

breaking the silence





# occupation of the territories

Israeli soldier testimonies 2000-2010

## Forward

In June 2004, over sixty former soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces presented an exhibition of written testimonies and photographs from their military service in Hebron. The exhibition led to the founding of Breaking the Silence, an organization that depicts the Israeli Occupation in the words of the soldiers entrusted with carrying it out. From its inception, the goal of Breaking the Silence has been to expose the day-to-day reality of military service in the Occupied Territories. The organization interviews men and women who have served in the security forces since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, and publishes their testimonies on its website, in booklets, and in the media. The organization holds ongoing public events, lectures, parlor meetings, and tours in the Territories in an attempt to encourage public debate about events there.

To date, the organization has published six booklets: Breaking the Silence: Soldiers' Testimonies from Hebron, 2004; Testimony Collection #1, which deals with cases of IDF soldier abuse, violence, and looting in the Territories; Testimony Collection #2, which discusses rules of engagement in the Territories; Soldiers' Testimonies from Hebron, 2005-2007; Soldiers Tell About 'Operation Cast Lead,' Gaza, 2009; and Breaking the Silence - Female Soldiers Testify about their Military Service in the Territories.

This volume contains more than 180 testimonies from 101 witnesses interviewed by the organization - both women and men. The testimonies were selected as representative of material contained in the more than 700 interviews conducted by the organization since its inception. They describe Israel's operational methods in the Territories and its consequences. The witnesses represent

all strata of Israeli society and nearly all IDF units engaged in the Occupied Territories. They include testimonies of commanders and officers as well.

All testimonies published by Breaking the Silence are collected by military veterans and verified prior to publication, including the testimonies that appear in this book. It should be emphasized that unless noted otherwise, the testimonies published here are reported by eyewitnesses, and in their own words. Minor alterations have been made to remove identifying details and to clarify military terms. As in previous publications of the organization, the identities of witnesses are kept confidential. Without anonymity, it would be impossible to make public the information published here.

This book differs in content and scope from previous collections of testimonies published by Breaking the Silence. Whereas earlier publications were devoted to specific aspects of military force in the Territories, this volume describes the IDF's principal methods of operation, as well as the policies of the Israeli authorities who control the Territories. Though the soldiers' descriptions are limited to their personal experiences, an evaluation of the entire body of testimonies published here exposes the principles of Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories. Contrary to the official Israeli position, which portrays the IDF's activities in the Territories as fundamentally defensive and intended to prevent harm to Israeli civilians, the soldiers' testimonies describe the policy on the ground as an offensive one which includes expropriation of territory, tightening control over the civilian population, and instilling fear.

Israel's policy in the Territories is often referred to in public discussion by a few

familiar terms. Each chapter in this book examines one of these terms, and compares it with the testimonies of IDF soldiers.

Despite its scope, this book does not describe all the means by which the State of Israel controls the Territories; it is limited to the information brought to light in the soldiers' testimonies. Likewise, the book does not consider the variety of activities connected with the work of the General Security Services ("Shabak") and other intelligence agencies, nor is it concerned with the operations and activities of the military courts, which constitute an important component of the structure of military rule in the Territories. There are other aspects of the military administration, besides the aforementioned, which are not discussed in the book, and so this book should not be read as an attempt to address all components of the Occupation. The goal of the book is to explain the principal operational methods of the forces that are charged with preserving the public peace and defending Israeli civilians.

Breaking the Silence considers exposing the truth about Israel's policy in the Occupied Territories to be a moral obligation and a necessary condition for a more just society. To ignore testimonies of the Occupation given clearly and unambiguously here is to surrender a fundamental right of Israeli citizens - the right to know the truth about their own actions and the actions of those who operate in their name. We demand accountability regarding Israel's military actions in the Occupied Territories perpetrated by us and in our name.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who contributed to and assisted with the publication of this book.



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## Introduction

The publication of this volume, *Occupation of the Territories: Israeli Soldier Testimonies 2000-2010*, marks a decade since the outbreak of the Second Intifada. Using the testimonies of hundreds of male and female soldiers interviewed by *Breaking the Silence*, the book exposes the operational methods of the Israeli military in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the impact of these methods on the people who live in the Territories - Palestinians, settlers, and the soldiers themselves. Those who carry out Israel's mission in the Territories - the IDF troops - reveal here, in unprecedented detail, the principles and consequences of Israeli policy in the Territories. From the descriptions given by the soldiers, one comes to grasp the logic of Israeli operations overall. The testimonies leave no room for doubt: while it is true that the Israeli security apparatus has had to deal with concrete threats in the past decade, including terrorist attacks on Israeli citizens, Israeli operations are not solely defensive. Rather, they systematically lead to the de facto annexation of large sections of the West Bank to Israel through the dispossession of Palestinian residents. The widespread notion in Israeli society that the control of the Territories is intended exclusively to protect the security of Israeli citizens is incompatible with the information conveyed by hundreds of IDF soldiers.

The Israeli security forces and governmental bodies make consistent reference in the media and in internal discussions and military briefings to four components of Israeli policy in the Territories: 'preventing terrorism' or 'prevention of hostile terrorist activity' (sikkul); 'separation', i. e., Israel's "separating itself" from the Palestinian population (hafradah); the need to preserve Palestinian 'fabric of life' (mirkam hayyim); and 'law enforcement' (akhifat hok) in the Territories. But the terms that Israeli security forces apply

to various components of Israeli policy in the Territories present a partial, often distorted, description of the policy and its consequences. These terms, once descriptive, quickly become code-words for activities that are unrelated to their original meaning. This book describes the Israeli policies in the Territories which the State of Israel's institutions do not disclose. The men and women soldiers whose testimonies appear in this book are an especially reliable source of information: they are not merely witnesses to Israeli policy; they have been entrusted with the task of carrying it out, and are - explicitly or implicitly - asked to conceal it as well.

The book is divided into four chapters, corresponding to the four Israeli code-words: "prevention," "separation," "fabric of life," and "law-enforcement."

The first chapter contains testimonies that fall under the rubric, "prevention of terrorist activity." The testimonies in this chapter show that almost every employment of military force in the Territories is considered "preventive." Behind this liberal interpretation of the term lies the idea that every Palestinian man and woman is suspect and constitutes a threat to Israeli security forces and Israeli citizens; therefore, deterring the Palestinian population through intimidation reduces the chances that the Palestinians will oppose Israeli security forces, and thereby prevents terrorist activity. Activities such as abusing Palestinians at checkpoints, confiscating property, exacting collective punishment, changing and obstructing the access roads (through floating checkpoints, for example), and even the arbitrary alteration of the rules (according to the whim of a commander at a checkpoint, for example) - all these can be justified as preventive activities. If the term "prevention" applies to almost every military operation, then the

difference between offensive and defensive operations gradually disappears. In other words, almost every possible military operation directed against the Palestinian population can be viewed as a justifiable defensive operation.

The second chapter contains soldier testimonies relating to the policy of “separation”. At first, the principle of “separation” seems to imply that the best way to defend Israeli citizens in Israel proper and in the Territories is to drive a wedge between them and the Palestinian population. The testimonies in this chapter show that the policy of separation does not only include the separation between the two populations, but also separation between and within Palestinian communities. This separation allows Israel to control the Palestinian population: it directs Palestinian movement to the Israeli monitoring mechanisms, and determines new borders on the ground. The many permits and permissions needed for Palestinians to move around the West Bank also serve to limit their freedom of movement and internally divide the Palestinian communities from one another. The often arbitrary, unending bureaucratic mazes are no less effective than physical barriers. The Israeli policy of separation is exposed as a policy of “divide and conquer.”

In this chapter soldiers also discuss the separation of Palestinians from their land. The Israeli settlements and surrounding areas are themselves a method of separation. Palestinians are forbidden to enter these territories, which often include their own agricultural lands. The separation barrier, made up of many subsections, has a threefold effect: it separates Palestinians from Israelis, Palestinians from Palestinians, and Palestinians from their land. The location of the barrier is not determined solely on the basis of defensive considerations pertaining to the identity of the population, but rather on offensive considerations pertaining to the areas that Israel desires to incorporate within its jurisdiction. Checkpoints, roads closed to Palestinian movement, prohibitions against the passage of Palestinians from one place to another in the West Bank are among



the measures that effectively push Palestinians off their land and allow the expansion of Israeli sovereignty. The soldiers' testimonies in this chapter make clear that "separation" is not a policy of withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, but rather a policy of control, dispossession, and annexation of territory.

The third chapter includes soldier testimonies that describe Palestinian life under Israeli occupation. Israel's official spokespeople emphasize that Israel does not withhold basic necessities from the Palestinians or cause a humanitarian crisis, but even allows for a Palestinian "fabric of life" in the Territories. Claims like these, as well as claims of economic prosperity in the West Bank, may lead one to believe that life under foreign Occupation can be tolerable, and even good. On the basis of these claims, defenders of Israeli policy maintain that the Occupation is a justifiable means of defense, and if those who live under Occupation are, regrettably, harmed, the damage is "proportionate" to the security of Israeli civilians. But the fact that the Palestinians require the grace of Israel in order to lead their lives shows that their lives are dependent on Israel. The fact that Israel can, when considered necessary, prevent a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, indicates that Israel also has the power to create a humanitarian crisis. The claim that Israel allows a Palestinian "fabric of life" to exist exposes the absolute control that Israel has over the Palestinian people. The testimonies in this chapter describe the many ways in which the lives of Palestinians are dependent on the Israeli authorities.

Israeli authorities decide on a daily basis which goods will be transferred from city to city, which businesses will open, who will pass through checkpoints and through security barrier crossings, who will be permitted to send their children to school, who will successfully make their way to the universities, and who will receive appropriate medical treatment. Israel continues to hold the private property of tens of thousands of Palestinians. Sometimes this happens for supposed security considerations, other times for the purpose of

expropriating land. In a significant number of cases, the decision to confiscate Palestinian property appears completely arbitrary. Houses, agricultural lands, motor vehicles, electronic goods, farm animals - any and all of these can be taken at the discretion of a regional commander, or a soldier in the field. Sometimes IDF soldiers "confiscate" people for the sake of a training exercise: troops will burst into a house in the dead of night, arrest one of the inhabitants, and release him later - in order to practice arrest procedures. This chapter describes the arbitrary and temporary Palestinian "fabric of life".

The fourth and last chapter of the book contains testimonies that describe the dual regime in the Territories. While Palestinian residents are governed mainly by military laws that are enforced by soldiers and subject to frequent change, Israeli settlers are governed mainly by civil laws that are passed by a democratically elected legislature and enforced by police. The subordination of Palestinians to the Israeli military forces is not the subordination to an authority of law that represents them and their interests. Rather it is a compliance with threats that reinforce Israel's total military superiority.

From the testimonies in this chapter one also learns of the active role played by settlers in imposing military rule over the Palestinians. Settlers serve in public roles and are ongoing partners in internal military deliberations and decisions regarding the lives of Palestinians in the area of their settlement. Settlers who work in the Ministry of Defense as their settlements' security coordinators determine the daily schedule and the borders of the settlement, and even participate in military briefings for soldiers in the area. The status of the settlers in the eyes of the security forces is such that violent acts against Palestinians are not treated as infractions of the law. The security forces do not view the settlers as civilians subject to law enforcement, but as a powerful body that shares common goals. Even when settlers' desires are not in accord with those of the security forces, at the end of the day they still see each other

as partners in a common struggle. Hence, settler violence against Palestinians is merely another way in which Israel exercises its control over the Palestinian population in the Territories. When conflicts arise between settlers and the security forces, they are settled through compromise. In effect, the security forces usually acquiesce to the aspirations of the settlers, if only partially.

The testimonies in Chapter Four describe the two regimes in the Territories - military and civil - and their influence on each other, as well as on the settlers and Palestinians subject to their authority. They strongly suggest that weakness of the Israeli police is not the main reason for the failure of law and order enforcement in the Territories. Law is not enforced because security forces do not treat settlers as regular citizens, but as partners in control of the Palestinians. Hence, the security forces in the Territories also serve the political aspirations of the settlers: annexation of large portions of the Occupied Territories for their use and enjoyment.

“Prevention,” “separation,” “fabric of life,” and “law enforcement” are some of the terms that the Israeli authorities have attached to elements of Israeli policy in the Territories. But instead of explaining Israeli policy, these terms conceal it by wrapping it in defensive terminology whose connection with reality is weak at best. According to the accounts of the IDF soldiers cited here, Israeli rule in the Territories does not only serve the security of Israeli citizens. Their testimonies also show that the effect of Israel’s activities in the Occupied Territories is not to preserve the political status quo, but to change it. While Israel expropriates more and more territory, its military superiority allows it to control all strata of Palestinian life. Contrary to the impression that Israeli officials attempt to create, in which Israel is withdrawing from the Palestinian Territories slowly and with the appropriate caution and security, IDF soldiers describe an indefatigable attempt to tighten Israel’s hold on the Territories, as well as on the Palestinian population.

We insist on exchanging the code-words that sterilize Israeli public discussion with a more accurate description of Israel's policy in the West Bank and the Gaza strip. We call upon Israelis to face the clear and accessible facts, to look directly at our actions and to ask whether they are in accord with our values.





Prevention

## Intimidation of the Palestinian Population – "Prevention"

Since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, more than 1,000 Israelis and 6,000 Palestinians have been killed. The considerable escalation in violence between Palestinians and Israelis both in the Occupied Territories and within Israel prompted the Israeli security system to develop new, more aggressive methods of action, which were intended to oppress Palestinian opposition and prevent thousands of attempted attacks on Israeli civilians and soldiers on both sides of the Green Line.

This chapter addresses the offensive and proactive military actions of the IDF in the Occupied Territories during the past decade. Although Israeli security forces claim they are "preventing terror," the soldiers' testimonies compiled here reveal how broad the security forces' interpretation of the term "prevention" truly is: the term has become a code-word which signifies all offensive action in the Territories. The testimonies in this chapter demonstrate that a significant portion of the IDF's offensive actions are not intended to prevent a specific act of terrorism, but rather to punish, deter, or tighten control over the Palestinian population. "Prevention of terror" is the stamp of approval granted to any offensive IDF action in the Territories, obscuring the distinction between the use of force against terrorists and the use of force against civilians. In this way, the IDF is able to justify actions that intimidate and oppress the Palestinian population overall. The testimonies in this chapter also show the serious implications of the blurring of this distinction for the lives, dignity, and property of the Palestinians.

The military actions described in the present chapter include arrests, assassinations, occupation of homes, and others. The testimonies also reveal the principles



and considerations that guide decision-makers both in the field and at high levels of command. Even at the beginning of the Second Intifada, the IDF had already established the principle that would guide new methods of action against Palestinian opposition, known as “searing of consciousness”. It assumes that Palestinian resistance will fade once it is proven to Palestinians as a whole that opposition is useless. The testimonies in this chapter demonstrate that in practice, the principle of “searing of consciousness” translates to intimidation, instilling of fear, and indiscriminate punishment of the Palestinian population. In other words, the testimonies show that violence against and collective punishment of a civilian population can be justified by the principle of “searing of consciousness”, and are cornerstones of IDF strategy in the Territories (e.g. testimonies 1,2, and 3).

One of the methods of action most often identified with the IDF’s efforts at “prevention” in the Territories is the policy of assassinations. The IDF has repeatedly claimed that assassinations are used as a last resort to protect against those who plan and carry out terrorist attacks. The soldiers’ testimonies reveal that the military’s actions in the last decade are not consistent with official statements made in the media and in the courts. More than once was a unit sent to carry out an assassination when other options were at its disposal, such as arresting the suspects (testimony 10). In addition, it becomes clear in this chapter that at least a portion of the assassinations are intended to revenge or punish, and not necessarily to prevent the materialization of a terrorist attack. One testimony describes the assassination of unarmed Palestinian police officers who were not suspected of acts of terror (testimony 55). According to

this testimony, the assassination was carried out as revenge for the murder of soldiers the day before at the hands of Palestinian militants who came from the same area. Other testimonies included here describe a policy of “paying the price”: missions whose goals are - to quote one of the commanders - “bring in the bodies.” (testimony 41).

Arrests are another principal expression of the efforts to “prevent terror” in the Territories. Over the course of the last decade, tens of thousands of Palestinians have been arrested in military operations conducted deep in Palestinian territory nearly every night. Soldiers’ testimonies reveal the methods for carrying out such arrests: In many cases, arrests were accompanied by abuse of bound detainees, who were beaten or degraded by IDF soldiers and commanders. The testimonies also reveal that arrests are used to accomplish a variety of aims, and in many cases, the reason for an arrest is unclear to those being arrested. For example, in many operations in which IDF forces invaded Palestinian cities and villages, all the men were arrested and gathered in a defined area, with no connection to any misdeeds and with no information on their intents, and were held, bound and blindfolded, for hours (e.g. testimony 24). Thus, under the guise of “prevention of terror”, mass arrests are used to instill fear in the Palestinian population and tighten Israeli military control.

Arrests are often accompanied by destruction of Palestinian infrastructure and property, or by confiscation of property. The testimonies demonstrate that destruction is often the result of a mistake or operational need, while in other cases is the outcome of intentional actions by soldiers and commanders in the field, or by orders coming from higher levels of command. In every case, destruction of infrastructure and property has become an additional avenue for control of the Palestinian population in the Territories.

The invasion into and control of the Palestinian private domain has also been

common in the last ten years. Nearly every night, IDF forces invade homes of Palestinian families, often taking post in the house for days or even weeks. This pattern of activity, known as a “straw widow”, is intended to improve the IDF’s control of territory by capturing and controlling positions and creating hidden lookout points. The testimonies demonstrate, however, that often the aim of taking control of a house is not to prevent violence, but to cause conflict. Thus, for example, testimonies included in this chapter describe “decoy” missions, whose aim is to bring armed Palestinians out of hiding and into the streets so that military forces can strike against them. As such, these testimonies show that IDF field units don’t work only in preventing military clashes, but also in creating them.

Beyond assassinations, arrests, and destruction, the soldiers’ testimonies gathered in this chapter reveal the method of intimidation and punishment coined “demonstration of presence” - one of the IDF’s primary approaches used to instill fear in the Palestinian population. One of the most conspicuous expressions of “demonstration of presence” in the Territories is the method of night patrol in Palestinian cities and villages. During the course of the patrol, soldiers are sent to stroll the alleys and streets of a Palestinian village, and they “demonstrate their presence” in a variety of ways: shooting into the air, throwing sound bombs, shooting off flares or tear gas, conducting random home invasions and takeovers, and interrogating passersby. Field-level commanders term these patrols “violent patrols”, “harassing activity”, or “disruption of normalcy”. The testimonies reveal that “demonstrations of presence” in the Territories are carried out on a frequent and ongoing basis, and they are not dependent on intelligence regarding a specific terrorist activity. Missions to “demonstrate presence” prove that the IDF sees in every member of the Palestinian population - whether involved in opposition efforts or not - a target for intimidation, harassment, and instilling of fear.

“Mock operations” are another example of the objective of “disrupting normalcy”. Military forces invade homes and arrest Palestinians for purposes of training and drilling: they take over Palestinian villages as a drill in preparation for war or in order to train for combat in an urban setting. Although the arrested Palestinians and those whose villages are taken over by the IDF may think these military incursions are completely real, the soldiers’ testimonies show that mock operations are explicitly defined as drilling and training activities and are not intended to arrest a wanted person or prevent a future attack. These testimonies suggest that mock operations are becoming more common as the level of Palestinian violence diminishes and attempts to attack Israeli soldiers or civilians decrease.

Finally, the misuse of the term “prevention” also finds expression in military activities intended to oppress unarmed opposition to the Occupation of the Territories. During the past few years, a number of grassroots Palestinian protest movements have developed in areas throughout the Territories, often with the cooperation of Israeli and international activists. These movements use various forms of non-violent opposition, such as demonstrations, publications, and legal battles. IDF “prevention” activities also include attempts to oppress these movements by using violence against protesters, arresting political activists, and declaring curfews on villages in which political activity takes place (testimony 28).

The various objectives and phenomena revealed in this chapter form part of the logic of IDF activity in the Territories over the last decade. At the foundation of the reasoning behind IDF activity rests the assumption that there is no need to distinguish between enemy civilians and enemy combatants. “Searing of consciousness” and “demonstration of presence” best express this logic: systematic harm to Palestinians as a whole makes the Palestinian population more obedient and easier to control.











Soldier standing at a post in a Palestinian house. Nahal Brigade, 50th Battalion. Hebron, 2003





Soldier preparing for a 'demonstration of presence' Batir, 2004



Palestinian detainee on a military base. Nablus, 2004





Palestinian detainees during 'Operation Defensive Shield.' Photo by S. Bloomberg, Ramallah, 2002



Palestinian detainees in an IDF vehicle. Nahal Brigade, 50th Battalion

## 1 I didn't know what a "demonstration of presence" really meant

unit: Paratroopers · location: South Hebron Hills · year: 2001

► They gave instructions to do some patrol inside. I think it was Yatta.

### **Is that what's called "a demonstration of presence?"**

A demonstration of presence.

### **Was it an order? Would you do it all the time?**

No, that's it...I didn't get to do it a lot. There were a few specific cases. Meaning I got to do a demonstration of presence once or twice, but that specifically I know it wasn't OK, I'll explain right away. When we went in, we went in with that officer and another officer, and us. I personally as a soldier knew that there was an order to do a patrol, to do a "demonstration of presence." I didn't know what a "demonstration of presence" really meant. They went in, like basically all of us went in...we had an APC and a security patrol jeep if I'm not mistaken, and they fired rounds. Like the officers were...one was on the APC, you know, he aimed the APC so he had a MAG machine gun. We also fired our weapons sometimes...the officer would fire some more.

### **Fire in the air? Live rounds?**

No, at houses, at garbage cans, things like that.

### **Shooting at a home means at the walls, the windows?**

Both. Garbage cans, water heaters, things like that. Now the thing is, what became clear after the fact, we later heard on the radio, someone reported that he heard the shots from Yatta or the village that we were in, I don't remember. So, no one knew... meaning they knew we were there, and they asked if we saw something, so the officers said: "No." Apparently, I wasn't near the radio at that point, but when we returned after the fact they said, the deputy company commander asked: "What, how could it be you didn't hear anything there, they fired off rounds like crazy. So they said they didn't hear anything. And basically it seems that they weren't supposed to fire a single bullet, it was really meant to be a patrol with the APC, you know, just for show ■

## 2 Stun grenades at three in the morning

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus District · year: 2003

► We had all kinds of situations of very dubious work in Area A [i.e. under the control of the Palestinian Authority]. If that means going in on Friday, when the market is packed, in Tubas for example, to make a checkpoint – a surprise checkpoint – in the middle of the village. One time, we arrived to make a surprise checkpoint like that on Friday morning, and we started to spread out as if at a checkpoint: inspecting vehicles and every car that passed. 300 meters from us a small demonstration of kids who were throwing rocks started, but they went maybe ten meters, and weren't hitting us. They started cursing us and everything. At the same time people start gathering. Of course it was followed with the aiming of weapons at the kids, you can call it self-defense.

### What was the point of the checkpoint?

To show the presence of the IDF inside the village. Inside the village, where the women go shopping, where the children play, just to show presence, and to enter a firefight, which within a second we didn't know if we would get it there. In the end we got out without a scratch, without anything happening, but the company commander lost it. He asked one of the grenade launchers to fire a riot control grenade toward the demonstrators, the children. The grenade launcher refused, and afterwards he was treated terribly by the company commander. He didn't receive a punishment because the company commander knew it was an illegal order, but he was treated really disgustingly by the staff. In the end that's how it ended. Another story was going into Tubas at three in the morning in a safari, with stun grenades and just throwing them in the street. For no reason, waking people up.

### For what purpose?

"We are here. The IDF is here." In general, they told us that some terrorist, if he were to hear the IDF presence in the village then maybe he would leave. He never left. It seems that the objective was just to show the local population that the IDF is here, and it's a policy which repeats itself: "The IDF is here, in the territories, and we'll make your life bitter until you decide to stop the terror." The IDF has no problem with it. We,

After the fact, the objective was to show the local population that the IDF was there, it's a policy that repeats itself... "The IDF is here, in the territories, and we'll make your life hell until you decide to stop the terror."

the ones who were throwing the grenades didn't understand why we were doing it. We threw a grenade. We heard the "boom" and we saw people waking up. When we got back they said to us: "Great operation," but we didn't understand why. It was every day. A different force from the company each time, part of the routine. Not an especially positive way of life ■

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### 3 To create a lack of sleep for the village

**unit:** Artillery · **location:** Gush Etzion · **year:** 2004

► The objective of "Happy Purim" is normally to not let people sleep. It's coming in the middle of the night, going around the village throwing stun grenades and making noise. Not all night long but at some specific time. It doesn't matter how much, they don't set a time for you. They say to you: "OK, they threw stones at you today in Husan, so do a "Happy Purim" there". There weren't many of those.

#### **What we call a "demonstration of presence"?**

I'm sure you've heard the term "Happy Purim" at some point. If not, you'll hear it. Yes, a demonstration of presence. We receive instructions from the battalion to carry out something like that a few times, as part of the situation report we did in the battalion. It's part of the activities that happen before...

#### **What's the rationale behind an operation like that?**

If the village initiates an operation, then you'll initiate lack of sleep for the village. I never checked how much this kind of operation causes lack of sleep, because you aren't in the village for four hours throwing a stun grenade every ten minutes, because after three times like that the IDF would have a tremendous shortage of stun grenades and couldn't do it anymore. It's operations that are at a specific time, and if you throw a single stun grenade at point x in Nahalin, apparently 100-200 meters from there it won't make so much noise. It maybe creates an effect that the IDF is around the village at night, you don't do too much activity, but I don't think it's more than that ■

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## 4 They called it an "arousal operation"

unit: Nahshon Infantry · location: Salfit district · year: 2001

► There were the standard missions – checkpoint, lookout, whatever – and then there was what's called "initiated operations." So that was like the action. Meaning going around the village, 3 in the morning, 4 in the morning, you know. And as we on the training track progressed then it became like more...Like I know? At first they would do the lookout on the village, they would sit between the village and the road, so no one would come and shoot at the road. So they would sit there with night vision, sitting, looking. Then, continuing on the track, then the platoon commander would already enter homes there and whatever...interrogate. What's there to interrogate? I remember that one time, you know, at very late hours, two, three, four, five, it doesn't matter, he randomly started knocking on people's homes. There isn't like, there is nothing...no information, [the platoon commander] just chooses a home. You go in, look around, wake everyone up...it's all very polite, he even spoke Arabic, I don't know what he would say to them. Without any physical violence, but with all of the presence. 5-6 soldiers enter the house in the middle of the night, stand in the living room. So we were very...you know, behind the platoon commander. Wherever he went we go with him. There isn't too much...no one breaks anything. You go in, five minutes, you leave, you look at everyone's ID in the house and that's it. But then too: All of a sudden you get it: walla, they enter homes at five in the morning without thinking twice. There is no information, there is nothing.

All of a sudden you get it: walla, they enter homes at five in the morning without thinking twice. There is no information, there is nothing

### **What was the excuse?**

No excuse. That's the operation, going into homes.

### **What do you write on the operation paper, the report you submit for the bureaucracy?**

The bureaucracy? "Operation against those bisecting the road, the route to the A-Dik village to prevent shooting on the road." And you know...it's late, and boring, and you're falling asleep...then he [the platoon commander] takes you, goes on a patrol in the village, the dogs are barking...you know, to enter a bit...

### **Action?**

Yes. I remember, one time he let me: “come on, now you do the interrogation.” I knock, see a guy in front of me, I don’t know what to say. Like I know? I tell him: “Ask him who threw the rocks today at the patrol jeep.” They also liked going in on the patrol jeeps, they would call it like an “arousal operation,” so they’ll throw stones. It had another name, but that’s the definition. They would go in so...

**They would throw stones?**

And then they could see who...

**The trouble maker.**

Yeah, yeah. So we entered and he said to me, like before we went in he said to me: “Ask who threw it.” And I’m like on this high: “Do you maybe know who...” In short, it was embarrassing, everyone made fun of me. I wasn’t the primary interrogator anymore, you can imagine.

**So your operations are arousal operations?**

The company tactical team enters the village in order to draw out the stone throwers.

**Is it also part of the framework of initiated operations?**

No, that’s during the light of day, because normally the stone throwers are during the day. The initiated operations are at night. Those operations were entry into homes. Also, it was only our platoon commander. I know that in other platoons it happened less because you know, you don’t mess with our platoon commander. He was also, you know, you asked me about the mission report – he didn’t have to answer to anyone. If he wanted to, he could have done whatever he wanted. He wouldn’t do much, but I’m saying if he wanted to. He didn’t have to answer to anyone, you understand? You know, the jeep has to be in a certain place? So he would take it to buy shwarma, you get it? And who would say anything? If someone were to punch him, they would be paralyzed for a long time ■



## 5 They beat him up, smashed his head with the butt of their weapons

unit: Kfir Brigade · location: Nablus district · year: 2009

### ► During your service in the territories, what shook you the most?

We did searches in Hares, that was the straw that broke the camel's back. They said that there are 60 houses that need to be searched. I said that surely there was some warning from intelligence, I tried to justify it to myself.

### During the day or at night?

At night.

### You went out as a patrol?

No, the whole division. It was a battalion operation, they spread out over the whole village, took control of the school, broke the locks, the classrooms. One room was the investigation room for the Shin Bet, one room for detentions, a room for the fighters to rest. I remember that it annoyed me in particular that they chose a school. We went in house by house, knocking at 2 in the morning on the door of a family. They are dying of fear, girls pee in their pants from fear. We knock hard on the doors, there is an atmosphere of "We'll bring them down," a fanatical atmosphere. We go into the house and turn the whole thing upside down.

### What's the procedure?

Gather the family in a particular room, put a guard, say to the guard to aim the barrel of his gun at them, and check the whole house. Another order we received, everyone born from 1980 until ... an age range from 16-29, it doesn't matter who, bring him in cuffed with a plastic cuffs and a blindfold. They also yelled at old people, one of them had an epileptic seizure. They continue to yell at him more. He doesn't speak Hebrew and they continue to yell at him. The medic treated him. We did the rounds. Every house they went into, they took everyone between 16-29 and from there brought them to the school, they sat tied up in the schoolyard.

### Did they tell you the purpose of this thing?

To locate weapons. And we didn't find any weapons in the end. They confiscated

Girls pee in their pants from fear. There is an atmosphere of "We'll bring them down," a fanatical atmosphere. We go into the house and turn the whole thing upside down

kitchen knives. What shook me the most was that there were also thefts there. One took 20 shekels. People went into the houses and looked for things to steal. This was a village where the people are very poor. There was a stage where they said, "What a letdown, there was nothing for me to steal. I stole what I found, markers, just to say that I stole something." You see really poor people.

**That was what the soldiers said?**

Just between soldiers, in the room after the action. There was a lot of joy at others' misfortune, people even told it happily. There was also a thing where one Palestinian (who was known to be mentally ill) yelled at the soldiers, but the soldier decided that he was going to attack him, then they simply exploded at him with blows. They hit him in the head with the butt of a weapon, he bled and they brought him to the school, to assemble with the rest. There were a lot of arrest orders ready and signed by the battalion commander, with a blank area. They wrote that the person was detained on suspicion of disturbing the peace. So they just filled in the name and the reason for the arrest. I remember that the people in plastic handcuffs, where they had put them on really close to the hands, I cut them off and put on freer ones. I got to speak with people there. There was one who works 13 hours a day, there was one whom a settler had brought into Israel to work for him, and after two months he didn't pay him his salary and handed him over to the police.

**Everyone was from that village?**

Yes.

**Was there something else you remember from that evening?**

That disturbed me? A small thing, but it disturbed me. There was a thing that they came to a house and simply demolished it. There's a weapons-finding dog and they wouldn't go with it and they just destroyed the house. The mom watched from the side and cried, the kids sitting with her and stroking her. I'm seeing how my mom put so much effort into every corner of our house and suddenly they come and destroy it.

**What does it mean to wreck a house?**

To break the floors, turn over sofas, throw plants and pictures, turn over beds, break closets, tiles. There were smaller things, but they didn't really disturb me. The looks of people whose house you've gone into. It really hurt me to see. And after that, they



left them for hours in the school tied and blindfolded. At four in the afternoon the order came to free them. That was more than 12 hours. There were security services investigators who sat and went one by one and interrogated them.

**Was there a terrorist attack earlier in the area?**

No. We didn't even find any weapons. The claim of the brigade commander was that the Shin Bet agents did manage to find intelligence and that there are many stone throwers that we will now succeed at catching... Things always come up for me from the operation in Hares.

**Which things?**

How they looked at us there, what went through their and their children's heads. How you take the son of a woman in the middle of the night and put him in restraints and a blindfold ■

## 6 The deputy brigade commander beat up a restrained detainee

**unit:** General staff reconnaissance unit · **location:** Nablus area · **year:** 2000

► It was in Kfar Tal, we went to look for a few suspects, a Nassar Asaida and his brother Osama Asaida. And we were at a house that Osama was supposed to be in, we surrounded the house and closed in on it, the procedure was that you yell and make noise...and if not – you throw a stone at the door so they'll wake up and in a situation in which...if it doesn't work then you shoot in the air or the wall of the house and if it continues to deteriorate, like I know, in the end there would be bombs on the roof, but the procedure was clear that you start the...the "action" with...

**Not with shooting?**

Not with shooting and...really at the end...when they report that we were in position, from the...side...at the house's three o'clock, I wasn't, I was at the twelve o'clock, from the three o'clock where \*\*\*'s force was, there were shots from a machine gun, maybe a Negev, I don't remember what they had, at the wall of the house. A burst of

It was for no reason. Releasing depression...He decided that he would remind him who the boss is, who the Jew is and who the Arab is, who the prisoner is...And I in that situation was standing between these two people, between the terrorist or the wanted terrorist and the deputy brigade commander so that he won't...to prevent abuse of the detainee

gunfire, you know five, six times: rat-tat-tat-tat like that...like they fired a lot and again against procedure and against...

### **So what happened to the suspect afterwards?**

The suspect came out afterwards, no, not from there and he was interrogated by, by us and it was really him and they restrained him with his hands behind his back and blindfolded him, I don't remember what we put on, um...and I took him to...to the northeastern corner of the courtyard and some kind of, they sent some kind of armored jeep of the deputy brigade commander, the brigade commander at that time was \*\*\* but he wasn't there. I don't know who the deputy brigade commander was, the deputy brigade commander arrived with a driver and a radioman or some other guy and when I took [the detainee] I certainly wasn't rough but I also wasn't gentle, I was very assertive, I took him and made it clear, so it was totally clear who the boss was in the situation, but when I got to the to the deputy brigade commander then the deputy brigade commander decided that instead of taking him with assertiveness he would also remind him, he would remind him who the boss is, who the Jew is and who the Arab is, who the prisoner is and he gave him some two, three, four, chops, elbows to the ribs, a kick to the ass, all kinds of...

### **The deputy brigade commander himself?**

The deputy brigade commander himself. It wasn't "see who's boss," which, say, would be one hit to show him, I would say I don't understand, it could be the guy, it was just releasing tension. It was the deputy brigade commander releasing tension on the...the son of a bitch who apparently sent suicide bombers... And I in that situation was standing between these two people, between the terrorist or the wanted terrorist and the deputy brigade commander so that he won't...to prevent abuse of the detainee. I also found myself threatening the...two or three times the driver and the radioman when they put him into the back of the jeep or whatever it was, because if I heard that something happened, I personally take care of them and I don't know where he is, then how would it end. I remember that after the fact I thought that as a soldier who was there to protect the State of Israel, in the end I said to myself: what's the difference between the deputy brigade commander abusing a...a Palestinian detainee who, it doesn't matter who it is, who is now restrained and blindfolded. Of

course I also told this, it didn't lead to anything.

### **The interrogation?**

The interrogation. You know, a small interrogation at the end of the night ■

## **7** A bound man, they kick him in his stomach and head

**unit:** Armored corps · **location:** General · **year:** 2000

► There is some law that it's forbidden to hit a Palestinian when he is bound, when his hands are bound. When a General Security Services Agent would take people out of their homes in the middle of the night, they would tie their eyes and kick them in the stomach when they were bound. Three in the morning, opening the door, bursting into the house. The mother is in hysterics, the whole family is in hysterics...they send someone to be checked, it's not always terrorists, yes, they catch them, bring them down...and you can't imagine what's going through the guys' head, they blindfold them, two soldiers accompany him from behind, holding him and other soldiers come along the way. And it's standing army people, 15 people who are a problematic minority in the company. And they just, a bound man, they kick him in the stomach and the head...those guys really liked it.

### **It wasn't reported to the staff?**

It was an officer on the staff! A serious officer on the staff! You don't understand anything during regular service...if he didn't have the legitimization to do it he wouldn't do it! It's just because that's how it is. The Wild West and everyone...whatever they want.

### **And the majority, they should just take it as a given?**

I don't remember if I respected the person. I can't ignore it and say, "OK, he's like that." But the truth is that when I think about it, I should have done something. I really had to stop it...you don't think like that...you say that's the reality...it doesn't have to happen, they're shits that they do it...but you don't exactly know what to do. You

Those guys really liked it...really there isn't too much to do. Especially when it's officers...

don't feel like you have anyone to turn to.

**You go back home. Did you tell your mother and father?**

Are you serious? You suppress it.

**Your parents didn't know anything about it?**

What the hell! You're part of it. Really there isn't much to do. Especially when it's officers and you are a soldier in the tank corps who they wouldn't even piss on, so what? You'll get into a fight? You'll stop them? You'll bother them? You can't disrupt the company unity or the group dynamic, you can't come and fight people during. Now it wouldn't happen. I wouldn't allow it to happen, but that's not a big deal because I'm a reservist ■

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## 8 The unit commander used a guy as a human shield

**unit:** Nahal Brigade · **location:** Hebron · **year:** 2002-2003

► I remember a specific incident where we used a human shield, not the neighbor procedure. A guy from the house, scared to death. The unit commander grabbed him like that, he walked in front of him with his hand on his neck, proceeding in his steps. The terrorist who was inside was wanted for 11 years. Very, very, very senior. Very, very dangerous. We knew that he went into the PA police station, killed a few Palestinian police, threw grenades in every direction, like Rambo, went in and took two of his friends out of the prison. A very, very dangerous guy.

**Where was this and when?**

I think either Hebron or Jenin. It makes sense that it was Hebron because we were active a lot in Hebron during that time. It makes sense that it was Hebron. The end of my service, meaning the beginning of 2003 or the end of 2002. There was a very senior suspect who didn't leave the building, we knew definitively that he was inside. He had a bunch of weapons. The unit commander proceeded, and said to the guy whose arm he was holding that he should say that we'd kill him if he didn't come out,

if he didn't surrender. That we were going to kill the guy we were holding if he didn't surrender. It was all a show, a show...I believe it was a soldier. Afterwards they put him up against a wall, I never told anyone this in my life, they put him against a wall right at the door to the room of the senior suspect. We came with a laser scope, regular ammunition, so we weren't to expect these kinds of responses. And the unit commander puts the gun to his head and yells: "Where is he? Where is he? Where is he?" In the end it worked, he said where he was. To the credit of the unit commander. He was sure he was going to die. I was also sure he was going to die, by the way, as an observer from the side. I thought that he, I didn't think he would kill him but I was very, very confused by the situation ■

## 9 We would send neighbors to disarm explosives

unit: Engineering Corps · location: Ramallah · year: 2002

► So there was an uproar when the Kasams arrived in the West Bank. There was some location, they called us [because] they found Kasams in the minaret of a mosque. What do you do? You look for someone to go up to the mosque and take down the Kasams because it's dangerous for us. So they knocked on doors in the area. There is always someone who speaks Arabic on the force. There is a unit in the army of Arabic speakers who are like mediators who go with the force and make all of the announcements. In short they knocked on doors and found someone. He was retarded. They said to him: "Go up to the mosque. Above in the minaret are pipes. Bring them down." They didn't even tell him it was explosives. It turned out it was motors for Kasams. It wasn't so dangerous but it was certainly not work for someone like that but the reason it happened was because "neighbor procedure" was a reality, it was a basic procedure of combat. I think that until today it's a basic procedure of the rules of combat, "neighbor procedure"...that's it, I just remember how central "neighbor procedure" was to the rules of combat.

**Yours? You used it a lot?**

They knocked on doors and found someone. He was retarded. They said to him: "Go up to the mosque. Above in the minaret are pipes. Bring them down." They didn't even tell him it was explosives

A lot. All the time.

**In what way, you really used him as a human shield?**

Yes, a human shield in that if there was something dangerous.

**But you have a robot.**

But the robot takes a ton of time to operate and to bring it everywhere. You need a special vehicle. Our vehicles are not armored, and to put it on an armored vehicle is a whole story. Until it moves, and there were a ton of malfunctions. Bringing a robot to the minaret of a mosque, even the best engineers can't create a robot that can do that. "Neighbor procedure" was certainly central when dealing with suspicious objects.

**That's very strange...the basis of your entire duty is to know how to approach a bomb and to neutralize it.**

Our duty is to remove the threat.

**OK, I can also shoot. Tell everyone to take cover and...**

When they were doing the considerations, in optimal conditions it could have worked but to start shooting at the minaret of a mosque at one in the morning in the middle of Ramallah or to have one of the neighbors take it down...we aren't a command authority, we are a professional authority. We go to the commander and tell him our options (according to our order of preference): "Either you bring a tank now and shoot at the minaret of the mosque, or you bring a neighbor, or you want me to go up and bring it down." It's hard for me to remember what we said in that situation.

**What do you prefer?**

For a neighbor to do it.

**Were you afraid?**

What? Presumably. With improvised explosives any small mistake is extremely dangerous. If you have a telephone on you it's extremely dangerous, static electricity is extremely dangerous. Explosives are very, very dangerous, friction near them is very dangerous. When you know how dangerous they are you don't want to go near them. So many times they used...I remember a case where there was a very big argument in the unit. It was in the area of Hebron. Someone in the area of Hebron who they shot at and was wearing a vest. Now I'm trying to remember if they took the vest off of him.

I think they did, but now you have to destroy it because you don't know what's inside of it [but] you don't want to endanger yourself by opening it. It's better to blow it up.

**Are you talking about a terrorist?**

Yes. One of the soldiers in the unit gave one of the neighbors a brick of explosives prepared to explode...he took the brick with the electric wire or maybe it was wireless, there were all different kinds, "take it, put it down and go." I'm like...as the army we don't take a risk, "you take it and put it [there]." There was a big argument if it was right or not right. I don't think there were many cases like that. But he said: "I'm not going near explosives if there is no reason."

**If there is someone else?**

Yes. If there is someone else. They did the same thing as a trend with the South Lebanon Army. I don't know if you know about it. They created a unit of South Lebanon Army soldiers who basically...they trained them on a very low level. They gave them short training and they would deal with the explosives in Lebanon. They didn't give them a lot of means or training. It's a similar trend here if there is someone else willing to do it.

**Willing...?**

Yes...

**So what was the argument?**

If it's right to let someone else do it from a professional standpoint. It's considered something professional.

**So it was a professional argument?**

Yes.

**It wasn't on an ethical level it was on a professional level?**

On no level.

**Is that what you learned in the course?**

Yes, totally.

**Before "neighbor procedure," if that is not an option you do it yourself?**

How is there a situation where that is not an option.

**If there are no people? Did anyone ever tell you no?**

Just understand that the argument was solely professional: if it's professional to let someone go before you in a place where there are suspected explosives. Can he

activate something or initiate something. Anything having to do with ethics didn't come up at all in the argument ■

## 10 I couldn't believe how an order to kill someone could be carried out in a minute

unit: Special Forces · location: Gaza strip · year: 2000

The General Security Service agents were happy like kids who came back from camp...No one in the unit dealt with the shooting at the wrong car, the killing of innocent people...I was shocked when the newspapers published that "a secret unit killed four terrorists"

► The story which brought me here happened in Gaza. After these two incidents, I think there was a period at the beginning of the Intifada where they assassinated people with helicopters, a huge media frenzy because sometimes it would miss and kill other people. They decided to send people in, ground forces, and we started to get ready.

### **This was at the beginning of the Intifada?**

Yes, it was at the beginning of the Intifada. Until then there were a few assassinations with the help of helicopter missiles, from a media perspective...I remember there was a mess because they were offensive and they killed our guys and they informed us they we were going to do a "ground elimination operation".

### **Is that the terminology they used? "Ground elimination operation"?**

I don't remember. But I do know that we knew it was going to be the first operation of the Intifada. That was very important for the commanders and we started to train for the operation, the plan was to catch a terrorist on his way to Rafah, block him in the middle of the road and eliminate him.

### **Not to stop him?**

No, a straight elimination, targeted. The operation was cancelled and a few days later they informed us an operation was going out but we were going on an arrest-operation. I remember the disappointment that we were going to arrest him instead of something revolutionary, out of the ordinary in combat, changing the phase – instead we were going to arrest him. The operation was planned... Can I have a pen and paper?

**Yes.**

[Drawing] this is the road, here is where the APC regularly sits. We were supposed



to relieve the guys in the APCs and when the car arrived, then intelligence from the drone, cross here with an armored truck, crossing the road, there are also dirt paths here from the bases, and inside the armored truck there is a hole on top and there is a step for the soldiers to pop their heads out of the truck like in the A-Team, and basically block the road here, he'll stop here and shoot at him from here.

**To shoot at him or to arrest him?**

I'm now talking about the first plan – to arrest him. When everyone goes out [of the truck] like that with their weapons to stop him, to say “get out of the car” and that's it. Very simple. When there are jeeps here, they're meant to be security jeeps and something pretty massive. And that's it, we went out on the operation, when I...

**Which force are you in?**

I'm in this force, two soldiers and the operations commander – here.

**Do you have a sharpshooter's rifle?**

No, M16. There is another vehicle which I don't remember where it was located.

**What kind?**

A jeep or an APC. In the end, we were waiting inside the APC, we have Shin Bet agents with us and we hear updates from intelligence and it was amazing: “He's sitting in his house, drinking coffee, he's going downstairs, saying hi to the neighbor” all kinds of stuff like that. “He's going back up, coming down, saying this and that, opening the trunk,” really details, “opening the trunk, picking up a friend” – he didn't drive, someone else drove, they said his weapon was in the trunk. We knew he didn't have the weapon with him in the car, which made the arrest much easier. At least it reduced my stress, because I knew that if he would run to the trunk to take out the weapon, they would shoot at him. It was reasonable to assume he wouldn't do it.

**With which force did the Shin Bet agent sit, with the jeeps?**

With me. In the APC. He didn't see. Maybe there was also a Shin Bet agent here, I don't remember. We were in contact with command and they informed us that he would arrive in another five minutes, another four minutes, another minute, then a change in order, apparently from the brigade commander: elimination operation. A minute before. They didn't prepare for it. They prepared for a kind of unexpected, if maybe he didn't have a weapon – a minute before it's an elimination operation.

**Why do you say “apparently from the brigade commander”?**

I think it was the brigade commander. Thinking about it after the fact the whole operation seems to me to have been a political trick by our commander trying to get the extra point of the first elimination operation and the brigade commander trying...everyone wanted it, everyone was very “hot” for it. The car enters, and not according to plan, really their car stopped here and before it another car here. This is the car we need, and another car comes into the section. From what I remember we had to shoot, he was three meters from us. We had to shoot, and after they stopped the cars I fired from three meters through the scope and there were crazy amounts of noise from gunfire, crazy. And then this car, the moment we started speeding, started speeding in this direction.

**The car in front?**

No, the terrorist’s car started speeding, apparently when they shot the driver his leg locked and hit the gas and it started flying. The gunfire increased and the commander next to me is yelling “hold your fire, hold your fire,” and I see they’re not stopping. The people get out and run from the cars and from the security jeep, they shoot some rounds and go back. Crazy bullets for a few minutes. “Hold your fire,” and then they stop. In that car, the car before it, they fired tens, if not hundreds of bullets.

**Are you saying it because you checked afterwards?**

Because we carried the bodies. The Shin Bet brought the bodies. There were three people and nothing happened to the person in the back. He got out of the car, looked around, raised his hand and the two bodies in front of him were hacked to pieces. He sat in the back.

**In the car with the suspect?**

Yes. I checked afterwards, I counted how many bullets I had left – I shot ten bullets. It was so terrifying: more and more and more noise. It happened within a second and a half. And then they took out the bodies, we carried the bodies with us, I have no idea why. We went to a debriefing, I’ll never forget when they took them out on the base, I don’t remember which one, and we’re standing two meters away in the shape of a semi-circle, the bodies are full of flies, and we’re having a debriefing. The debriefing was “Great job, we succeeded. Someone shot the wrong car and we’ll do the rest on the base.” We went back to base, I’m in total shock from the bullets I saw, from

the crazy noise that was there. We looked at the video, everything was documented on video for the debriefing. In the debriefing I saw all of the things that I told you, the people running, it's clear, the minute of gunfire, I don't know if it was 20 seconds or a minute, but it was hundreds of bullets and it was clear that everyone died, but the gunfire continued and the soldiers ran from the security detail, fired a few bullets and ran back. They showed it during debriefing and I see a group of bloodthirsty men firing crazy amounts of bullets, at the wrong car too. The video was just awful and then the unit commander gets up who we'll still be hearing a lot from.

**What does that mean?**

He'll be a General Commanding Officer of a region or the Chief of Staff [one day] and he says, "The operation was not carried out perfectly, but the mission was accomplished, we received a call from the Chief of Staff, the Security Minister and the Prime Minister" – we're all happy, we're getting compliments, it will raise the unit and the operations, it'll get a "great job." The debriefing was just cover-up after cover-up.

**Meaning?**

Meaning they don't stop everything and say, "three innocent people died." Maybe there was no choice with his driver, but the other two?

**Who were they really?**

During that time I had a friend in a course at the Shin Bet, I remember he told me about the jokes that the terrorist was a nobody. Apparently he was active in the shooting, and the other two were just unrelated. What shocked me, was the day after the operation in the newspapers, [it said] that "a secret unit killed four terrorists," and for each one there is a story, where he came from, what he was involved in, what operations are in his past. And I know that in the Shin Bet base, the jokes are spreading about what a nobody they killed and the other two aren't even connected and in the debriefing itself, I'm going back a bit, they didn't even deal with it.

**Who did the debriefing?**

The unit commander. They didn't deal with it. That's the first thing I thought I would hear, that something bad happened, that we went on the operation to eliminate one and we eliminated four. I thought everything would stop and he would say "I want to know who shot at the first car. I want to know why A-B-C ran from the vehicle just to

take part in the bullet party.” And it didn’t happen at all. At that point I understood that it just doesn’t bother them. These people do their own thing and it doesn’t bother them. The next day, when the operation was published in the newspapers – I was in shock.

**Did the guys talk about it?**

Yes. With the exception of two others with whom I could talk to and tell them that I don’t understand how it happened... [...] The second guy was really shocked but it didn’t bother him to continue. It also didn’t bother me to continue. It was only after I was released from the army, I understood. No, even in the army I understood that something very bad happened and I didn’t know how it would affect me. When I was released from the army, I couldn’t believe that I got to the point of shooting at people. It’s not practical and it’s field security but I couldn’t imagine myself taking an order to kill someone without knowing who it is. I don’t know how I got to that point. And today I’ll even say, even if it was Osama Bin Laden I wouldn’t shoot him. I couldn’t believe in shooting other people. On our way back the Shin Bet agents were happy like kids who came back from camp.

**What does that mean?**

They were so pleased, hi-fiving and hugging. Lost in themselves. Smiling, they didn’t even participate in the debriefing, it didn’t interest them. I couldn’t believe how an order to kill someone could be carried out in a minute. What exactly was the politics of the operation? How did my commanders, no one admitted that the operation failed? It failed so much that the gunfire was so widespread that those who were in the truck got shrapnel from the bullets. They just shot at them, at the truck itself. It was a miracle we didn’t kill each other. They didn’t mention it ■

# 11

## A death sentence for an unarmed man

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2002

► We grabbed a controlling house, made posts, one of the sharpshooters identified a man on the roof, two roofs away, I think it was between fifty and seventy meters

from him, unarmed. I looked at the man through the night vision, he was unarmed. It was two in the morning. An unarmed man walking on the roof, walking around. We reported it to the company commander. The company commander said: "Take him down." [The sharpshooter] fired, took him down. The company commander, \*\*\*, decreed, decided on the radio, a death sentence for that man. An unarmed man.

### **You saw he was unarmed?**

I saw it with my own eyes the guy was unarmed. The report was also: "an unarmed man on the roof." The company commander declared him a lookout, meaning that he understood there was no threat from the guy, and he gave the order to kill him and we shot him. I personally didn't shoot him, my friend shot and killed him. And basically you think, if you see in the United States where there is a death penalty, for every death sentence there are like a thousand appeals and convictions and they take it very seriously and there are judges and learned people and there are protests and whatever. Basically a 26 year-old guy, my company commander, pronounced a death sentence on an unarmed man. Who is he? What do you mean a lookout? And even if he was a lookout? So what, you have to kill him? And how did he know he was a lookout? He doesn't know. He received a report on the radio about an unarmed man on the roof, and he gave the order to kill him, which I think is an illegal order, and we carried out the order, we killed him. The man died. And listen, to me it's murder. And that's not the only case. He would laugh about it, we had code names: "The lookout," "The drummer," "The woman," "The old man," "The boy," and what was the other one? I'll remember later.

### **And these are all people you killed?**

They are people we killed. Oh, "The baker" ■

The company commander received a report on the radio about an unarmed man on the roof, and he gave the order to kill him...how does he know he's a lookout?... I saw with my own eyes that the guy is unarmed... And we carried out the order, and we killed him. That wasn't the only incident...

## 12 The battalion commander gave an order to shoot at those trying to recover the bodies

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2002

► There is something else: shooting at people trying to recover bodies. That I certainly

They told me  
they did it a lot  
in Lebanon – you  
leave a body in the  
field and you wait  
until they come  
to recover it in  
order to shoot at  
those recovering  
it. Like, you make  
an ambush around  
the body...

remember in Nablus. It was on the main road, they killed two, two armed men, they identified two armed men in Nablus, towards the end of the operation, they killed them, and then they shot at the people who came to recover them.

### **That was the instruction?**

I was with the battalion commander there. The battalion commander is now a colonel.

### **What's his name?**

\*\*\*\*. He definitely gave the order to shoot at the people who came to recover the bodies.

### **Were they armed, recovering the bodies?**

I think they were but I'm not sure.

### **Did they endanger anyone?**

They didn't endanger anyone, but the shooting there was on armed men in general. Like, armed men were...

### **To be killed?**

Yes. So it seemed reasonable to me.

### **You don't know if they were armed?**

I don't remember if they were armed or not, but I certainly remember that it was people who came to recover the bodies and they fired on them. At the time it didn't seem terrible to me, today it seems a little it's...but I understood that it's also something, a logical procedure. You leave bodies in the field - they told me they did it a lot in Lebanon – you leave a body in the field and you wait until they come to recover it in order to shoot at those recovering it. Like, you set up an ambush around the body. But those are things I heard about Lebanon. So it happened here too. I remember there was a shocking thing there, like it's already at the point of disrespecting human life. We received the order on the radio of how to get to the head of the penetration. So we get it and it's: you cross this tunnel, the tunnel opens to a road, you turn left and at the end you turn right. And then, like really, someone wrote, they mark with arrows the direction of the progress because those are the places where they met and split and whatever, all kinds, and every company had its own arrow, and then someone comes and makes an arrow: "X".

### **What about the guys who were shot at, those recovering the bodies? Did**

**someone go afterwards to kill them?**

Yes, we verified the killings. A body that's presumably sitting in the field for a long time then no, but even after they shot, they shoot a kill shot, and it's really a problem.

**We're in Nablus?**

We are in Nablus again. After you kill someone – he's already lying on the ground – there is a shot with an aim to take him down for certain.

**And the guys who went to recover the bodies who were shot at, did they verify their deaths?**

I imagine, it was procedure.

**You weren't there in that situation?**

I didn't see it. I was in the room with the one who was shooting, but didn't...

**You didn't bother going to the window....**

You try and stay low, if you don't have to [get up] ■

# 13

## He took down an eleven year-old boy

unit: Paratroopers · location: Jenin · year: 2003

► Some take it like this and some like that. There are people who...OK, I killed a kid, OK. They laugh. Yes, now I can draw a balloon on my weapon. A balloon instead of an X. Or a smiley [soldiers draw an X on their weapon for every kill]. Some people take it hard. I remember that during squad commander training I was in Jenin, let's say, we were in a "Straw Widow" [a house which soldiers secretly take control of], and everyone who climbs on Israeli APCs or armored vehicles – shoot to kill. And the aim of all this was to have people climb. Because you have APCs under the house all the time. They tell us of course that the aim is to make the wanted men come out. But what wanted man would shoot at an APC just like that?

They also say that if they jump on the APC and take the machine guns...shoot to kill. And then a friend of mine came with his M24, a sniper's weapon, and a kid just climbed. He shot, all happy – I took someone down. And then they told him he took

down an 11 year-old kid or something like that. He took it very hard.

**He killed someone, so he was happy. Why?**

Yes, because you prove yourself. You're a man.

**Do they know he is unarmed?**

He's unarmed for sure and he climbs it...No one asks you why you have two Xs on your weapon and if they were armed and whether this was done by procedure. It can be two Molotov throwers and it's still two Xs ■

## 14 Her limbs were smeared on the wall

unit: Givati Brigade · location: Gaza strip · year: 2008

Someone said it  
was funny, and  
they cracked up  
from the situation  
that the kids  
saw their mother  
smeared on the  
wall...

► There was an operation of the company next to me in which they told me that a woman was blown up by a “fox” [explosives that are used to break through doors and walls] and her limbs were smeared on the wall it and it wasn't on purpose. They knocked on the door a lot and there was no answer so they decided to open it with live ammunition. He [one of the soldiers] placed a “fox” and right at that moment she decided to open the door. And then her kids came and saw her. I heard it during dinner after the operation, someone said it was funny, and they cracked up from the situation that the kids saw their mother smeared on the wall. That's an example. I was also screamed at by my platoon in the heavy APC when I thought about giving the detainees that were with us in the bridge of the heavy APC water, from the platoon's water container, the field kit water, a large 24-liter canteen. They said to me “what, are you crazy?” I don't know what their reason was but they said: “diseases, seriously.” In Nahal Oz [military base] there was an incident in which kids whose parents apparently sent them to try and infiltrate Israel because the families are hungry in order to try and find food or I don't know what. Everything like that is a pursuit, fresh turkey. We did a patrol at Nahal Oz. There were I think 14-15 year-old boys there, I remember a boy sitting blindfolded and then someone [a soldier] who is known as an idiot came and hit him here.



**On the legs.**

And he spilled some oil used to clean a weapon on him, I don't remember where.

**Did something happen with it?**

He did it in the center of the company but no officer saw it. I said something to him at that moment, but I didn't scream at him and I didn't tell my officer that he did this and that. Theft was very common. Souvenirs, flags, cigarettes.

**The commanders and the officers didn't pay attention even though it was common?**

I think they did and if not, my company commander knew because I told him.

**And what did he say?**

That it's good I brought it to his attention.

**And did it end?**

I don't think so. It didn't end.

**You mentioned before the issue of slaughtering animals.**

It was during one of the operations in the heavy APC , even the first one I think. The company sergeant major of the company was the commander of one of the APCs and there were horses and sheep there, maybe even donkeys and he also sprayed bullets at the window with the MAG and maybe even ran them over, I don't remember. He shot the animals.

**Did anyone ask questions?**

No, it wasn't in my APC but I know about it.

**How do you know about it? Can you repeat the story?**

The whole company was in the APC in the area there, in the homes where the operation was – first of all I think we saw dead sheep, things get mixed up in my head. Someone told me that someone shot them. During the operation we talked about what happened and he told me about the shooting of the sheep. It wasn't something that I needed to verify, it didn't seem illogical that it happened.

**Was it a onetime occurrence?**

I think so ■

# 15 We sent him to open the house for us

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2004

They say "Neighbor  
Procedure" is no  
longer legitimate.  
So you don't call  
it by this name.  
You call it "Bring  
a Friend" or  
something like  
that

► There were a few operations this year of entering Balata at daytime to the market alleys, in order to take out armed guys. That's the aim. We once had a mock arrest in a shop in the market. We just entered the shop. Just in the one that looked the most convenient. At the same time snipers enter the houses nearby and we stayed there for 40 minutes inside the shop like idiots, hoping that no one will shoot us in the middle of Balata. It's a very...refugee camp...a deputy commander of a paratrooper company was killed there a month ago...so we're in the same alley, hoping our snipers take them down before...

## **Just a minute, is there a reason for doing this?**

I don't know. There's no intelligence or anything. It's just something that the company commander chose.

## **What, while moving?**

No, no, no. It's a battle procedure of three days. You look at the aerial photos, you say "If I choose this shop, then this is the house where I will put him," and, sort of strategically, this shop is the most convenient. It has the best entrance, it has the best emergency exit.

## **And the curfew is on or not?**

What, there's no curfew in the city.

## **Are there people in the alley?**

Full of people everywhere. That's the aim. The market alleys are full of people in midday. Like any market...

## **And you go in.**

We go in with stun grenades, shooting in the air. A shop is something this size, with the entire wall exposed to the street. A door here, a door there and all of it exposed to the street. And as soon as we enter, people start running away.

## **What's the point?**

Make the gunmen come, and let the guys bring them down before they hit us. We're

the ducks.

**OK, so what do you do in the meantime?**

Nothing, inside the shop, try to find shelter. In case they come to the alley in front of us and...

**Scary?**

Yes.

**How long?**

40 minutes. The aim is to make it look like an arrest all the way. So that they won't get the method. So you also arrest a guy. Arrest a guy inside the shop, run him through all the process of...take him to the detention center with his eyes covered, to the regional brigade headquarters, they will interrogate him and release him at the end of the process. Let them think it was a real arrest and we just got the wrong man. And there was a case when we went in once and the shop was empty and another time there were three people there, one 70 year-old, one 50, and a 60 year-old woman.

**You had no one to detain, just...**

Yes, but it did not prevent the platoon commander from blindfolding and handcuffing the 70 year-old and taking him.

**And detain him and...**

Yes, but we didn't take him, we realized it was unnecessary. But what we did was we sent him to open the house for us.

**I don't understand.**

They say "Neighbor Procedure" is no longer legitimate. So you don't call it by this name. You call it "Bring a Friend" or something like that. It has a name...

**What does it mean?**

It means that if I go to arrest someone and I know the guy is dangerous, he's armed and all that, then there's nothing to prevent me from going to his neighbor, and I go in and I don't know exactly where the location is – I have 5 houses, let's say in the Casbah or in Balata. Intelligence says that the guy is supposed to be on this block. So I knock on the door: "Which family is this?" OK, that's not the one. "OK, you come with me". Make him knock and bring everyone out.

**So now he goes around the place – knocking on door after door...?**

No, he goes to one house and then we'll take someone else from the other house.

**And when he goes, where are you?**

A bit behind him. He goes first.

**You aim your weapon at him?**

No. He goes first and you aim, but not specifically at him. He realizes he has nowhere to run. He knocks on the door: "Ya Zalami..." He summons them.

**What...this is happening now?**

Yes, it's a well-known arrest procedure in the case of...

**When was the last time you did this?**

April...I don't remember exactly.

**Did it seem strange to you when you did this?**

It's obvious to me that this is wrong, but not strange. This is something that happens all the time. A well-known procedure ■

## 16 The commander from the special forces put the barrel into his mouth

unit: Shaldag special forces · location: Ramallah district · year: 2002

► We entered Bet Rima with the Special Forces, we went on some operation to capture some suspect. There were a few targets, they took some and we took some...that's it, there was...meaning, I was in the forward command unit during the operation...and then when we went to the Special Forces group there was some case of a runaway from the house but when we got there he already had a bullet in his leg. The Special Forces commander that was there...the main commander of the force, a company commander of combat soldiers, grabbed the guy and told him to open his mouth and he put the barrel [of his gun] into his mouth and said to him "listen, where's the suspect?" He said the name, "where is the suspect, tell me where he is now before I blow your head off." We got there we said to him...

**You saw it? You saw the barrel in his mouth?**

Yes. I was there for the last second. Meaning, I didn't understand what was going on and then he took it out?

**He took it out because your commander said something?**

Yes. I think so. That was the situation ■

## 17 The brigade commander explained: "You go up to a body, put the barrel between its teeth, and fire"

unit: Givati Brigade · location: Gaza strip · year: 2008

► There was a template. It started with Operation Hot Winter [end of February – beginning of March 2008] because until then it was the largest operation ever, not the longest, but in scope and with the most achievements. Before that there was Operation "Fall Clouds" sometime in 2006, around the time of the Lebanon war, it was a 48-hour operation, and afterwards for five months it turned out that there was a battalion operation, the whole battalion plus a little less than a company...

### How often?

Once a week. But not the whole battalion, during five months there were maybe six battalion operations and everything else was company operations, which was mostly searches and trying to draw out terrorists.

### How deep did you go in?

Mostly not too deep but also not four houses in from the border. The deeper operations were I'd say a kilometer and a half – two kilometers.

**I want to ask about the preparations. For example, rules of engagement, civilians, what you are going to do?**

They said that the objective was to search the houses and see if there are weapons. Of course part of the objective is also to try – there were operations where they fired for no reason, consciously, but the battalion commander said the shooting was to draw out terrorists in order to kill a few terrorists.

It turned out that every week there was a battalion operation inside Gaza... Sometimes one of the objectives was to bring people to Israel for General Security Service interrogations... not specific suspects, rather in order to gather information and to recruit collaborators, that's my guess

**Where did you shoot?**

There was a specific operation where I remember a force of grenade launchers, machine guns and maybe even a .5 heavy machine gun on the homes. They didn't shoot at the home, but they shot without aiming and not on the groves, in the area of the homes. Not to hit anything but to try and draw out terrorists. In regard to preparation, I don't really remember if they said, it's not black and white, and they didn't say to shoot at everyone, it's not like Operation Cast Lead where there was crazy excitement.

**How was the operation itself run? You finished the briefings...**

There are operations on foot, there are heavy APCs, you get to the point of entry, it doesn't matter if it's a company or a battalion, there is a marching order, you walk, at a certain point you occupy a destination, every squad captures a specific house. You walk at night, you get to a house, you go in and verify there is no one armed, you never enter "wet" [while shooting], there also isn't "wet" cover with the exception of a few specific operations where there was fire for show, to try and draw fire. We never used grenades, maybe only during Hot Winter.

**The shooting for show, where was it aimed?**

I don't know because I wasn't in that platoon. I know that the objective was not to hit people, but they did shoot towards the houses. My good friend who was in the battalion and was in the battalion commander's command force, not with him personally but in the broad sense, but he did hear the battalion commander talking with someone on the radio saying to him "come on bro, you don't know what's going on here," during the shooting for show. There were operations where they got so excited that they fired grenades from launchers or a small grenade launcher that they got from the paratrooper patrol company or I don't know what, they brought it for the operation – the small launcher is lighter so it's better.

**You went into the houses and then?**

In most cases there were homes to search and then to take up the location. They searched for weapons and armed men, and then they would put up snipers or sharpshooters and sometime they had to break tiles in order to fill sand bags and they would do 4/2 [shift hours] or 2/2 according to the amount of men in the squad or the platoon. It was all flexible until they folded up.

**What would they do with the people who lived in the homes?**

They would gather them in one room, normally with the hands restrained. I don't remember blindfolds, maybe only rarely, and they put a guard there. I don't remember violence towards the people beyond...there wasn't resistance on their part. I remember difficult things in places on the border, on the edge, totally rural areas which the regime doesn't care about, they live in shacks, a terrible stench. I don't think there are things like that in the West Bank from the standpoint of poverty.

**Who do they restrain?**

Not women, I think.

**Only men. Was there an age group they would restrain?**

I don't think the elderly. During Hot Winter there was a whole extended family in the house – we didn't restrain them, we just put them in a room with a guard.

**A 12 year-old boy?**

I don't think so. Maybe I exaggerated and for the most part they weren't restrained. There were operations where they would go in heavy APCs and come back on foot. There was an operation we came back from and brought a lot of people for Shin Bet interrogations, not specific suspects, rather in order to gather information and to recruit collaborators, that's my guess, they would load up men from a certain age on a large truck and it would go in to Israel. Apparently the Shin Bet would interrogate them.

**Who chose them? Would a Shin Bet agent come with you?**

For the most part no. That happened maybe once, there was a specific operation that I remember where we came back with a few detainees on foot. What's fucked up is that they came back blindfolded, it's not clear why, what secret could they tell, it's not like they were in a Merkava Mark IV [tank], right? They were handcuffed and it was a difficult area for walking even for us. A few lost their sandals on the way and they walked barefoot in an area that's not pleasant to walk barefoot. It was a nightmare. For me too...in all of these operations I wanted to get there already, the operations were difficult physically and not just because they are physically difficult but because they are difficult. I also felt bad for them.

**How many were they?**

Not many, not a long caravan, but that was only my company. The operation I was

just talking about was the battalion so maybe in other companies.

**Was it something that came as a surprise to you then?**

No, it was defined as the objective of the operation, to bring detainees to interrogation.

**Who gave the briefing?**

A platoon commander.

**During the briefing in which they said you're coming back with detainees, what did they say to you?**

You are detaining people for interrogations, I don't remember if they said the Shin Bet. Sometimes they defined it as a secondary objective. In the briefings, bottom line, they didn't talk about an overall objective, rather they explained what you do and they would explain during. The operation was searches and "hopefully there will be terrorists to kill," mostly it was weapons searches and if there was some intelligence.

**I wanted to ask if that method works, of drawing fire.**

I don't remember it working. There were a few operations like that. It was a change that came after two months in that period, they started doing it. There was a period of foot operations, after that operations in heavy APCs and after that towards the end it was sometimes this and sometimes that.

**When you sat in the window of a house, did you need permission from someone to shoot?**

It depends. If I see someone armed – no. I say no because I remember clearly but generally. If you see someone armed - then no, if I see someone who looks suspicious because he's trying to hide or because he has binoculars or a cell phone – then yes. That's at least what I understood.

**After you came back did they tell you if there were hits?**

They did, but in general if there was something to say about the influence of the operation then yes. After Hot Winter they made sure to say it was successful, a lot of terrorists were killed and it had a deterrent effect. But after that operation [the witness is referring to an event in which the soldiers encountered armed Palestinians] when we thought the terrorists were killed and it turned out they were only wounded, it was surprising and frustrating. Surprising because one squad commander in my platoon for example shot a terrorist who was walking with a Kalishnikov and a cell phone in



the street and he didn't know he was 30 meters from the IDF. He shot him in the center of his body and he fell, and then they threw 2 grenades at him to verify he was dead, and afterwards they said that terrorists were not killed. By the way, during this period, was verifying a kill legal?

**I have no idea. Why?**

After the incident where they dismissed the platoon commander, we had a briefing from the Givati brigade commander, who sat with the battalion commander in the room, and our platoon sat while he briefed us in order to know better what happened there. And then he gave us clear orders regarding encounters and how it is supposed to end: "You go to a body, put the barrel between the teeth and shoot." Afterwards I heard that verifying a kill was illegal.

**That's also what I know.**

I know they created a cleaned-up word, "verify neutralization" ■

# 18 The objective is maximum kills

unit: Engineering corps · location: Jenin/Gaza strip

year: 2000-2003

**► What was the hardest part for you in your work?**

I don't know, but I remember one story. I remember a story from the Duvdevan unit. They had a commander who very much liked to kill.

**What does that mean?**

I'm trying to remember his name. He really liked to kill.

**How do you know he liked to kill?**

He said it many times.

**He said that he liked to kill, the commander from the Duvdevan unit? How did he phrase it?**

Don't quote me on it. He said that our objective is to kill as many people here as possible. People, not terrorists.

There was one commander...he was like very militant...he said that our objective is to kill as many people here as possible. People, not terrorists

**Where is “here”?**

The refugee camp and Casbah of Jenin. He was, like, very militant. I remember: we entered the Casbah in Jenin for some locating. We go in, do a search, find some can the size of something that could be an explosive. So he says to me “Can you collapse the house?” I say to him “No, I deal with the explosives, I put a brick...” He says, “No, I want you to collapse the house”. “No, I deal with the explosives.” “No I want you to collapse the house.” And I think, what is this, you have to evacuate two houses in the radius...he asks, “Do you have enough explosives?”

**Is he the authority?**

I’m the professional authority, I told him there aren’t enough explosives.

**Did you have enough?**

Yes. There are forces like that, like the elite terror fighting unit. The elite terror fighting unit in Gaza just went in in order to kill.

**What is the elite terror fighting unit?**

They disguise themselves as Arabs, they are an elimination unit. That’s what they call themselves. They go in in order to kill. That’s what they say about themselves.

**Did you talk to them? How did they phrase it?**

Yes. That was the feeling. The feeling that they come to kill and they kill.

**Who?**

Anyone in the area. Generally you know going in with them that in the end there will be four to six dead.

**Have you heard from a company commander or a unit commander something like: “I want six bodies today”?**

No. Many times \*\*\*\* [one of the brigade commanders] when giving operation orders would say that the objective is maximum kills.

**Maximum kills?**

Yes, in Gaza. Maximum hits.

**Who? Armed men?**

Yes. I think maximum hits of armed men.

**In that environment an armed man is the enemy?**

Yes.

**What about lookouts [those defined as observing the IDF in the field]?**

Them too.

**But they are unarmed.**

It's the same thing.

**Look, if you will shoot, everyone with me in the house or in the neighborhood would look. Right? You wouldn't look?**

Yes, of course. They also waited for people to come and look.

**Who waited?**

The snipers. The snipers wait. For them to be there, he was there for that. There is the armed man and the observer. Waiting, in order to kill.

**How do you know all that, they talk to you about it?**

I'm with them, what do you mean.

**With the snipers?**

Yes, with the snipers. The snipers sit in the house and I sit with them in the house in case...normally I open it for them. Whether it's a location they were at before or not, I have to open the location and check that there are no charges along the way. After I finish my professional work, after I open it for them I sit and wait with them. I participate. I take a window and also look outside ■

# 19

## They told the force to shoot at anyone in the street

unit: Engineering corps · location: Rafah · year: 2002-2003

► During the operations in Gaza, anyone walking around on the street, shoot at the center of the body. During an operation in Gaza in the Philadelphi corridor, anyone who walks around at night, shoot at the center of the body.

**How many operations were there?**

Daily, in the Philadelphi corridor. Every day.

**When you are looking for tunnels, they walk around there because they live there.**

It always ended  
with "We killed six  
terrorists today."  
Everyone you shot  
at in the street is  
"a terrorist"

The thing is like this: You bring a force up to the third or fourth floor. Another force does a search. They know that when they do the search there'll be a lot of people who'll try to hit the forces. Normally it was assumed that they'd try to hit the forces carrying out the searches. That's why they brought a force up, so they could shoot at anyone in the street.

**How much did they shoot there?**

To no end.

**I'm on the ready, I'm sitting on the third floor, I shoot at everyone I see?**

Yes.

**But it's a street in Gaza, the most crowded place in the world.**

No, no, I'm talking about the Philadelphi corridor.

**It's a kind of rural area?**

Not exactly rural, it's a road, it's like suburbs, it's not like the center: during the operations in the neighborhoods of Gaza it's the same thing. Shooting, during the operations at night – shooting.

**There isn't some kind of announcement that says "don't leave your homes"?**

No.

**They actually shot people?**

In actuality they shot at whoever was walking around in the street. It always ended with "We killed six terrorists today." Everyone you shot at in the street is "a terrorist."

**That's what they say at the briefings?**

The objective is to kill terrorists.

**No, what are the rules of engagement?**

Whoever is walking around at night, shoot to kill.

**During the day, too?**

During the day they dealt with in the briefings. Whoever walks around during the day looking for suspicious things. But suspicious things are also...a cane ■

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## 20 Every kid you see with a stone, you can shoot

**unit:** Paratroopers · **location:** Etzion brigade · **year:** 2002

► What broke everything – was the brigade commander getting up in front of us during the briefing saying we are in a Hudna [ceasefire], a sensitive situation, he's talking about it and then a minute later he briefs us, "Any kid you see with a stone, you can shoot." Like, to kill him. A stone!

### **Who was giving the briefing?**

The battalion commander or the brigade commander, I don't remember, it was a briefing like this. "Now the situation is very sensitive, and a stone is a deadly weapon, you know what it is. I've seen someone injured by a stone." I think that our battalion commander, of the...he saw that the brigade commander was also there. The Etzion Brigade, it was \*\*\*\*.

### **\*\*\*\* brought down an order that you are allowed to shoot a child who throws a stone?**

Yes, because it's a deadly weapon, because they throw it on the street. It was during the Hudna.

### **There was no outcry from it?**

No. I told you, I was a foot and a half out, in my thinking. What annoyed me the most was that the guys on the team already got to the point that all that interested them was that at that briefing they told them that they have to wear regulation army boots for the brigade commander [special forces tend to wear hiking boots, not regulation army boots]. And they argued about it for hours, and one person went and yelled at the company commander, they yelled at each other for half an hour after that briefing. And no one questioned him...and I certainly wanted to ask, but I had so much despair from all these closed-minded people, and I knew that every time I would ask there was opposition against me...the few people who said, "come on, again with questions and again with whatever, we want to play soccer." Or "you're stupid with all your questions." It always followed me, I had the group who was always in the opposition, so I knew I

The soldiers said, as a joke: "Let's just shoot someone to end this stinking Hudna [ceasefire] and we'll stop with the ambushes and start going back to making arrests." And it comes from the highest command and he apparently is also sick of it, so he wants something to happen.

wouldn't get an answer, as always. It was, to me, over the limit, it was really overdone. The people said, the soldiers said, as a joke: "Let's just shoot someone to end this stinking Hudna [ceasefire] and we'll stop with the ambushes and start going back to making arrests." And it comes from the highest command, and he apparently is also sick of it, so he wants something to happen ■

## 21 The battalion commander was violent and encouraged violence

**unit:** Engineering corps · **location:** Yakir · **Year:** 2004-2005

► The deployment went like this: generally kids throwing stones, Molotov cocktails here and there. Again, anyone we caught got some physical violence from us, we had a room next to the operations room, a briefing room, they were there. It was me and a guy named \*\*\*\*, we would give them water. If one of us was in the post or the operations room, we gave them water. If not – they would find themselves tied to a chair for 14 – 16 hours without water and blindfolded. I want to say that I was there under the command of an armored corps battalion, with an aggressive and violent battalion commander who was famous later because he was dishonorably discharged. He wasn't my battalion commander. We were under the command of the armored corps and my battalion at that time was in Har Dov and everyone who will hear this needs to know. That battalion commander's name is \*\*\*, if I'm not mistaken. He and his driver there headbutted Palestinians. I don't know if you know the story. He's big and bald, and he headbutted a Palestinian during a quiet demonstration. It was videotaped by the women of Machsom Watch, who he also raised his hand at. It was shown on television and they dishonorably discharged him after a long process. The headbutting battalion commander – that's what he was called. He was violent and encouraged violence. He said "Give it to them," during his briefings. That headbutt made it to television, the entire country saw it. The response of the battalion and his companies and us was mixed. I celebrated it because to me it was showing

the whole world. Of course my commanders didn't like my remarks against the battalion commander, and they quickly explained to me that I'm endangering myself, so I shut up. After he left, the battalion in the sector also changed from battalion 46 to battalion 9 ■

## 22 The battalion commander marched him barefoot

**Unit:** Engineering corps · **location:** Gaza · **year:** 2002-2003

### ► Was there abuse of Palestinians in the units you accompanied?

Was there a lack of consideration of the limits of abuse?

#### What does that mean?

For example, it could be taking everyone out of the house at four in the morning in the freezing cold and leaving them outside in the cold, in robes, without a minute of warning to put on some clothes, and leaving them for a half hour outside until you do the search. Up to cases where they come with a Givati force in Gaza, they go in with the battalion commander, they find someone there who isn't connected to anything, a house that's not at the location they received, a different house. And of course in every home in Bet Lahia, outside of the house, there are pictures of Shahids so he says to him: "What's this?" And then he decides to take him with us and he's barefoot. They walk three kilometers from his house to the border and he's barefoot. He asked the battalion commander if he could put shoes on, sandals, he asked him in Hebrew and he goes to him: "No"! He started bleeding on the way.

#### How fast were you walking?

The pace of soldiers with shoes. I didn't measure it, but we walked the pace of soldiers with shoes, and he started bleeding on the way because you walk on thorns and clumps of ground, etc., and he's limping in the back and each time one of the soldiers kicks him so that he'll move already because he's not keeping up the pace. Incidents like that of a lack of consideration.

They find someone there who isn't connected to anything, a house that's not in the location they received, in a different house...he asked the battalion commander if he could put shoes on, sandals... and he just goes, "No!"

**What did you do with him?**

They gave him to the Shin Bet agent and I don't know what happened afterwards. There were cases of shoving 20 people into an APC, getting 20 people into an APC. There was an APC specified for detainees, that was mostly during an operation in Gaza. I don't remember anything like that in the West Bank. They put all of the detainees there with blindfolds and handcuffs. Shoving, shoving, shoving, and at they end they shove in the equipment. I also remember an incident at the end of some brigade operation, they brought the General Officer of the Southern Command and loudspeakers with Imad Fares [the brigade commander from that time] speaking. They put the detainees like 20 meters from them with a young soldier guarding them, and they still were blindfolded, on their knees, handcuffed, head down, no water, no nothing, and I remember Fares speaking and one of the Palestinians telling them, translating what he was saying. I like stood on the side and didn't participate. They were very pleased with the operation.

**Did it seem unbelievable to you that he was translating for them? What was he translating, what did he say to them?**

Nothing, just the operation was this and that and we did this and that. It's unbelievable. He's standing in the middle of an army base and that guy is translating. They like forgot, they didn't interact with them at all they aren't even relevant. These detainees were for the most part the men they brought from the house to interrogate. The locations by the way were just arbitrary.

**There was no intelligence?**

There are locations where there were arrests and there are locations... That house is a controlling house so they inspect it. You know, take the Philadelphi Corridor, the whole house – terrorists. So all the men who are in the house you remove for interrogation. The assumption is that anyone who lives on the Philadelphi corridor knows where the tunnels are. It was like the hot topic at another time during my service ■

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## 23 At the end of the incident he had deep cuts on his feet

unit: Nahshon Battalion · location: Tul Karem · year: 2002

► There was one time we were in some house, we did like an armed arrest, and they took the guy and put restraints on his feet. And then they said they have to bring him, that the patrol jeep was waiting outside the village, that they have to bring him, because we were on foot. I remember that he wasn't able to walk.

### **Because he had restraints on his feet?**

Yes. So they didn't walk. What did they do? They ran. I'm telling you they ran, like I'm in good shape, and I even had my vest and helmet and weapon, but I got there, meaning, it was far. I'm telling you that at the end the guy, had deep cuts like I had never seen in my life.

### **Where?**

On his legs. We ran him the entire way.

### **Did you drag him?**

We made him walk as fast as a person with restraints can walk, proceed, move.

### **Restraints on his legs?**

Yes.

### **The legs are together, you can't move them.**

You can't, he moved.

### **Why did you run? Why didn't you release his legs?**

That's what the commander of the force decided. Yes. I remember that he had deep cuts on his legs at the end of the incident ■

They put the  
restraints on his  
legs...they made  
him walk as fast  
as a person with  
restraints can  
walk...

## 24 We assembled all the men in the stadium

unit: Nahson Battalion · location: Tul Karem · year: 2002

There was a pretty serious media storm. Like concentration camps blah-blah-blah...they go from house to house to make sure there are no men and weapons... they turn the house upside down as if a hurricane had been there...they didn't leave anything as it was

► I remember they once gave the company some activities in Tul Karem. They were activities which drew a lot of criticism, even in the foreign press, because they gathered all the men. What did they do? Each time they would go into the villages, to the cities and whatever, they would take a lot, they would get it. So what did they say? They went there, and declared, it was an order from above. The battalion was one of a few, of many...

**The order came from higher up than the battalion? The brigade commander at least?**

Yes, the brigade commander at least. No, it was a serious operation, of the IDF, not only the Nahson battalion was there.

**What sector?**

In the city of Tul Karem. So in short, the order was that all the men would be taken out to a giant soccer field there, and then there would be like no men in the city so it would be easier to do searches, you get it? Less concern, because if you see a man he's suspicious, automatically he's suspicious. So it really got a lot...you can imagine.

**How many men were there?**

They gathered all the men in Tul Karem for some 48 hours. It was, it made, there was a pretty serious media storm. Like concentration camps blah-blah-blah, you know. They gathered them in some central field.

**They announced it?**

Yes.

**Who announced it, you?**

No. I don't know. The white ones I think, the white jeeps.

**The District Coordination Liaison.**

In any case, afterwards they gave us a sector where we went from house to house looking for weapons. That was the mission: they told us during the briefings beforehand:

They informed all the men that they have to be in some central location, so you aren't expected to encounter any men. Anyone you do – is a suspect. They included us in what happened before so we would know the mission.

**And you didn't see the field?**

No. But I remember that they said...it was like 48 hours that they were there, so there were a lot of incidents there, there wasn't even a bathroom.

**Who guarded it, do you know?**

No. But I believe during the extensive debriefing, let's think about the day, at least which month, it was about a year and a half into my service, maybe more, around September 2002 let's say. Let's say give or take three months, four months, probably more than less. In any case, so we go in...you know, on a high at the beginning...like how we learned to open corners, you really feel the fear. You open them up one by one. You go into the house first, you check it and everything, really check that no one is hiding, that you don't see any weapons, but still within the line of reason. And then there is exhaustion and whatever. Then there was the part when we went into houses and we would put everyone who was left in the house, usually the mother and the children, maybe some grandmother or something, in a room and we're strewn about in the living room, strewn about for some two-three hours.

**Did you do a search of the house?**

They did a search to make sure there really were no weapons, you know, everyone on his level. There were those who checked and took out all the clothes. But the houses did not look the same as they did when we went into them.

**You go house to house searching all of Tul Karem?**

I'm telling you, it was a very serious operation, so everyone gets a sector. And you know, a house is missed here and there, you don't go crazy, but in principle you go house to house to make sure there are no men and no weapons.

**Were there men?**

All kinds of old men. "Why are you here?" An old man and whatever, you know. And then there was one house where she had a picture on the refrigerator or something, of her with a weapon.

**Her with a weapon?**

Yes. What's this and whatever...people going crazy. Where is it, what is it, and whatever. She tried to explain like, you know, it's a picture, pride, it's some Palestinian policeman's. Just like we have. Why compare it? Yes, photographs, but like we had during the period of whatever...it's a militant thing, it's their national pride, you know, it's also ours, OK. So that's it, people were like crazy: "We're going to find weapons here." And it's clear to me that we won't find anything, but it's not important. And I'm telling you they turned the house upside down as if a hurricane had been there, they didn't leave anything as it was. OK, it was in other houses that they basically turned the house upside down, but they also broke things like crazy there. And it's clear that the sergeant saw it, but at a certain point I say: "Hello," I say to the sergeant, "Look at what he's doing." And then some kind of friction started, like tattle-tale and whatever, here and there. But really I'm telling you, shelves with fragile stuff, everything went flying.

**You saw there was no weapon there?**

No, it was clear that it was vandalism.

**There wasn't some element of searching?**

No. There was an element of searching, but during it there was also vandalism. You open the closet and on the way you see a shelf so you send the whole thing flying. Yeah, that house took a lot. And as the day progressed, the standard of sensitivity of the force went down, and they're holding [the family] already for four-five hours. You know, it was a long operation. People were really tired already.

**How long was the operation?**

I think it was like 24 hours. The preparation was more, but I think the noise about the gathering of the men, because when we went in they said it was going to be three days, but I think the noise influenced [the length of the operation]. Because I remember we also encountered there – you know, no one dared to interfere, there also were no men, the roads should have been clear – and there were two women from some international peace force, what are they called?

**There are a lot.**

There are a lot but this is the most well-known. It's not important; you know what I'm talking about. In short, these two women come, and we're in the house and the family is stuck in a room there for hours, I think it may have even been that house with the

weapon, where we saw the picture.

**How many hours?**

We were there at least three hours.

**Was there a curfew on the streets?**

Yes, yes.

**So they are stuck in a room. They are stuck in the house anyway.**

Yes, you're right. They are stuck in a room in the house. So those two women were going crazy. Every time there was someone else watching the door to the house. I remember standing there and they come, the two crazies – crazy I'm telling you, you get it? – and they say to me, screaming at me in English for hours. And I understand every word, I speak English at home. And I say: The last thing I can deal with right now is an argument with someone whose side I'm actually on. Like, everything here is crazy. So I just ignore it like crazy and one of them yells, "He understands English, he knows." I don't know, maybe she saw something in my eyes that I understood every word they were saying and I'm just making a face like they are speaking Chinese. It was really hard. They really, they like feel it, they see what I see.

**What do you see?**

Everything that I told you, and it puts a mirror to your face. It was very difficult for me. And people are annoyed, "These sons of bitches." We leave the house, and they start, they continue following us. And they yell at them: "Get out of here." Somehow they succeed in scaring them enough so they'll leave. I remember just as they were leaving – I was last, I don't know, somehow I was last or something – I said to them: "You have to tell the world what you see."

**How did they react to it?**

I don't know, they looked at me like I don't know, I don't think it made an impression, and rightfully so, objectively speaking. You know, I, if I were to look at someone like me from the side – not a great hero, the opposite, I'm a witness to all of these things. They took the trouble, they came from the outside, they are the ones trying to save the world. Me, what am I doing here? I'm there and I'm not doing anything. I enlisted in this army, I do all the missions they tell me. The fact that I think that what they are doing is good, doesn't make me...but I don't know what they thought. They are

things that are also difficult for me personally, but that's what happened. And yes, I remember that I went there, I went home for the weekend, and on the radio they talked about the operations in Tul Karem and they reported they found this and that and some fertilizer that could have been used...

**As explosives.**

Yes. I remember that I said: "What bullshit." And we were in the car I think with \*\*\*'s father, and \*\*\*'s father is a very conservative thinker, but he says: "What kind, innocent fertilizer, seriously?" And I say from back: "Who knows if there was even that." Then he says: "What the hell." I imagine that if I were sitting at home I would also say what the hell and whatever, but you know, after everything I saw it was just...you know, the report on the radio in the end, it's unbelievable how the report on the radio in the end was: "In an IDF operation in Tul Karem," like I know, "20 suspects were captured, 10 weapons, and substances, and fertilizer suspected for the manufacturing [of explosives], and a ton and a half of fertilizer." So it's a success, because you hear it on the radio, you say: "Come on, we got all this, we did what we were supposed to do." And we did just the opposite. Because what did we do? We committed crimes, we destroyed houses. No house that we went into was the same.

**How many houses did you go through?**

We went through streets. I'm telling you every house, somehow someone came up with maybe they are hiding things in the water containers on the roof, you know, they have those large black water containers on every house. So they turned over every container.

**Did the water leak?**

They flipped it over. Whoops. With our craziness.

**Did you leave the residents without running water?**

I don't know, they didn't think about it, they were looking for weapons. Maybe there is a weapon beneath this water. Everything is allowed, there was no specific information on the house, but you had check every house as if it were a Hamas headquarters ■

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## 25 Disrupting the everyday life of residents

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2005

► Normally when they say “disruption” it refers to terrorist activity. You disrupt terrorist activity. When you explain what that means – what is disruption, why don’t they say thwarting or prevention? What does disruption mean? You know, there is thwarting, preventing, disrupting, responding to terrorist activity, all of that. Yeah, a lot of things that you do. You understand, like what is disruption? In general what we, the answers we gave ourselves, or the answers we got from the commanders, the big ones, is that it’s like a kind of creating a lack of routine.

### For who?

Even in our operations, so they wouldn’t know how to follow us and to give it to us. Once, it’s clear, it’s logical, to protect the patrol. But also with the...meaning all of a sudden we have a checkpoint of, like a check-post [a surprise portable checkpoint], for twenty five minutes on some road. A road that goes up towards the Avraham Avinu neighborhood. And then the minute you start this story, the guys [the Palestinians] start thinking they can’t plan anything because it’ll be disruptive. If in the middle of the night you go in for mapping, then whoever is wanted as it were, responsible for Abu Saninah, either he’ll never sleep or he’ll decide to leave Abu Saninah [neighborhood], he’ll decide to be in the neighborhood further away. That’s disruption. Disrupting the everyday life of citizens. I don’t remember, I also don’t believe that it was written for us. No, it could be that it was written in other places ■

## 26 In the middle of the night with stun grenades and flash explosives

unit: Golani Brigade · location: Jenin district · year: 2002

► So it turned out, a situation was created where there was some kind of, the company was also totally falling apart from the standpoint of discipline. The Shimshon

battalion would do the routine things, not [interaction] with the Arab population, so that everything was totally falling apart. The company commander would go around in his jeep inside the village and in the whatever, trying to create a mess. What do I mean create a mess? The idea was to draw fire, to find armed men and then kill them. So they would go into Salem in the middle of night, for example, with stun grenades and flash explosives, to do it.

#### **In vehicles or on foot?**

In vehicles, with a jeep. The forward command, I'm not talking about a mission. Without a set of orders that they went over beforehand or anything like that. They go into the village, he and all kinds of, like I don't know, adjuncts, company commanders: shooting in the air, throwing stun grenades, just like that...people come outside, throw stones. I remember the strategy was, like their theory was, that if you draw the incidents away from the road, like in general our objective was to protect the road, so as long as I distance the incidents from the road then nothing will happen on the road itself. So that's how it was ■

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## 27 Slapping, pushing, all kinds of things like that. Everyday

**unit:** Lavi Battalion · **location:** Hebron district · **year:** 2002-2003

► There was some thing with a retarded kid, really mentally disabled, who threw stones from some hill near Kvasim road. And in the end they arrested him, and it was with that same deputy company commander [he was described during the interview as violent towards Palestinians] and he said to my soldier, "OK, take him to the jeep." The soldier, who was relatively small, grabbed him [the Palestinian] by the shoulder. The soldier was OK, and the guy started wrestling with him and it was really hard for him, the small soldier, to control the 16 year-old boy. So I threw him to the ground. During the altercation my weapon hit him in the mouth and broke his tooth or something. He started bleeding and going crazy. Finally I was able to control him. All of his cousins, and uncles, and his



parents, I don't know what, they came, his whole clan, some four adults, adult men, and the deputy company commander threatened them that the next time he sees the kids there: "I don't care, if he throws a stone or doesn't throw a stone I'm going to kill him." And the kid, his whole face is filled with blood. And they say: "What, he's retarded and his hand doesn't work" – he had a very, very strong right hand, because it worked, the left hand was just, it had a kind of delay, it didn't function. "He can't throw a stone," etc., etc. And he threatened the parents. We released the kid and he just grabbed a huge stone and almost hit the deputy company commander. The deputy company commander and he started fighting a bit and the kid took a lot of hits, the whole time he's bleeding from his mouth from the cut he got from me. But the thing with the violence, I think, it wasn't how harsh it was, it was how common it was. It got to the point where there almost wasn't a day where he didn't hit or threaten to hit. Most of the time it did come in the form of slapping, pushing, all kinds of things like that. Every day ■

## 28 Purposeless arrests

**unit:** Nahal Brigade · **location:** Ramallah/Hebron district

**year:** 2008-2009

► We also had arrests that we were tired of. There was a feeling that they were purposeless, for example looking for people who cut the fence or people who threw stones or were identified at demonstrations against the fence or inciters. It was a feeling of purposelessness. If in Hebron there was a feeling that you were arresting an unfortunate person, the feeling here was that we were doing nothing. There was one arrest, I don't remember in which village it started heating up, and there was chaos and I remember the company commander cocked his weapon and said they need to calm down, and the Shin Bet came in the middle of the village among a few houses of a large family.

### **What happened in the end?**

They took who they needed and that was it.

There was a feeling that we were doing nothing...I had to take the detainees many times to Camp Ofer...The guy sat there bound with his eyes covered

**What was the range of ages of those guys?**

15-16 up to 23-24.

**And you said people who cut the fence, threw stones, and were identified at protests?**

Yes.

**Protests in Na'alín?**

No, from protests in the area. I remember one of my hardest experiences there, I had to take detainees many times to Camp Ofer [detention facility] and like I said before, the right hand and the left hand of the army are two different entities... I had to take him to the battalion's base for a night until the vehicle would arrive, the Safari. In the meantime I went to bed. The guy sat there bound with his eyes covered, I said to the guard at the gate that they shouldn't do any nonsense, they gave him water and we covered him with a sleeping bag because it was cold then. I remember that it was terrible, because Camp Ofer opens at a certain time and we waited there and the driver was sick and the feeling of seeing him was terrible, he had to pee and [and I had to] stand next to him with the weapon.

**How long did he sit like that handcuffed and blindfolded?**

A few good hours. Until they took him and then it was over. No one knew what to tell me to do with him. Total chaos. We waited at Camp Ofer and he sat in the Safari and I didn't sleep many hours the night after the arrest.

**Were there those who just "dried out"?**

There is an anxiety that always exists, both in Hebron and Rantis. The basic things – sitting in a room with someone guarding, tying the hands, covering the eyes and giving food or water and covering – that they always give. It wasn't a question. There were the right-wingers who felt it was too much and the left-wingers who...and you ask yourself maybe we are being too kind. The standards of evil and good deteriorate there, I think that's the thing that is most difficult, in Hebron it was sharp, there it's black and white, everything that is good and bad, but the day to day is very gray. Every person that you stop, his kid didn't do anything, and the feeling is that you destroyed his kid.

**The guys you arrested?**

The dilemma is daily; you leave the gate on a patrol, part of your basic presence there. I had a dilemma. But in these areas it is more points of extremes of how nice you are.

What it means to be humane is very unclear.

**What I ask is, for those whom there was a dilemma about, were they people you arrested or you just “dried out”?**

In Hebron it was, again, I don't know, because in Hebron there were also those who stole metal, 7 year-old kids who wanted to steal metal, and all they did was steal metal to sell because they didn't have any money at home so they crossed the road they were forbidden to cross, because the Shuhada street separates between the Jewish settlement and the Casbah and they are allowed to be in Abu Sanina and the Casbah, and they are forbidden to be in between. So they would capture them and the police had nothing to do with them, and you sit them for two hours at the gate. You don't have a way to deal with it or to solve it, so you dry them out. Maybe how I see things is very distorted compared to what they are on the day to day. I don't know. My aunt is a psychologist and she said to me that in order to understand it you need to get out of it completely and I can't tell you what's good and what isn't, because I don't have all of the tools ■

## 29 The investigator gave him a deadly beating

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Unspecified · year: 2001

► At the beginning we had prisoner interrogators from \*\*\* [intelligence unit], they were at the beginning of the incidents. They were very patriotic reservists. Yeah, and they were on our team. What did they do? They beat people up. A lot. Terrible slapping, hard shakes, yelling, scaring. To us they were the Shin Bet agents and they knew what they were doing. Sometimes they crossed the line in my eyes.

### Like what?

Like some ear-ringing slaps to someone who claimed he had no idea about something, about where his brother is. Crazy slaps. Crazy. He broke his jaw I think. Really, in my life I had never seen it, and I've seen a lot.

### Where did it happen?

It happened at the end of 2001. I really don't remember. We were searching for his

Sometimes they  
crossed the line  
in my eyes...crazy  
slapping. Crazy.  
He broke his jaw  
I think. Really, in  
my life I had never  
seen it, and I've  
seen a lot

wanted brother, and he didn't know where he was. The interrogator took him to a side room and gave him a deadly beating. Crazy slaps. And he argued that he didn't know. So either he survived the interrogation or he really didn't know. One of the two.

**Did you encounter things like that a lot? Was it routine?**

Yes, it was pretty...it was dependent upon the interrogator. There are more violent interrogators and there are less violent interrogators. There are interrogators who speak quietly and frighten them and there are interrogators who yell like crazy. The Arabists on the team didn't serve as interrogators, meaning they wouldn't apply moderate physical force on the one being interrogated. They spoke with them in Arabic, made announcements in their homes, spoke Arabic, trying to understand the situation.

**Not beyond that?**

No. We are an ethical army ■

## 30 The guys slaughtered his chicken

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Jenin district · year: 2002

I remember  
them coming  
back happy after  
their meal...Two  
grilled chickens...  
the owner of the  
house, he was  
locked-up in some  
room... they turned  
a blind eye to it

► We were in some house, the whole company, and below the house, and the owner of the house, he was locked-up in one room too, he had some chickens... one floor was a coop for chickens, pullets. What the guys did, they simply, they wanted to cook a meal so they slaughtered some of his chickens and barbecued them downstairs. Yeah, this is what they did, I remember them coming back happy after their meal. Two grilled chickens, down on that floor.

**Were there officers, commanders?**

No, there were no officers with them, it was, I think . . . I knew, everybody knew about it. You can say they turned a blind eye to it, I believe, but they were not actually with them. Those were veteran soldiers, from August '99.

**Yes, veterans.**

Yeah, they did what they fucking wanted ■

## 31 The guys set up like a pipe, to pee

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2002

► There is a house we captured in Hebron...we captured a house. You know the procedure, the family moves a floor down. Now, what did we do? We were...the guys set up, they set up a pipe to pee, it was on the third floor, to pee outside. They put the pipe, we put the pipe so that it would exactly, all the pee would flow into the courtyard of the house below us. There were a few chicken coops right there, everything just poured out there. That was the daily joke. Waiting for the father and one of his kids to go to the coop and then everyone stands and pees down [on them]. Or I just remember a friend that liked brushing his teeth and he would wash his mouth with a canteen, and then wait for someone to pass underneath and then spit on them, spit outside.

### It's part of...

It's part of your possibilities, yes, it's just part of your possibilities. No one can prevent you from doing it, to my dismay not even the commanders in the field because most of them are part of the majority and not the exceptions. It's just within the realm of your possibilities. You can, so you choose to do it, or choose not to do it. There is no judge and no judgment. There is no one to judge you for it ■

That was the daily joke. Waiting for the father and one of his kids to go to the coop and then everyone stands and pees down [on them]. There is no judge and no judgment. There is no one to judge you for it

## 32 To take control of some family

unit: Field intelligence · location: General · year: 2004-2006

► When I was an officer, in the beginning, I was very concentrated on the mission they gave me. They gave me the mission and I was in it the whole time. And afterwards there was a period in which my soldiers were already, I relied on them in the way that they could be in control of the mission and I was very...I moved to the side of where we would gather the family, I would sit with them.

### With the family?

You see that they don't have, that they are the most innocent in the world...it's as if the army says that like there isn't, this is the last resort...and then the brigade commander says: "you take control of this house and this house, and this one and that." And you say: "Why don't you think of something else? What are you doing here at all?"

Yes, talking with them, you know, talking about...I would even give them some of our food. It's packaged precisely, you know, everyone counts his half a tuna, you can't carry too much because you are there for three days, and I would give them the food because they didn't have anything.

**For the family?**

Yes. They have nothing. And you sit with a family and you live with them. You are with them for three days, it's a ton. It's not an hour or two. Maybe infantrymen spend a few hours, I don't know.

**They stay in the room the whole time or you release them sometimes?**

That's it; that was our problem, when there is no bathroom in the house. Normally there is a soldier who accompanies them one by one when they want to go to the bathroom. He goes, accompanies them, is with them in the bathroom. It's the same thing when the mother wants to cook food, then he goes with her into the kitchen. The truth is it has to be an inside room so there are no windows to exit from or yell or I don't know what, so they won't hear outside.

**Was it a covert entry in the house, or do you set up a lookout even if they see you?**

No, it's covert. They don't know we are inside.

**It's a kind of kidnapping basically.**

Yes.

**Three days.**

It's as if the army says that like there isn't, this is the last resort. And OK, so the family will be under a kind of confinement.

**But afterwards they'll tell people.**

Yes, they'll tell people afterwards, even though they won't know what we did. We went into their house and left, they don't know what we did inside. They go into a certain room and there is another room from which we carry out our mission. They don't see and they don't know and they have no connection to it.

**Were there ever people who complained, who said they don't want you to come in?**

Never...that doesn't happen. You go in.

**If you were to come into my house I would...**

Of course. You enter with a full team in the middle of the night with weapons, OK? And they don't know what...Our faces are colored or something like that, so first of all you are in shock for a few hours. Then the whole family enters the room. There isn't, I never encountered any resistance or anything like that.

**What did you do when the bathroom was outside?**

So you had to...I don't know, they had to relieve themselves somewhere.

**Inside? In the room?**

So that's it, I don't remember exactly what our solution was. We certainly found some solution. But generally it's, even if you planned to be there for two days, it could be that after a day we couldn't survive it because it was impossible, because of that we had a problem. That's it, and then you see there is, you get it, and then you start asking, being provoked. And then you arrive at the situation assessment after you were in all kinds of incidents like that, and then...

**Afterwards, when you are already an officer, or after a few days?**

You are an officer, you go through all of these incidents, of this poor family, who you see have nothing, who are the most innocent in the world, who barely know Hebrew, nothing. You know, sometimes he goes to the city, he can say a few words. But they don't have...they are illiterate. They don't know anything, they don't have any connection to anything. So then you say, you gain perspective when afterwards you get to some situation assessment and the brigade commander says: "Yes, you take control of this house and this house, and this one and that." And you say: "Like what, why don't you think of something else? Maybe, "I don't know what, what are you doing here at all? Why is the army here at all?"

**It's not their job to think about why the army is here.**

Yes, of course. No, but easily you...if they decide only to do a demonstration of presence, OK? So go on a patrol or I don't know what, there are a lot of military solutions. No one made it that you have to take control over some family and do a demonstration of presence.

**Did you demonstrate presence by entering homes?**

Yes, of course ■

## 33 Moving human shield

unit: Civil administration · location: Bethlehem district  
year: 2002

He just stopped  
a 40-something  
Palestinian,  
passing by, tied  
him to the hood  
of the jeep, the  
guy was just lying  
on the hood, and  
drove with him  
into the village...no  
one threw rocks  
anymore

► I'm not getting into the description right now of the day-to-day, because if you spoke with soldiers who served in the field you certainly know all the games of there is/there isn't electricity in the village, and shooting at the water containers and "hours on exit" at the checkpoints [i.e. detaining Palestinians at the checkpoints for offenses which are not reported to the police] and other things like that. That every soldier who served in the territories knows and knows that it has become a kind of norm. What I will [talk about], there are two incidents which upset me, A., because they were very serious in my eyes, and B., because they were done by officers in the paratroopers. One was done by captain \*\*\*, and the other a first lieutenant, when the captain was a company commander in the paratroopers. The majority of the complaints came to us in the end, they flowed to us. I'm talking about a complaint that came to us one day that happened at the entrance to the village Takua, an entrance that we weren't at and because of it, it happened, because we weren't at the entrance. They went in without telling us, the soldiers, which is completely against the directives. A totally unbelievable complaint: IDF soldiers tied a Palestinian to the hood of the jeep and drove with him through the roads of the village. The complaint just seemed so illogical. We turned to their operations room, they said: "We'll look into it and get back to you." It never happened. We said to them: "it never happened." They said to us: "yes, it happened, look into it." It was illogical, but a complaint like that, you can't make it up. You can make up a complaint about a delay at a checkpoint, but this is such a seemingly outrageous complaint, that apparently it happened, it can't be they made something like that up. My commander, a lieutenant colonel, together with another officer went out there.

### Were you there?

I was at the DCL and I was in the investigation and I know the guy that did it and everything, and in the end he admitted it. They went there, and again we got the response that it never happened. We started the investigation, started speaking with soldiers. Apparently that captain went out to Takua, which is a pretty hostile village, they threw stones at the jeep. He just stopped a 40-something Palestinian, passing



by, tied him to the hood of the jeep, the guy was just lying on the hood, and drove with him into the village. No one threw rocks anymore.

**A human shield.**

Yes. But not a human shield – a human shield is from the start a terrible word – a moving human shield. He tied him to the hood of the jeep and drove with him. He drove with him through the village, which is terrifying. That officer, by the way, a month before we went out into that village, Takua, gave an instruction to his soldiers to stand on the hilltop, again the same captain, I don't want to screw him personally but all of the incidents are written and recorded, it's recorded and documented at the DCL and it got to the newspapers, at least the story with the jeep. He admitted it and he was sentenced to two weeks incarceration and he was dismissed from his command position.

**Which battalion was it?**

I don't want to just say. It was a battalion that sat in Beitar Ilit there, I don't remember which battalion exactly.

**When was this?**

In the middle of my service, something like that, March-April. But it was a captain in the paratroopers, it was an incident that made it to the media, to the newspapers. I'm almost sure 101, but I don't want to just say. I remember I worked with them the most, they were there most of the time. But in any case, that same guy, a month before we went into Takua. And you have to understand, they go out on patrols in Takua, it's legitimate. Both to locate vehicles and to demonstrate presence. He gathered everyone and said: "Guys, I'm putting three snipers on the hilltop, and I'm stopping with the jeep in the heart of the village." What he tried to create was for everyone to congregate around him and start throwing rocks. He said, "I don't respond to rocks. When enough people gather, the soldiers on the hilltop will take out their legs." The Palestinians didn't know there were soldiers behind them, and the soldiers would just spray their legs [with gunfire]. It was only prevented because I was there and another officer was there and we just prevented it. We reported it but it was smoothed over. It was just shocking. His entire goal was to lure Palestinian children, just to cut off their legs. It was also terrifying. It's the same captain who led the incident we were talking about ■

## 34 We once caught some kid

unit: Armored corps · location: Baka a-Sharqiya · year: 2000

We explained to him with the help of the barrel of the gun what he needed to do... And the logic that was behind it was that we wouldn't do it, because it's too dangerous for us to do it

► I was on the front in Baka right when the Intifada began, really one weekend, one week you see a teeming village filled with life, everything full of Israelis shopping for the Sabbath, and then afterwards there is a kind of sudden switch, the place turns into a ghost town where no one would dare leave their house...In principle you are at a checkpoint and the main road of the village is also the road that leads to Mevo Dotan and Hermesh, we had to keep the road open so they could go, so it would stay open and every now and again they would, the Palestinians would come and at a distance not far from the checkpoint they would place burning tires, they would put in anything they could get their hands on: tires, furniture, everything... they would block...sometimes they would make a few of them a distance of a few hundred meters from the checkpoint, not too big, and the practice was with something like this to remove, to open it and the logic that was behind it was that we wouldn't do it, because it's too dangerous for us to do it, because there is no way to know if there was an explosive inside, and it was impossible to know if there was a sniper standing on one of the hilltops waiting for us to bend over and not be ready and then shoot at us. The logic was to grab random people on the street and explain to them that they had to do it. We grabbed all kinds of people, it just depended on who was there at that moment. Sometimes it was just older people, sometimes it was just people walking in the street, and my story is that one time we grabbed a kid, not a big kid, a 10 or 12 year-old boy, something like that, we explained to him with the help of pointing with the barrel of the gun what he has to do, meaning waving the gun, showing him what to do. The situation that was created was like...there is a little boy behind him, a patrol jeep, and three soldiers aiming their weapon at him and he [the boy] has to go and remove, he has to remove the blockade, these blockades. And he's working and crying...and removing the blockades, and we go and point our weapons, and he goes to the next one and like that...then the patrol jeep commander that was with me decided that maybe they'd do something like that down the road, something

which is of course not logical at all, because you leave the village from there, so there is no chance it would happen, and he says to me maybe there is something down the road, we'll take him with us. Inside the patrol jeep there is no place to put the boy so what he does is he throws him in the back, my friend and I sat in the back of the patrol jeep and the boy is strewn between us on our legs and our equipment and the grenades, and he's crying the whole time, while he's lying down on us, and on the equipment and our feet. I felt through his pants that he was peeing out of fear. And he's crying and lying between two soldiers in the patrol jeep, after 10 kilometers from the village when it was completely clear that apparently they did not walk 10 kilometers with furniture to make a blockade, the commander decided that it was enough, you can take him out, he stopped the jeep, he got out and came to the back, pulled the kid out, threw him on the side of the road, crying again, with wet pants, to walk 10 kilometers back, and we kept going to the settlements that were there ■

## 35 You could do whatever you want: no one would ask

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2002

► ...there was another mission with an APC, imposing curfew, going around, driving wherever you like. Destroying their streets just like this...

### **What do you mean destroying their streets?**

The APC drives on it and destroys the streets.

### **What, with cars and such things?**

Sometimes they went for it and sometimes they wouldn't. Sometimes you drive over cars and sometimes...

### **Military necessity?**

No, no military necessity.

**No, I mean, if you want to enter some place and a car is in the way, then we have a military necessity.**

We were inside  
the city, you would  
shoot at whatever  
you wanted. We  
would shoot at  
streetlights...you  
would shoot near  
this...one time we  
drove over a  
moving car

No, no, by mistake... you cannot see, the place is too narrow... at that time we could do whatever we wanted. We would shoot, we would stand at the blocking point, the abandoned house, and you could see people from 1 kilometer or 500-600 meters ahead before they arrive, and they don't hear you and you don't have the energy to yell at them to turn back before they get there, and you don't have the energy to speak with them and throw them back. So you try to push them back, so that they won't come near at all. So what do you do? Shoot near them.

**Live ammunition?**

Live ammunition. Back then we would use only live ammunition. We were inside the city, you would shoot at whatever you wanted. We would shoot at streetlights...you would shoot near this...you would shoot a warning shot, shoot in the air, you didn't need authorization from someone higher than the commanding sergeant, nothing. They would ask you on the communication radio, the company, the battalion. You would say "I did it – OK". No one would ask why, no one would ask anything. At some stage we were inside Hummers, armored Hummers. We would impose curfew in a city where no one really obeys you when there is curfew. We would crash into running cars...

**I don't understand.**

You...cars go by, and then the driver sees you, realizes that they have to get back, that they cannot drive, so they start going in reverse, and you go faster, so you drive over them, with an armored Hummer, crash into it.

**Did it happen to you, in your Hummer?**

I was in a Hummer when this happened.

**How many times?**

I, specifically – once. And other than the sergeant who was with me in the Hummer, no one knew about it.

**Do you know if this happens a lot in the company?**

If not this, it happens very often that you take them out of the car and beat them, so that they understand that there is a curfew.

**What do you mean, "beat them"?**

You know, a few hits, a few kicks. "Come here, shut up! Why are you here, why...and then "Yalla, get lost and go home!"

**Do you know if it happened another time with the Hummer?**

With the Hummer? No.

**Who was present at that specific event?**

We were with an armored Hummer. Four people: a commander, a driver, me and another one. And I would like to say that at the time I was only eight or nine months into my service...I had no awareness. It looked OK to me, all this. It looked OK with everything happening around you so you're not aware at all...We came down the hill, and he came to the junction, started going in reverse, and escaped from us.

**Did the sergeant give the order?**

Yes. "Chase, chase him." And the driver, he had no doubts whatsoever. A driver from the company, a combat soldier. And then the car got stuck, because there's traffic in the city...we drive in front of him and just keep going.

**The Hummer just went on top of the car?**

It didn't crush it, it went on top of the hood. And then we jumped out of the Hummer, we pulled the driver out, I don't believe his car was destroyed. You catch the person, put him against the wall, immediately start...the car that made him stop comes from the back. He was a photographer. So he immediately started taking pictures. My sergeant got pissed off, and all that, and took his film and photographer ID.

**Was it a foreign photographer?**

No, Arab. But yes, a journalist card. And took his film. No one knew. No one...you have no inquiry after the mission, you don't have...that was a time...like the Wild West. You could do whatever you wanted and no one asked you and no nothing.

**And in that case, didn't you tell the sergeant something like: "You know, this car...this is wrong...and..."?**

No, I didn't realize I was doing something wrong. I mean, you don't have the awareness. I...I don't know. It sounds stupid, but you don't know how what you're doing is bad. Only later, maybe after two years, maybe after you become a commander, and you become more balanced, grown up. You start realizing what you did there. I'm not saying I'm the one who...but I saw my friend putting them against the wall, and these are 30, 40 year-olds, and not...I said, wow, but I didn't see the red light. I said, what a stinking reality this is, and that's it. Going around the city, doing nothing, yelling. And sometimes

we would have with us a border police Jeep. Just like that. They would stop, see an open shop, and beat the hell out of everyone. Just standing them up. It was amazing, I remember it. We stopped and stood in front of an open shop when there was still a curfew. The border police guys, right away the commander opens his door and puts everyone in a line, they all know very well how to stand. They say “Why are you...” bang, bang, two slaps, go home, like that eleven people, two slaps in the face ■

## 36 We crushed tens of cars

unit: Armored corps · location: Jenin · year: 2003-2005

You flutter, the only solution was to drive up on the cars...there is zero care taken with the road itself. It just doesn't interest you...

### ► Did you go in with tanks into Jenin?

There were a few times when we went into Jenin with tanks, it's very difficult.

### Why?

Because if you get into the technical details, a Merkavah IV weighs, it's a tank that weighs nine tons. And when you try to go up with a vehicle that weighs nine tons with a caterpillar track on asphalt and it won't go, then you try to grab on to anything you can...

### It certainly swerves left and right?

No, you go up on cars. You just run over cars.

### Oh, I thought that was for fun.

No, no. The driver would never choose, at least my driver would never choose to drive up on a car for fun. It wasn't...people didn't look at it as fun, but, you know...there is a certain feeling of satisfaction when you drive up on a car and what you, like, feel...it's not, you certainly don't hear it and you don't feel it. I can't explain it. It's as if you were to drive a car over...I don't know what? A mouse, that's basically the feeling, just a small jump, that's what you feel. We were in Jenin like, I don't know how we didn't lose tanks there.

### Wait, so how many cars did you destroy?

Tens.

**More than thirty?**

There was, there was some hilltop we had to capture in order to cover for the special forces, and every time we had to go up on that hill, at the end there is like an incline where you flutter, you flutter, the only solution was to drive up on the cars. When there were cars that had been crushed already then we drove up on the cars that had already...

**When you crush a car, how tall is it afterwards? How big is the car then?**

30 cm tall.

**Like that?**

Yes. It's a tank, my friend.

**So how can you, like, in the field go over it with a tank?**

In the field, yes. The tank is designed to conquer Lebanon. It's designed to capture hilly roads, the hardest ones there are. It can. The only tank in the world that can traverse the Golan in any location, on all of its crazy basalt stones. It's able to climb a meter and a half step, but tracks for asphalt, it doesn't have.

**Wait, you don't have tracks for asphalt?**

There are no tracks for asphalt.

**But wait, you had special training for combat in urban areas in the Merkavah IV, and they didn't take it into consideration?**

You had urban combat training. They don't pave a road for you.

**But it's something you take into consideration. When you enter the city, even from a technical perspective you know that if there are no cars, because they are always removing the cars, you won't be able to climb the hill.**

If you remove the cars then it will try to grab onto something else for a grip, it can go up on the sidewalk. I don't know. There is zero care taken with the road itself. None, none, the road doesn't interest you. It doesn't interest you. The only thing that interests you is getting to the...as the gunner the only thing that interested me was looking through my scope, checking that there is no one with an RPG waiting at some corner or on some roof, and then getting to our cover point and covering the team. As a driver I don't know how he felt about it, but it doesn't seem like it interested him too much. You feel so...so strong when you are inside the tank. It's not even a uniform

and a weapon...it's a new 2003 model, oiled killing machine. It doesn't interest you. You don't care. It doesn't affect you. And they don't teach you for it to affect you, to make it affect you.

**They don't talk about it? They don't say, "guys, there are safe methods"?**

Yes, they talk about safety. The safety is more about the gunner and the driver. The safety is awareness in the field that our soldiers are there. The safety is that we are making a "diamond." A diamond is when we take four roads and create a kind of sterile area which infantrymen can enter. So safety yes, but regarding....no. There aren't even that many rules of engagement. Everything is the gunner, everything is the gunner. Things like that...listen, it's a tank in urban combat, a tank is not built for urban combat.

**So why do they bring you in there?**

Because we are like a moving fortress. We, the point that every terrorist always wants to destroy, will always draw fire, especially away from the infantrymen who are much more vulnerable than we are. Like we are always the safest point inside the Palestinian city. We are the thing that you, like, cannot destroy as it were. The vehicle that in any situation you can evacuate the wounded to, you can do everything, just not in an urban area, especially not in a gigantic tank like the Merkavah IV ■

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## 37 The commander decided: every car we pass, we'll put a burst of gunfire in

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2002

► We left with the squad commander to patrol in an APC. We patrolled in the APC in one of the neighborhoods, I think it was Jabal Shimali in Nablus. And then in the middle of the patrol, my team commander decided that every car that we see is potentially a suspicious car bomb. He decided this in the middle of the patrol, it just popped up in his head, I don't know, out of boredom, out of whatever, and we had to neutralize the threat, and therefore we had to put a machine gun burst in every



car we passed. And that's what we did. We drove on the road, through an entire neighborhood in Nablus, every car that was parked, we shot a MAG burst in. Like this, car by car, rat-tat-tat, like that. An entire road, entire roads, cars. I remember that I really enjoyed it because I got to shoot the MAG, but my thought after, it just shows you how much some person, in the middle of a city, shooting the MAG at cars, just because some squad commander decided, because that's what he felt at that moment. I don't think he did it because it was fun, I think he really believed that we were inspecting suspicious cars. But, just because, we didn't get an order to do it, it was something he made up. Everyone, every officer, does what he thinks is right. Or every commander. Total anarchy. Of course no one checked us. We asked for permission to fire, yes, before and after, but of course we got it.

**And what was the reason for the permission?**

He said "I want to fire to at a suspicious object." Ok, you have permission, go ahead, shoot. We went, we shot car by car, and you shoot at cars, behind the cars are houses, and a MAG is not precise, so sometimes you hit a house, and maybe a bullet goes in a window. Who knows what you did ■

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## 38 I shot at an ambulance with a machine gun

unit: Paratroopers · location: Hebron · year: 2000

► It went on like that for some period of time. We exchanged crazy fire with the auxiliary company. Like they shot, we shot back, they shoot at us...the helping company arrives and the company commander decided that there is no such thing as firing in our sector. The auxiliary company is here to show who is boss. We set up posts, meaning on all the rooftops – our whole suppressive fire force – machine guns, rocket launchers, MAGs in every corner, as big a holding force as possible. I had both a heavy machine gun and an RPG. I had a lot of junk. No one wanted to carry the heavy machine gun, so they told me, "go do the heavy machine gun course." And I said, "I'm an RPGer" – there weren't any RPGers at that time. It was a relatively new

We would shoot a "fire-storm" at the neighborhoods...I would shoot so many bullets at night, but at houses, not at dead areas. I have no idea what I did with those bullets. It could be that I even killed people. I still don't know because they didn't tell me...And it's known there were casualties in those fire-storms

field, not so new, but relatively new in the company. They said, "you are an RPGer, OK, go down to the heavy machine gun post." It was really fun for me, because I was young and we would have kitchen duty like crazy. The machine gun post means I would come for two hours, shoot the machine gun which is hilarious, sleep for five hours, wait at the post for further reports. If there was nothing I would go back to the company. If there was something I would wait to sleep there some more. It was a post on a roof in the middle of a neighborhood next to Tel Rumeida.

#### **After being shot at how would you fire back?**

Bullets, even flares, it didn't matter. Whatever was heard in the sector, immediately there was fire-storm back at the neighborhoods.

#### **Just like that?**

Just like that, do you understand how stupid it is?

#### **They didn't know what was happening...**

For the most part we didn't identify the source of the fire. At first it was towards targeted locations, like if we identified the source of the fire, we would open fire at the source of the fire. At a certain point the company commander decided it wasn't enough. "OK, so whenever there is a fire-storm, everyone shoots." You get the sectors where they have to shoot, mostly dead areas.

#### **Which neighborhoods did you shoot at?**

Abu Sanina, I don't remember the names of the neighborhoods. We were in Tel Rumeida. Everything that looks over the other side wasn't fired at. The second side in all three neighborhoods that were there, large, all posts firing. Every roof post, every lookout post, everyone fires. All the guys in their posts saying, "Whoa, everyone is firing." No one knew that I was also firing. Everyone fires! There is no one who didn't fire. My friend went on the radio and says to me, "come meet me for a second at the intersection." I was at one post and he was at another. I go down to meet him. "Bro, you have to bring me a magazine and supply me. I ran out of bullets." And he didn't even have anything to shoot at. You would just look out into an area. We would shoot bullets, we would shoot into windows, no reason...you know, sniping for an objective, as a joke.

#### **This was all during, like, October?**

It was at the beginning, right at the beginning, the first weeks, you know. Just shooting as a joke. Everyone was shooting so no one knew I was shooting too. Everyone fires!

**There was no supervision over who was shooting, when they shot? Where they were shooting?**

There was supervision, but there isn't a commander at every post. At most of the posts there are no commanders, so wherever there are no commanders, you do what you want, get it?

**And where there are commanders...?**

They navigated the fire, but it was also very random. I was at the heavy machine gun post. There was a sector battalion commander with me sometimes, the battalion commander of the border police in the sector, who was totally crazy. He was sick in the head. He would go to me, "shoot there, shoot there, shoot there." And I unleash in all directions without discretion. There was also my company commander and my deputy company commander, like all of the head staff. There was a booth in the lookout post, two lookouts, the gunner which was me and another friend of mine who helped me, an RPGer and a friend of his helping him, because it's always teams of two. Now, during one of the ambushes we would switch, me and my friend, both of us gunners. So he took the heavy machine gun and fired. We would shoot something like 400 bullets a night.

**Would you open fire only when fired upon or was there also fire to prevent?**

Once or twice there was general fire, before, you know, to open the evening as it were, to show them that we started the night tonight. But most cases were responses to fire. But sometimes there was no fire, it was just an explosion. We would hear "pop," and we would start to shoot. OK, there was an ID of a building "blah, blah, blah," great, they are starting to shoot. So you shoot.

**Do you know if you cause damage? Did you hit someone?**

We blew up a car. I was going to tell you that same night when my friend fired, then we shot at street lamps. We had to take the streetlight out, so he shot towards the streetlight, he wasn't able to hit it precisely. All of a sudden we realize there's a fire behind the lamp, like a small spark and then a bonfire. It was a long distance, a kilometer and something, and then the lookouts started cracking up. They go to us,

“come look,” because they had a recording device...they rewound, showed us that behind the streetlamp there was a car, us shooting at the light...all of a sudden boom. The car blows up. Like a parked car, not driving, and then the company commander comes into the picture, he goes crazy. “Wow, I want to blow up a car.” Every car he saw, “blow it up for me.”

**What does that mean? Parked Cars? For no reason?**

At first it was parked cars, and then it was any car there was a warning about. We weren't sure if that was the car, but there was a warning so we had to blow it up too.

**It was also driving?**

It sped away from us. We shot at it while it was driving.

**There was a person driving inside?**

Presumably yes. But the claim was that he was transporting terrorists at that moment. We don't know what really happened. We did what they told us to do. But the claim was that at that moment there were terrorists inside who were running.

**You fire on it with the heavy machine gun?**

With the heavy machine gun and the RPG. The RPG missed like crazy, so we fired only with the heavy machine gun. The thing was we didn't succeed in repeating the blowing up of the car. It succeeded one time by accident, and it didn't succeed the other time.

**Did you hit cars?**

I don't know.

**The one that was speeding?**

It kept speeding. It sped away from us in the end. It could be that we hit it but it sped away. We don't know, because you can't know if you hit it unless you see something happen. We don't know. You know, if a light goes out, or the car stops speeding or something like that. Now there were all kinds of theories. The commanders started running with ideas – “No, you have to fire two bullets and then one more to blow up the trunk, the gas tank.” All kinds of theories about how to blow up a car. No one was able to recreate it. We gave up on it.

**Were there investigations of these incidents?**

I don't know. I have no idea. There was a lot of massive fire. There was one night

where they claimed that there was fire coming from the tallest building, every night. I didn't know where they were shooting from, because, you know, I would hear the "pops". I didn't know where the shooting was really coming from. They said to me, "shoot up the building. Shoot as much as you can." I shot and shot and shot. The building caught on fire.

### **A building people were living in?**

I imagine that at a certain point they lived in it. After we started, I don't think they lived there anymore, because we shot inside the building itself. Apparently I hit one of the curtains or something like that...the window started burning and then the house started burning. We called the firemen. They said "cease fire," and they put out the mess, and there was some ambulance there and they reported it was transporting terrorists. That same night we didn't do anything about it and then later they continued telling us that the ambulance was transporting terrorists all the time. The same ambulance is the one bringing the people who were shooting at us and then would bring them back afterwards. And then that ambulance came with one of the Arabs and we got permission to shoot at it, so we shot at the ambulance. It was very far away. I have no idea if I hit it or not, but I opened fire with a heavy machine gun on an ambulance. You get it? Like that's what they told me to do...I met with the deputy company commander of that time a little while ago during reserve duty. I came to do two days of reserve duty and then I said, "I can't anymore." I went home. I met him. It seems as if he's my officer now as it were but I didn't go, but he should be my officer. So I reminded him of it, "do you remember that ambulance we shot at?" So he goes: "We shot at an ambulance. That's what we had to do. There was a terrorist there." Like, he's an officer. He's still in the mindset of, "that's what they told me. That's what has to be done." And I like smiled and thought – he's fucked. You don't get that we shot at an ambulance. So what if there were terrorists inside. It's still...what it means – we shot at an ambulance...I have no idea. I had a heavy machine gun. I would shoot so many bullets at night, but at houses, not at dead areas. I have no idea what I did with those bullets. It could be that I even killed people. I still don't know because they didn't tell me. And it's known there were casualties in those fire-storms. It's known.

### **What does that mean, "known"?**

Because the DCL [District Coordination Liaison] was constantly in contact with us ■

## 39 It definitely happened that we sent half a block there flying

unit: Engineering corps · location: General · year: 2001-2002

We wouldn't leave  
100 kg explosives  
in the APCs and  
bring them back to  
the base. We'd lay  
the stuff, you get  
me?...You've got  
to understand it's  
nearly impossible  
to take down a  
house without  
damaging the  
adjacent houses

► I did see that we were laying some explosive system in a house, and half the block was blasted. Half a block.

### But that's not supposed to happen.

There's no supervision, no control. Again, it's not some combat procedure that had been practiced for a month. There's not always an engineer to come along and tell us how much to place everywhere. Say we wouldn't leave 100 kg explosives in the APCs and bring them back to the base. We'd lay the stuff, you get me? If we brought along half a ton and we got there and realized we need only 400 kg? We'd lay the surplus mines as well.

### What for?

Because it's more convenient that way, because it's more convenient for the unit, you know, to make sure the mission is accomplished. That's what I'm telling you about the feelings I had. As for my commander, from the army's perspective – the main point is for that house to come down. That's what counts, not sparing explosives for the sake of convenience.

**You can make a hole in the ground that will get all the way to China with such a mass of explosives, but you need proportions. I mean, you're in an urban area.**

That's right, and there wasn't always a sense of proportion, that's just what I mean. It was not always supervised, usually it wasn't. There was not always an engineer along with us. You know, we'd do it on the basis of our own experience and our own sense. But the houses next to the target, often these shacks people lived in, were hit, and it definitely happened that we blew up half a street.

### Half a street?

Yes. I mean, I recall not only the targeted house being destroyed. You've got to understand it's nearly impossible to take down a house without damaging the adjacent houses.

**So is this taken into account, are people next door evacuated?**

Sometimes there are no people there, but there are no more houses.

**Did you check that there were no people there?**

Again, that was not our job, so it's hard to account ■

## 40 They threw a grenade at him, and then they put a bullet in his head

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2002-2003

► In Ramadan of 2003, or 2002, it was one of the Ramadans, we went out for an arrest. There were normal commands to open fire for a suspect, arrest procedure, etc., etc.

**Who gave them?**

The company commander, during the briefing. Again, it's all about mood. The commands to open fire, the sector brigade commander creates them. He has one or two battle procedures and he gives the command for opening fire as he sees fit. Sometimes it's, in the best cases it's the brigade commander. In the more urgent cases it's the battalion commander. He decides. There is no clear procedure as to the commands to open fire.

**But what were the commands to open fire during this incident?**

Rules of engagement – procedure for a suspect arrest. The procedure for a suspect arrest is: “Stop, stop or I’ll shoot,” Shooting in the air, blah, blah, blah...it’s never used during operations. The procedure for a suspect arrest is an expedited procedure of a suspect verification, which is “Waqf [Arabic] – Stop,” Boom. If in the second during which you yell at him to stop he doesn’t stop and put his hands up, shoot to kill.

**Meaning there is no shooting at the legs? No shooting in the air?**

Stop, boom. When many times the “stop” is for protocol.

They shot him.  
They verified the  
killing...the guy had  
a drum in his  
hand. What did  
it turn out to be  
after the fact?  
That there is a  
custom during  
Ramadan, that at  
four in the  
morning people  
go out, and drum,  
in order to wake  
people up before  
the fast...

**Boom, stop?**

Something like that. In short, we went in for an arrest, it was during Ramadan. There was some confusion, one of the teams took up position incorrectly, we only knew this afterwards, in the debriefing. An arrest is four teams who surround the house, and there is an operation team which comes to the house. The operations team identified a man in the alley there, a man with an object in his hand. Yelled at him: "Stop." The man started running, they started shooting at him, chasing him. The man ran to the alley where one of the teams took up the wrong position, and basically a situation of friendly fire was created, where one team chased after the man and shot at him, and basically, when it shot at him it shot in the direction of another team. Now, this team, the team that wasn't chasing, basically thought they were shooting at him, and saw the silhouette and shot at it, that guy. They shot at him. Again, there was a verification of the killing with grenades.

**They shot at him, where were you at that time?**

I was on the other team.

**And you know this from the debriefing, and from the fact that they were on your team and you spoke about it afterwards?**

Yes. And I was a few meters away. I didn't see it with my eyes, I was looking at the corner of the house, but the incident happened in my presence.

**They shot at him accidentally because they thought...**

That the fire was at them. And they also saw an object in his hand, so they were afraid it was explosives. They shot at him, and did a verification of the killing.

**Who did the verification of the killing?**

Guys from the team, according to the procedure known to them as verifying a killing – they threw a grenade, after that they put a bullet in his head. The guy had a drum in his hand. What did it turn out to be after the fact? That there is a custom during Ramadan, that at four in the morning people go out, and drum, in order to wake people up before the fast. We didn't know it. If we had known it, if someone had, you get it? Not only did we, simple soldiers, not know, no one in the platoon knew it. No one in the IDF took the trouble to tell us that at such and such an hour people will go around with objects in their hand, with drums in their hand, and maybe you need to tone down the



commands to open fire, and maybe need to be more careful. No one took the trouble to tell us, and because of that this man died. Because of our ignorance ■

## 41 The commander said: "I want riddled bodies"

unit: Golani Brigade · location: General · year: 2003-2004

► There was a commander of the Egoz elite unit who used to simply say in these very words, and it was awful, he used to tell us: "I want bodies. This is what I want."

### **Do you remember a specific case of him saying that?**

I remember ten such cases. Ten cases. From his opening speech to us, and in these words he said: "I want riddled bodies." I was horrified. I also met him as a civilian, at the house of a friend who was wounded. Then he said to me: "yes, we killed 28 people. They are not really people, they are terrorists, it's OK. I know of mistakes, too, but let's put this aside." Later on we'll talk about mistakes, though it happened in a different area, but let's put this aside. This is what he wanted. This is what he said should be done. Before going out on an important mission he would say: "I want riddled bodies." And if we came back with somebody we'd killed he was happy. Just like that.

### **How was it expressed?**

It was expressed when we returned from an operation, and he'd say, "way to go for killing" ■

## 42 The division commander said: "You are measured by the number of people you kill"

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2007

### **► OK. What missions would you find there during that period?**

During that period, it would change. I think it's important to say, I remember that when

You are looking to  
kill...someone who  
wanted to succeed  
everywhere he  
was had to bring  
him dead people

I was enlisted into a patrol unit then the thinking was, I always heard friends say, what the patrol unit does, the difference between the patrol unit and the battalions, the patrol unit makes arrests. It goes to arrest people and whatever, I said great, really interesting, let's go for it, I don't want to stand at a checkpoint, let's make arrests. At some point during the service a sudden unnoticed change that the units became more extreme. What do I mean, the unit was no longer measured by the number of arrests it made. We had a conversation with a division commander when we got to the central brigade in Shomron. He said: "You aren't measured by arrests, you are measure by the number of people you kill."

**Who said that to you?**

The division commander. Above the brigade commander, the most important person.

**Which division commander of the West Bank?**

The division commander of...I don't even know how it's divided. Apparently of the West Bank.

**Do you remember which division commander it was?**

No...it was when I was a sergeant, after we finished training, it was in 2007. He said unequivocally, "this is how you are measured. With 'Xs,' I want you to strive for contact every evening, and that is how you are to be measured." That's also how the company commanders were measured. At some point I realized someone who wanted to succeed anywhere he was had to bring him dead people. He – you didn't have to bring him arrests. "Arrests are wear and tear, the battalions already make arrests. You are a spearhead, the army invested in you for x number of years, I want you to bring me dead terrorists." And that's what pushed, I believe. What we would do was go every night, draw fire, go into dangerous alleys. There were arrests, there were all kinds of arrests. But the main thing of "every night" was drawing fire, create a situation for them to fire at us. There were not "good" Arabs. Those were the ones that didn't shoot at us at all. For the most part we would go out every night, get some mission, trying to take advantage of everyone's abilities, go into a house, of course all these houses were of uninvolved people, see now I'm even using it. Of innocent people. "You go into the house, you do this, we'll try and draw..." We were a new team in the patrol unit. They really tried...he really, really wanted us...for the snipers

to kill. It really burned in him. "We will do everything, you be at the opening point and we'll make sure to draw armed men onto the roofs." That was the goal. They are situations, the angles where you get into a situation, it's hard to explain it. You are in the binoculars and looking for someone to kill. That's what you want to do. And you want to kill him. But do you want to kill him? But it's your duty. And you stay in the binoculars and you are already having mixed emotions. Do I want to? Do I not want to? Maybe I want them to miss, basically, I remember there was a night when my soldiers were on the scope, there was an armed man, and I was praying they would miss. And I'm standing next to them, saying to them: "come on," but praying that they'd miss. That they'd miss and not kill. I didn't want them to kill a man.

**Did they miss?**

They missed. They injured. But they missed...

**And during those days when you went around looking for fire, did you get fire?**

Yes.

**And then what would happen?**

First of all it depends on what point we were at. The phase inside the house is very short.

**By the way, in regards to returning fire, when you say "identifying the source of fire," is it seeing the armed man standing on a roof or the window of an apartment, or does "identifying the source of the fire" mean shooting at the house from which you know they shot from one of the windows? How precise is it?**

No, I don't think there was a situation where there was fire from the house of a window and they would spray [bullets back]. We wouldn't do things like that. But what did happen, they would do everything in order to draw fire. The situation was such that the objective was...you know, you go into some neighborhood. Your objective is to bring them outside, to cause them to go outside, in order to kill them. And it was done any way you could to draw them outside. If you saw a flash, they talked about it – is a flash enough? Yes. A flash is enough if it's from a window, there are all kinds of subtleties, I don't remember anymore, if you identify a person then you can, if you see a flash and then a person then you can, everything in order to permit the forbidden. In short, we would do everything in order to draw fire. For the most part we wouldn't

go out on a specific mission and by chance they would shoot at us. Many times it would happen that we would go out to search, and if they would shoot at us on the way to the mission we would cancel everything and look for the shooting because we already had someone with a gun, why go and look for someone else. The company commander before him, even if he wasn't righteous he was locked on a target, we would go and do something, again, maybe it was a change of perspective by the army, I don't know what's happening now, he was locked on the mission, so if there was peripheral shooting at him, then OK, you have to ignore it and continue with the mission. When I finished with him he was...that's what would draw him. The fire would draw him and he would do everything in order to get back into that fire ■

## 43 The punishment for killing a child: one hundred shekel fine

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2002

There are riots,  
you get permission  
to shoot at the  
legs of kids who  
throw bricks...they  
accidentally killed  
kids. They aimed  
at the legs – they  
shot them in the  
back and killed  
them

► We were in Balata. The scouts have permission to fire. There is a straw widow [a house that soldiers covertly take control of] and the scouts on the roof identify someone with a cell phone on the roof and they report it. If a person stands on the roof with a cell phone there is permission to fire, it's enough that the scouts identify him speaking twice on the phone and looking down, seems a bit suspicious, they get on the radio with the officer to get permission to shoot at his legs. It sometimes happens that they miss the legs, and accidentally hit the stomach. We did have cases in the city in which kids were killed, as a result of trying to hit them in the legs, but they were hit in the back, in their stomach. If there is a punishment, an officer gets fined 100 shekel for killing a child and, if we enter the city in a vehicular patrol or something, on a jeep, and stones are thrown at us and all that, you will not get permission. But if you see a kid throwing a brick at you, you can shoot him in the legs.

**He throws this at the Jeep?**

Yes.

**Is the Jeep armored?**

Absolutely. We were shot at, they threw everything at us, and nothing happened. But in the case of bricks you can shoot at the legs with permission from a captain.

**The officer at the scene?**

No, not from the commander inside the Abir [military vehicle]. It's usually a permit from the company commander. The one who shoots if I'm on my way to an arrest or in a "Livnat shibush" procedure.

**What is a "Livnat Shibush"?**

It's when you have a specific alert that there's going to be a transfer of weapons inside the city, inside Balata...if someone wants out, so they focus attention at us, we just drive a lot, make a commotion inside the city, throw a lot of stun grenades, lots of gas, just to give the impression that there's a large force, and make them scared of getting out. The idea is to make them come out towards us and cause riots. When there are riots, you get permission to shoot at the legs of kids who throw bricks, and if I happen to shoot, and I'm just a rifleman (not a sharpshooter), and I aim at the knee...

**Can any soldier shoot?**

Yes, from his personal weapon. If the commander during the procedure is a deputy company commander, he can authorize this. And if by mistake I hit him in the back or kill him, and we had this... 2-3 times just in the last service term.

**Soldiers killed kids.**

Killed kids by mistake. Aimed at the legs, shot them in the back and killed them.

**How do you know afterwards if soldiers killed them?**

Reports arrive from the DCL [District Coordination Liaison], the Palestinians report, there is cooperation in that sense. So kids get killed. It's nothing to a soldier. And for this an officer can get [fined] 100, 200 shekels.

**100, 200 shekels for a kid?**

Yes.

**Prison?**

No, no.

**A trial? Any serious inquiry about this thing?**

No. I'm sure it doesn't go above the battalion commander. I don't know of people

undergoing an inquiry. I can't say for sure...but I didn't see people undergoing an inquiry and I know nothing was done with it later...someone comes to the alert squad: "Let's go guys, there's a 'Livnat Shibush.'" "Why, what happened?" "There's an attempt to swap weapons in Balata." What do we do? Go around Balata and we can use the demonstration dispersion equipment, two stun grenades...

**Any restriction on the use of this equipment?**

None. You can be there with four stun grenades on you. We have a box of equipment inside the Abir and everyone can use as much as they want. How many rounds of gas does the grenade launcher shoot? As many as he wants. No restrictions.

**In every such vehicle there's a commander...he says where to shoot...**

No, he sits with the driver in the front, we sit in the back. "Listen, there are some kids here I'm throwing them at." "Great, chief this is 2A, the demonstration dispersion equipment is OK"... "Check, roger". You throw stun grenades, you throw gas. No authorization needed, no nothing. "I'm throwing gas", and this comes to a point when people behave like little kids: "Let me throw gas, let me throw gas."

**Do you say anything about this?**

Yes, in the company I'm in the minority. In a platoon of nine people, we were three against behaving like retarded kids every time you enter the city and throw stun grenades like...

**What do you mean by "retarded kids"?**

It's when they throw stones at you, while you're in an armored jeep, and you know nothing can happen to you. So there's no need to throw stun grenades at them, making them deaf for a month.

**The orders are to throw stun grenades at them?**

There aren't any defined orders. If there are defined orders then nobody knows them. Use of demonstration dispersion equipment – no one has ever told us anything about it. Inside the city, inside Nablus.

**Inside Nablus, you go in – you can do anything you want? With rubber bullets?**

Rubber, yes.

**Anything.**

Yes, anything. Maybe you have to report on the communication radio about rubber shooting. I never heard anyone say “no.” No matter what. Four soldiers in the back, the commander in the front, he has no idea what’s going on.

**Can you tell him, “I saw something – I’m gonna shoot”?**

As long as it’s not live bullets – anything.

**Have you guys ever shot rubber too?**

Yes, sure.

**For what?**

I myself never shot rubber, but if we were really getting taken apart, and I see that they’re standing on the roofs and throwing refrigerators and almost breaking the Jeep, we shoot rubber or live bullets in the air.

**Where do you aim rubber bullets?**

The lower part of the body ■

## 44 We killed “only” four children

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2003-2004

► Our headquarters were at the regional brigade, and we would enter the city for ambushes every time.

**When you say “every time” you mean...**

Something like 4-5 times a week. Arrests, “Straw Widow” procedures [houses which the army covertly takes control of], “Livnat Shibush” procedures [creating a diversion from a military operation].

**How many X’s does the company have?**

Hmm...we have eleven armed, I think. And something like four or five kids.

**Four or five kids?**

To the extent that at some point they told us that since we took down only four kids, they give our company missions because we are known as a company that doesn’t hit innocent civilians.

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**Who told you that?**

The company commander said it was the brigade commander. We get tasks because we know how to be selective and we don't hit the innocent.

**But these are "only" four kids...**

Only four kids...

**And these four kids were killed when?**

Between December and May.

**Between December and May - four kids.**

It's a company of 60 people that know how to distinguish...there was an operation, "Mei Menuhot", it lasted two and a half weeks, the entire brigade entered Balata. Each time for a few days. Going in, going out. I think that just there, as part of the brigade, the paratroopers, we took down a lot of civilians. We got newspapers every time and I would see that an old man was killed. We were not aware of this. They didn't tell us that the nearby force took someone down. "An old man and four children were killed in Balata because they entered a battle zone." Now, you are there, you know what a battle zone is.

**What is a battle zone?**

I don't know. The papers say Balata is a battle zone. There weren't too many shooting incidents there. But it is a battle zone...I don't know...soldiers shoot so it becomes a battle zone ■

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**45** I shot him, he was 12-15 years old,  
something like that

**unit:** Golani Brigade · **location:** Gaza strip · **year:** 2003-2006

► I finished the training track and then I went into combat, in Gaza. And there I "got the slap," as it were. All of a sudden you get what's going on. Like in the Anti-Tank unit it wasn't...it was more arrests, and straw widows, pinpointed operations. I didn't experience the drain of the checkpoints which they talk about so much, the daily



interaction and friction with the population. There was friction but it was normally through the rifle sights and less in the eyes, you know, a personal meeting.

**What was the “slap”? Like why would you get slapped? It seems like...sterile to me.**

All of a sudden you get what's going on, it's relatively sterile, but when you go into someone's house, it doesn't matter if it's the evacuation of Gush Katif or if it's a terrorist's house. It doesn't matter, rotten things happen. We talked in our conversation before the machine was turned on, before you started recording. For me less so, it's clear that I have a problem with how things are run, but it bothers me much more the place from where they are run and less so the way in which they are run. I'm not talking about we have to/we don't have to be in the territories, that's a lofty issue for me. If I had an answer then I guess I would be the prime minister. But...I'm sorry I got lost a bit, ask a directed question.

**The question was where did the slap come from.**

After about half a year into my active duty, my service as a combat soldier, a year and a half after I was enlisted, about, I say about because there wasn't a specific incident, we didn't rape refugees and we didn't beat up Arabs at the checkpoint. But you see what...basically what, because I dealt with combat bottom line and you see what the meaning of the fact that you are in an armored vehicle with infantrymen and the armored corps, and you see that the armored corps and the bulldozers don't look through other eyes, and the deputy company battalion is in the bulldozer leading the company...meaning it's the deputy battalion commander.

**What do you mean, “they don't look through other eyes”?**

He doesn't think too much, it doesn't interest him, it's just another house, to him the house can be, maybe it somehow endangers us – “Take down this house, this block, this avenue.” I don't have an explosive story about the army.

**No, it's not about an explosive story. I just want to understand your point.**

Where I got the slap? It's not that one day I got up and I had an experience and now I'm enlightened and not a combat soldier. If I had arrived at some unequivocal insight then...

**Then you would be...prime minister.**

No, then I would have left. I would have got up and left. It almost happened a few times during my service. It happened when I left the patrol company and it happened during my service as a combat soldier, my place apparently is not here and I don't believe in what I'm doing, but you stay for a thousand and one reasons, because of peer pressure, and I don't want to disappoint my parents, and I don't know what, I'm already part of the guys and I'm going to finish my service like I'm supposed to, you know, I'm here already. You know I went into Lebanon, I was almost killed because of inertia. How far is a person willing to go for the consensus? I didn't wake up early enough. I was an eighteen year-old kid, nineteen years old. What do you understand about life?

**When you see the bulldozer with the deputy battalion commander, when could you say to yourself what you are telling me today?**

I'll tell you when "I got the slap." We were on an operation in Gaza, I don't want to say routine, but it was all the time. But it's not routine at all. Every time we would go in I was...my balls would tremble with fear. On that level. You have your gear and night vision goggles and you have a thousand and one forces surrounding, but it's not pleasant at all to be in hostile territory. We were in the armored vehicle and kids got close to us and threw stones. And the orders were, the moment it gets to a distance where he can hit you with the stone, you can throw a stun grenade. It could be that it's logical when you say it. So I shot him. He was twelve, fifteen, something like that. I don't think I killed him, and I say it like that to rest my conscience, to sleep better at night, but I don't know, my slap was when I came out of distress to talk about it with my friends, with my family, what am I, in a fucking movie, I aimed at someone and shot him, in the leg, in the ass, that's what I want to think. Everyone is happy, mark an X, they made me into a hero. And it came out of the fact that I'm going crazy, I don't know what to do with myself. They announced it in the synagogue of the yishuv, I was in shock.

**What, were you in the synagogue?**

No, I don't go to synagogue. My father told me.

**What, it got out of proportion?**

They made it at least as if I had captured [Marwan] Barghouti.

**And what? What do they know? Like what do you say to them? Guys, come on, keep it in proportion?**

It's not proportion, it's an issue of spiritual degeneration. It is an issue of who you define as an enemy, it's a very complex reality, very complex. Few of us are really able to grasp its complexity. I certainly cannot. I prefer to alienate myself and move out of Israel. I can't believe that I live here. I'm going to finish my studies and get out of here. But who is your enemy in this war?

**What you saw, like in Gaza, what you said was the slap. Where was the slap? Before you talked about people destroying houses, who blow up houses and here about people who don't see that they are destroying houses.**

I...There is no specific incident that I can point to. It's the essence of war. The price of war. It's not a war against an army. It's, what the fuck are you doing there?

**And from the inertia? It'll keep going on?**

From the inertia, on a personal level I stayed there, I stayed there and I was an active combat soldier and I never once refused an order during my regular service.

**Were there orders you didn't agree with?**

I never received an order like that. I don't remember at that time, maybe now with a more mature perspective, with a more crystallized world view, I would think a thousand times. But at the time, when you are in it, it's the consensus and it's what's accepted, and it's what...it's your education. How does the military education work? They take you. You are a flower. I have the spirit of an artist. One of the things that I believe in the most is individualism and self-expression and you are who you are. The army takes you and destroys you and makes a rag out of you, and gives you the run-around during basic training, and you crawl on thorns. They rape you in the ass. And wake you up at night with tear gas, and then you attack in battle with the same person because that's the order, at the order of a commander! Because they say it demonstrates friendship, because they paint it, they wrap it in a Zionist and ethical wrapper.

**So were there operations you did then that you have doubts about now?**

It's hard for me to say. You know, because of the complexity of this reality, like saying that you didn't have to go in and arrest this person? I don't know. We didn't beat up his mother and we didn't beat him up, and if he hadn't brought it upon himself. If

he hadn't resisted, we used reasonable force. What is reasonable force? You don't break his arm but you clarify for him, maybe in not the most respectable way, who is in charge ■

## 46 Blowing up house after house

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Nablus · year: 2002

We would move  
the people away,  
and boom...blow  
up a house like...all  
of the adjacent  
house, blowing  
up a wall of two  
houses. And  
proceeding like  
that

► The incidents that I remember, that I carry with me as an unpleasant feeling, are not actually incidents where I lost myself, rather the essence of the operation carried me. For example, it was a weekend before the “worshipper’s route.” We were deployed, the company, in Nablus together with many other IDF forces in the Casbah in Nablus. The objective was to find two explosives labs. So in order that there wouldn’t...they decided it was too dangerous to advance through the alleys of the Casbah in Nablus. It is really very dangerous. What was decided was that we would go into the first house and some of the guys from the engineering corps would accompany us and just blow up our path from house to house. Now, you understand, it’s not your personal behavior, it’s the act itself. It’s just what was done there. We really went into the first house, and from house to house, house to house, same story – a demolition brick on the wall or some window, we also went around with “cold” combat gear. We would move the people away, and boom...blow up a house like...all of the adjacent house, blowing up a wall of two houses. And proceeding like that.

**And do the people in front destroy equipment? Beat up people? Did you encounter things like that?**

What I remember from the incident, from this thing, was that we were sitting, resting, in one of the Arab houses. Sitting on the sofa, and an old woman was sitting in front of us, very old...definitely up there at 80-90. She looks at us with a look of...I imagine it meant: “you came into my house, blew it up, and now you are sitting on my sofa, what, are you waiting for me to bring you something to drink?” And the two guys sitting next to me, guys from the engineering corps played some game I don’t

remember...rolling up balls from paper that was there and throwing them at her.

### **At her?**

At the old woman, yes. Then I say, “guys, seriously, a little respect.” So they say: “respect for whom? The mother of a shahid [a Palestinian martyr]? It doesn’t matter if it’s the mother of a shahid, not the mother of a shahid, an old woman is in front of you, an old man is in front of you, it doesn’t matter what his repertoire is. And I remember that they were looking at me shocked like where are you from? Where did you land from? What, are you with us? Where were you born, where did you grow up?

### **Are you with us or against us.**

Yes. A shocked look like, what do you mean? She, it’s not that we...just their look said to me: “It’s not that we are throwing paper at a human being, we are throwing it at an Arab woman, there is a big difference.” And I can’t tell you that many times during my service, if at all, again, because I think, because in Nahal it’s a bit different, I saw people who were just abusing. Also because some of the things, of the small changes I would make were in that checkpoint or that arrest or that patrol, to try to prevent things like this from happening. But I went home on the weekend, after that time in Nablus, it was the weekend that I was deployed at the “worshipper’s route” and I remember I got home and felt so dirty and impure. I’m not sure if I remember correctly, I think I just got home and I was on the verge of tears or just cried, from those three days in Nablus going from house to house and blowing up house after house ■

## **47** They would destroy the house on purpose

unit: Engineering corps · location: Bethlehem district · year: 2001

► The truth is that the worst things that I saw, Shimshon Brigade did. The house where they destroyed a wall, they looted like crazy...

### **What do you mean, “looted”?**

They, let’s say, shat on the...they shat on the couches, they stole.

### **They shat on the couches?**

They drove over  
four cars with  
the tank, they just  
went up, turned  
around, they took  
down with the back  
half of the tank  
the whole... like the  
whole entrance  
to the house. They  
just took down  
half a house

They shat on the couches before they left, they just shat on the couches, they stole suits, all of the suits that were in the closet they lifted.

**You saw it?**

I was there. I left the house with them.

**What, they put a suit in the backpack?**

No, inside the APC they just, like, threw the suits in.

**OK.**

They would leave, like on purpose, a destroyed house behind. They would turn the house upside down, like when, when the family is locked in some room...they just turn their house upside down...also how they...their arrest procedure is a very, very violent procedure...

**What do you mean? Give me a specific example.**

We encountered some...we were separate forces then, we arrived from one part, they were stuck with, with the tank in some alley, they couldn't get out. [...] Then they were with the tank, there were some four cars in front which were locked, and a porch. Like the whole entrance to the house, which was an old Arab house, and they went up with the...they went up with the tank on all the cars, of course they could have gotten out in reverse but...they decided they needed to turn around. The drove over four cars with the tank, they just went up, turned around, they took down with the back half of the tank the whole...like the whole entrance to the house. They just took down half a house, with the tank, and left. And let's say also on the same...I got there and they detained people, like there were, we would gather people and they, all the men had to come to...before we broke into the government building of the area, a commercial area, like the alleys, they informed all of the men they had to go to some place where they would all be checked, and then we would go into the government building and then they would come back. And when they got all these men, they would just...they would undress them down to nothing. Anyone who objected a bit, they would just beat him, push him, beat them up, shoot in the air...on that level. And then they released them. They were people who came, who were informed they had to come and they came of their own free will. And when we went into that building, by the way, which was also supposed to be, how the Shimshon commander defined

it in the briefing was, “some of you won’t come back,” like that, “some of you won’t come back, there is going to be a crazy battle.” And we went in without them firing a bullet at us and all these guys from Shimshon just shot in every direction out of fear. With the...like they are on foot but also with their APCs ■

## 48 In reality you are just abusing the population

unit: Field intelligence · location: South Mount Hebron

year: 2005-2006

### ► What operations did you do in South Mount Hebron?

It's the same operations, lookout activities. Sometimes we would...the brigade would try to play with us. We would go on missions of...we would join some infantry company or organize some kind of team, they would go into a house, just do whatever...as a demonstration of presence, OK? In order to draw...it's a mission which has a kind of logic, but in reality you are just abusing the population. You arrive...the idea is like this: The infantry team takes control of some house, we take it covertly so no one will know, OK?

### The same house?

No. The house across from it. Meaning the same street. One here, one here. They make noise and chaos so there will be a protest. They really burned tires there on the house.

### The soldiers?

No, the Palestinians, because they took control of the house as a protest, meaning they put up flags, made noise, stun grenades. That was their mission. And we were secretly across.

### What time was this?

It was during the day. We came at night and all the action was during the day.

### At dawn?

Yes. The idea was that maybe some armed man would come to the area and then

When you sit with a map with the brigade commander, then it seems very yes, nice...“You take control of this house with a demonstration of presence, you’ll be hidden, and an armed man will come and everything will be fine and dandy.” But in the field you destroyed the house of a family and left, that’s it. And it happens every day, all the time

we’ll succeed in taking him down, because we are there secretly, because we are at a different corner. In reality an armed man didn’t come, fine, OK, and their house was destroyed. Tires were burned on the house. An innocent house, just a house on the map, that the Shin Bet checked and there wasn’t any...that it’s really an innocent population, that’s what they check.

**They are innocent, so you enter their house?**

Yes, and they destroyed the house. The windows were broken, they threw stones into the house. That’s it, an entire house was destroyed.

**Where was the family?**

I think they threw them out.

**Where was this?**

It was in Yatta. So do you, like, understand? The thought at the beginning, when you sit with a map with the brigade commander, then it seems very yes, nice...“You take control of this house with a demonstration of presence, you’ll be hidden, and an armed man will come and everything will be fine and dandy.” But in the field you destroyed the house of a family and left, that’s it. And it happens every day, all the time.

**It’s not an unordinary activity?**

It’s an activity that the infantrymen do.

**Did you do it more than once or twice?**

Yes. Yes.

**It was routine?**

Yes. But that was more unique because it was in the heart of Yatta and we did it secretly etc.etc. ■



# 49 We go into innocent people's homes, every day, all the time

unit: Field intelligence · location: General · year: 2004-2006

► The thing that shocked me, that caused me to be shocked, was that you, every day you do missions in which you go into houses and it's...to families...and then when we got to this family which wasn't, which didn't have a bathroom even in the house – it shocked me. That's why it also, it's something that weighs on my heart a lot. Because I felt that I...that day when he was planning to take out the chickens, because we were able to somehow communicate a bit, I had someone on the team who spoke Arabic. So his work [the Palestinian's]...he collects the eggs, he sells the eggs, that's his job. And no one, his wife doesn't work, she's in the house with the kids. So you grab your head, you say: "that's it, I stopped him from making a living for a day." That's it, that's what, and then I like said, I decreed everything that happened with me, because that's what we do: we go into innocent people's homes. Every day, all the time.

**There are those who would say that they are not innocent, that it could be they are hiding things.**

Of course. No, there are also those who would say: it's good to go even into innocent people's homes, the sanctity of the mission is above all, OK? Meaning, there isn't some kind of problem here, they'll tell you there is no ethical problem with what you are doing. You aren't harming the purity of arms, you aren't beating them up. If they resist, then you have the permission to give it to them, to respond or whatever, so there is no problem with regard to the punishment. So everything is OK, and it's for the good of the mission, it justifies the means, and that's it. But in the field, when you summarize the period, then it's not always, most of the missions aren't always thought out to the end. There were a lot of missions which didn't have much purpose, or we were sent on a mission where the intelligence was so weak that maybe it would have been better to avoid it. In the end, bottom line, that family took it and that's it, that's what happened on that mission. And it doesn't happen...that's most times. Let's say 95 percent of the

There were a lot of missions which didn't have much purpose...95 percent of the incidents, their whole purpose was to strike a family and go back...there was always the thing of presence

incidents, their whole purpose was to strike a family and go back.

### **Deliberately?**

That's what happened in practice. And then you start thinking. OK, but you can't know. Speaking from experience, we saw which missions succeeded. Those which had very, very focused intelligence, very, very clear, and that work was done with the whole web of intelligence, meaning the Shin Bet and whatever. Only then was it successful. But it could be there are, the army always has all kinds of, which means basically: even if you don't feel it, it has other ramifications. There is the presence of the army, there is always that thing of presence, and it has implications from the standpoint of the goal of the army or its large missions ■

## 50 Stun grenades in central locations

**unit:** Shaldag special air-ground designating team

**location:** General · **year:** 2002-2004

A violent patrol is one that you carry out so people will know, to flaunt your presence. You suddenly yell for everyone to get indoors. You show your presence

► I'd like to mention that my worst cases are the routine things, actions I do not have the privilege not to carry out on a daily basis and become immune to them. It is these things in particular that take place every day and that affect me the most.

### **Give me an example.**

I can tell you that targeted, complicated, difficult assignments with casualties would be much more reasonable because you know who these people are. But the missions I've carried out because something happened in my designated area and reinforcements were needed, so our unit was summoned to help out and we went and took part in these routine actions – that's where I experienced the worst. Things...that's where the denial of freedom, of the most fundamental human rights unnecessarily, because those people are not terrorists – that's where it got to me the most. There are many examples. So many that I don't...examples of helping out on violent patrols.

### **What's a 'violent patrol'?**

A violent patrol is one that you carry out so people will know, to flaunt your presence.

You suddenly yell for everyone to get indoors. You show your presence.

**In reaction to something?**

No...either in reaction to something or in the fear that someone will come out – I hope the soldiers fear that someone will come out – and then it will be done.

**What do you mean “you hope”? You weren’t some little wimpy officer, you served as an army officer for three whole years.**

I didn’t know that someone specific was supposed to come out of this village, but it could have been...

**Let’s say that it could have been known by the regional brigade commander?**

Could be. I wouldn’t know such things. Could be that the regional brigade commander knew and sent out violent patrols.

**What would you do on a violent patrol? You yell, okay. Are you really violent?**

**Like beat people up? Throw stun grenades? Shoot in the air?**

Throw stun grenades, yes.

**Where do you throw them?**

At central locations.

**You mean you come to a shopping center, yell at everyone to go home, if they scatter running – fine, and if you think it’s not fast enough, you throw stun grenades?**

Yes, yes.

**Midday?**

Midday.

**Sometimes totally unconnected with what’s happening in the area?**

I would hope it is connected, but...

**Not that you know.**

Not that I know ■

## 51 A celebratory entrance with some stun grenade

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2003

When you think about it, their lives there, you turn them into a nightmare... How do you choose a house? It could be just any house...

### ► You are a platoon sergeant?

Yes.

### You are supposed to know the missions and the objective, why they do them.

Exactly. Our missions in Hebron for the most part were protecting the Jewish settlement. Those were our missions, either guarding them on their way to prayer in the Cave [of the Patriarchs], or just daily tours of the city there. And it, when you think about it after the fact, their lives [the Palestinians] there, you turn them into a nightmare, if they are intelligence warfare operations.

### Intelligence warfare?

Exactly, making noise.

### What's intelligence warfare?

It's letting them know there is an army there. Even in places where there is no army, giving them a feeling that there is an army there. Whether it's to make noise in that area at night, just throwing stun grenades, or if it's going into some area in the middle of the night, into a house in the middle of the night, with some kind of celebratory entrance with a stun grenade, and to search the house and go out.

### How do you choose the house?

How do you choose the house? It could just be any house, it could be that if it's a house near the post it's also to scare the residents there a bit. The residents who see some potential danger from them because they are close to the post. For the most part they are innocent residents. That's it, there are foot patrols every day where you just walk in the city there and go into houses, any houses, no reason, just for no reason. No, you don't have any report regarding something specific in the house. You go in, look around, leave. And the moment you enter, then you go in and relax there because there is no other place to relax. You can't sit on a bench outside there and relax.

**During the night? Or during the day?**

It could be at night, and it could be during the day.

**Can you describe a specific entry that you remember?**

A specific entry? You enter the home with the goal of perhaps finding something suspicious, you don't even know what exactly. You put everyone into one room. Generally they put their money in the closets there, hide it. They don't have, they don't put it in a bank or any place else. They put it in closets there, they hide it there. Now, in order to prevent looting and whatever, normally we would put the whole family in the room with the money, so they wouldn't come afterwards and say they stole. That's it, they start looking in the rooms. Turn it all upside down, looking, searching, just because, the guys also take stuff.

**Were there incidents of looting that you remember?**

On missions that I was on as a commander I was not prepared for it to happen. Although there were soldiers who said to me: "Let's take, let's this, let's that." But I wasn't prepared.

**But were there things you saw in the company? Equipment? Small things?**

Equipment, small things. Like canes, all kinds of flags, like I know, of the Islamic movement, all kinds of pictures. I didn't see serious looting in the company. But again, I heard a lot of stories that happened and I wasn't surprised.

**Let's get back to the searching. Everyone is in the room and you do the search. How do you leave the house?**

You leave it, you try to leave it as we left [found] it. You know, rotten soldiers, come, sit on the couches, dirty it, it's still...still. Again, I don't know what happened on other patrols, because I'm talking about myself. We tried to leave the house as it was. But it could also be in lookout activities, suddenly you go in, you fall on some innocent family, you fall into their life and sit in their house.

**For how long?**

How long? It could be for a month, two months, two weeks.

**And during that time, where is the family?**

The family? I don't know, not in the house. I don't know, they make some arrangement with them, I don't know what they do with them exactly. We arrive at the house when

it's empty. Who knows what they do with them, I don't know.

**You didn't ask?**

No. It doesn't interest you at that time. And that's it, you just sit, turn the house into, like, a post. You remove everything and put up camouflage nets. You try not to use the bathroom and whatever. You aren't going to use the bathroom?

**So you use the bathroom or you don't?**

You use it, of course. A patrol can be four hours, it can be eight hours. I, of course when I was a commander, I made the decisions. You just go out in the area of the post and normally you try to not walk around in the same area every time, and you just go from house to house. Again, you don't know what you are looking for. The entry into the house is more for a warning. That's it, and this whole procedure of going into the houses that we talked about, that's it, you finish, you leave, if you want, you stay to rest for a half-hour, hour, and you continue. That's it, as long as that shifts takes, that's what you do ■

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## 52 We would steal what we could from the apartments

**unit:** Paratroopers · **location:** Ramallah/Nablus · **year:** 2001-2002

► At first we were in an empty apartment where no one lived. Then we would sleep in our sleeping bags. On the floor, at the posts there were sandbags. The whole regular combat kit, and we were just sitting there and guarding, like at the posts, passing the time, trying to forget what's happening...you bring a discman, you bring a book...the apartment – you couldn't damage it. Because it was empty, it was an apartment they didn't live in. What did happen, at a certain point we started to get annoyed. The soldiers who were there for Passover – I was there for two weeks straight – and there wasn't a chance for them to bring us provisions. We were living off the first provisions from Passover. We were there for two weeks after Passover, one week of Passover and another week afterwards, with matzah, chocolate, canned beef and olives. And

I started going crazy. My friends and I went crazy, meaning we were hungry. We had to find a way to get real food. We went down to the apartments below. We broke into the apartments, we broke in, we just broke in.

### **How? With a kick? A hammer?**

It was not a problem. You take down their door in a minute. We started looking for what we could do. The apartment, let's say, when we left, it was totally turned upside down, totally. Because from the beginning I understood if they did a search they made a mess, because in all of the apartments...

### **Why? What kind of mess?**

You know, they turned things over to see there were no weapons or terrorists, basically what you do in any apartment that you go into is to check there are no weapons.

### **What did they do, turn over couches?**

In places that were especially suspicious, if we found something which gave a reason to suspect the apartment itself, we would turn it over from top to bottom. Dumping out the closets. Dumping everything out, on the floor, like you would find after having been robbed. Everything on the floor. Like that. In short, we broke into that apartment with a five-kilo hammer. It was already pretty messy. Not very, but pretty messy. We went into the kitchen, we saw there was a stove, there were spices, there was oil. There was everything. You could make food, potatoes. We said, "we're making French fries." In short, we made ourselves food that we needed for a change of pace. We were happy. We started eating and we didn't feel bad about it. Unethical or something. I still today don't think that it was something totally forbidden for us to do, because bottom line, we were really hungry. The food there was like atrocious.

### **Did the commanders know that you...?**

There was one commander who didn't agree to it at all, he even yelled at the rest of the commanders who agreed to it. That same officer later was the deputy company commander and I highly regarded him. Later, I think...the fact that we had gross food doesn't mean that we have to go looking for other people's food and we even used their utensils. That's not ok. And there were commanders who were so hungry they even helped us. There was an officer who made a rotation of people who would go down to prepare food. Sometimes he would go down himself and prepare it. It was an apartment

We would check what we could take. Go through all the drawers, go through people's personal things...it started with small things as it were, lighters, rings, and the like. We evolved: video cameras, personal cameras, things like that

that had a stove, it had everything. And really we would eat great food there. We had fries, chicken that was going to spoil. We would have prepared it anyway. Because if it happened...we had an apartment that, bottom line, there was nothing to do with, no one was using it, it was totally unnecessary. The moment we discovered the stove and everything, then all of a sudden we had something to do. So we would use their pots and their spices, and eat, and eat, it was, like, great. We were...we were careful more or less to clean up after ourselves so there wouldn't be too much of a mess.

**What, to wash dishes and whatever?**

We also needed the utensils. Listen, we had to wash the dishes. And it went on like that for a long time. Even after we left the operation and came back. We would leave the post and go home. We would go back to the post and start making food. There was no chance we wouldn't. And we decided. We would check and whatever, and take notebooks from the apartment. We had to write, we would take notebooks from the apartment. I still have a notebook today from the apartment. Until today in my bag. I wrote a ton of stories and the like. Pens – if we had to write. Just nonsense, small stuff that isn't significant, but still not ours. You know, we would take because we needed it. And like, you imagine that it's OK and no one is going to come back there.

**Did they use other things, or take other things?**

They took cups, ashtrays, nothing significant, because truthfully, there wasn't anything significant in the apartment. People received enough warning before we came in order to run and take out their valuables. When Operation "Defensive Shield" began, and a bit before "Defensive Shield," a month before we went into the refugee camp in Balata. So we would go through the apartments, and they didn't have time to know. Like in Balata it was a surprise. They didn't know we were coming, and they didn't have anywhere to go to, so we took everyone who was in the apartments we went into, and put them into other apartments, of their neighbors. Meaning, we made them move in with their neighbors. If they said they had relatives who they preferred to move in with, then we gave them permission to move in with their family, because in principle there was a curfew. They were not allowed to leave their house at all, unless they had a special permit to move in with their relatives. But whoever did not, then there were guards and everything to ensure they wouldn't make trouble and go outside. If they



would ask nicely, there were certain hours during the day they would let them go out, shop, and come back. There were defined hours during which the stores could open. It continued like that, and then the situation with the stealing became much more serious. We were in the apartments. Listen, there are people of very high status in Nablus, with the same stuff that's in an average Israeli home: video cameras...

**When was this, before or after Defensive Shield?**

A little before the entry into the refugee camp in Balata. And then there was "Defensive Shield," and then again in Balata. We would take video cameras, we would take, you know, CD players, expensive rings...all kinds of things. We wouldn't take money.

**You would take them to the company?**

Not to the company, at first it was on a personal level, everyone would take for himself on the hush-hush, stuff, lighters, things like that..and we would do mapping. We would guard in the apartments themselves, we would steal from the apartments themselves. We would steal what we could from the apartments.

**Meaning from the people who were in Balata? When you went in the first time?**

In Balata, in Ramallah, there were a few incidents. Yes, in Nablus or Ramallah. At first we were in Ramallah. We went deeper into Ramallah and later we moved to Balata. So there would be houses of 20 there, we would go into the buildings and there were apartments that people were leaving, not apartments that we evacuated.

**You didn't evacuate, but they evacuated?**

People decided they wouldn't stay there because there were soldiers, so they went to live with their neighbors, or their friends. They left the apartments abandoned, you get it, but we had the keys to every apartment. We demanded that they leave the keys and we would go into the apartments above, and there were apartments, aside from our apartments, we would, like, go into other apartments. In the building, in the same building where we were staying. We would check what we could take. Go through all the drawers, go through people's personal things.

**Like what did you take?**

Things like video cameras, rings. I heard of an incident where someone took...stole, a golden sword. I didn't see it. I just heard about it. Not at the beginning. At first it

was small things as it were, lighters, rings and the like. We evolved. Video cameras, personal cameras, stuff like that.

**Which people have until today?**

Oh...now it becomes a little complicated. We started doing searches of homes, you know, going from house to house, checking people. There too we freely took stuff. We took things from every house we went into, things that we liked or were suspicious to us.

**When they are there?**

Yes, inside the house, in the room next door. Because we would do an inspection inside people's houses sometimes. If the person was suspicious to us, or we didn't like him because he was fresh, we'd take our revenge on him. We would take his stuff, too. We would take cell phones, we would take video cameras, everything... everything we could put in our pocket and run with without the officer knowing. Because the officers of course did not allow it. God forbid.

**And the officers didn't know?**

No, they didn't know. Like, it could be they knew and looked the other way. I don't know. It could be that they knew, you know, at a certain point you start to pay attention to things like that. In any case, at a certain point we went into some building in Nablus, a very large building, and there were a lot of apartments inside. There was even an office. We took a lot of stuff out of that building. We took a stereo system from the building to the company. We took a video to the company from that building. We took a video camera, a quality digital camera, tape recorder, all kinds of nonsense, really valuable things.

**In Nablus?**

In Nablus. Really valuable things. And when we evacuated the buildings, the residents complained that their equipment was stolen, and they gave a detailed list of what was stolen from them to our company commander. And the company commander heard about it and was very, very disappointed, and we had a big talk and he yelled at all of us. And he said to us that if we don't return all of the equipment within two days, the company is going to get 21 or 35 days of confinement. And he will pick specific people who he thinks are the most suspect and they will go through it. From that day on, anytime

we went home, they checked our bags. Whenever we came back to the company from the field. If you went home – they checked your bag as you got off the APC, the deputy company commander would come and do an inspection for everyone in their bags to make sure everything was normal. We would also steal Johnny Walker. I stole a bottle of Johnny Walker, a bottle of Chivas, all kinds of thing that we would find there, which to us were valuable. I was in Nablus on my birthday. After three days I was the most senior in my platoon. My platoon was the worst, we took the most things and the most valuable things. And when the company commander spoke with us, I felt bad, I was not happy with it. I started understanding how not OK it was. Basically, during that time I was bored and it was shitty for me...at a certain point...when I was there I didn't see it. An Arab, I don't care, and it was a thing because it was so boring. I was so upset that I was there. I didn't want to be there. I was really frustrated by the army. I still hate what I went through there. I didn't want to be there. I said at least I'll do something that will occupy me. That I'll feel like I'm doing something fun here as it were, even if it's not totally ethical. I never raised my hand at an Arab. Even yelling – I didn't like yelling, because when I stand in front of a person, it's unpleasant, a human being. I can't be disgusting to him. If someone was really aggressive towards me, I would show him who was boss, but not raising a hand, rather yelling at him. But that was very rare. But when they aren't there, and the apartment is empty and it's just stuff, just property...then it's just for fun, you know, to take it, to see what you can do. And we would talk about it in the platoon. I was the most senior in my platoon, because the senior soldiers left the platoon. I was relatively young, but I was the most senior in the company, and I organized all the young soldiers. We would inspect the spoils: they would lay out the spoils in front of me, show me what they got. We would divide it up between us: "Do you want the camera? Take the camera. Do you want the tape recorder? Take the tape recorder." Everyone would take what they wanted. We took all these things as spoil, literally looting.

**And this was before the talk?**

Before the talk. After the talk we felt it wasn't OK. I gathered the whole company, anyone who I knew took things in our spoils inspections. Because I wasn't responsible for the whole company, but I knew I could rule my platoon. Because I was relatively senior. I said to all the guys: "Listen, I know what we took because I saw what we took during

the spoils inspection.” I said to everyone what they had to bring from home. Everyone brought the stuff. I would never return on time from home. I had this thing of going AWOL all the time. All the time. I would come a day late. At first they punished me and everything. At a certain point they stopped. They just gave up. To just kick me out, they couldn’t just kick me out, because there wasn’t enough personnel. I was also banking on the fact they wouldn’t put me in anyway. I would call my commander, say to him, “I’m not coming back tomorrow, it doesn’t work for me,” He would say to me “hey, I don’t have the energy for your nonsense anymore. I don’t give a fuck.” Every time I left I would come back a day late or at night, or the day after. I was already crushed from a lack of desire, and on the day of returning the equipment I came a day late. And I had a video camera in my house that I had to bring back, and I returned it with a lot of feelings of guilt, and I made sure on the phone that the guys were really giving back the stuff, and they really returned almost everything. Part of the stuff, it’s unclear whether or not they made it up or it was really something that no one knew where it went, or if it was just lost along the way. But most of the stuff really was returned. The company commander said, “I’m still disappointed in you, but I’m happy that you at least gave back all the stuff.” And from then on the stealing was much less significant. The thefts focused on things they could use right away, rather than things you would keep forever. In Nablus, for example...

**Were you in Nablus during “Defensive Shield”?**

Yes. The whole mess and the talk was before “Defensive Shield.” Because we were also in Nablus then. I think it was after “Defensive Shield,” During “Defensive Shield” when we occupied Balata again, we went in reverse on an APC, on purpose, into the door of a shop. The shop was destroyed. A friend and I came when the officer wasn’t looking, we went inside and filled our backpack with packets of cigarettes, candy, cola, everything. We would come later at night with our bags and unload more things from the store and bring them to the company. We would distribute cigarettes to the guys...in Balata. Our guys discovered another store, they broke into that too.

**Who gave the order to go into the shop with the APC?**

No one.

**Was there a commander who saw that you did it?**

There were no commanders. There was a commander on the field, inside Balata

itself. The commanders on the drive were just soldiers. There was a commander of the drive who was a regular soldier, who was a commander inside the APC and the APC driver. OK...like that...Boom! He goes into the store, destroyed it. Inside the refugee camp itself they also discovered a...a kiosk, they literally made a route, you know, like in the ghetto where they would take out tiles from the ground to smuggle cigarettes and the like...they smuggled out cigarettes, they smuggled candy and whatever...to the large post – the battalion post.

**That was next to the kiosk?**

No, it wasn't far from the refugee camp in Balata. That's basically how we transported all the things. There also weren't enough cigarettes, so we would continue to get cigarettes, candy and cola...things we didn't have any other way. Just food, drink, cigarettes. And...

**The officers didn't know? You did it on the hush-hush?**

Yes, they didn't know. I imagine that some were aware. But the majority didn't know. We would hide it well from them. I still have things that I remember I took. That it just wasn't appropriate for me to return, so I still have them.

**Like?**

I have a cell phone that I took back then, and I didn't throw it out because it reminds me, it reminds me that stealing is bad. I was observant as it were in that period, meaning, I kept Kosher and I tried to keep the commandments as much as I could, without ever having been religious in my life. I have the most secular family that there is, and I treated it, all the things that I stole, I found them totally unusable, the lighters I took didn't work, the cell phone I took didn't work. The camera that I took – I returned. Unusable at the end of the day, and I approached it as theft is something that doesn't pay, and it's forbidden ethically anyway, and I won't do it anymore. It doesn't matter if it's an Arab or not an Arab. I won't do it anymore. And really, I stopped the thing with all the stealing, but I still have a few things which weren't appropriate to return. At that time, in my company, the auxiliary company, "the assisting thieves," we would steal like crazy! They took an entire storage locker of equipment from a base we were on once. We lifted an entire equipment locker. We lifted an entire container of equipment from the parallel company. We would do stuff inside the army itself. In the army it's

OK. Why is it forbidden outside, you get it? It's like a culture, it becomes one. Your company sergeant major sends you to steal from the kitchen because the kitchen isn't prepared to release food, so a certain approach, that it's permitted to steal, develops. And afterwards I decided no, I'm not going to continue with it ■

## 53 Why did I shoot? Just because of peer pressure

**unit:** Shaldag Elite Unit · **location:** Gaza Strip · **year:** 2004

**Our mission  
wasn't clear...**

► I mean, our mission was not clear. For instance, as I understood our assignment, if I do not detect armed men, fine, no armed men are moving around, that's my assignment, that's what I'm there for. But if the mission is to kill armed men, I haven't fulfilled my mission because I didn't kill anyone. And there was pressure all the time, several times a day: guys, why aren't you shooting? What's up?

### **Why aren't you shooting?**

Why aren't you shooting? We're not shooting because there aren't any armed men around, what should we shoot at? The mission was not clear, but in a "straw widow," sharpshooters are stationed, and we have to open all kinds of designated areas, and as a result, demolish some more houses, or mainly greenhouses. All that time, the family is shut inside a room, as you know, stuck in that room with a guard, so again I suppose we do it more... we let them come downstairs and prepare food.

### **How long were you inside the house at one go?**

48 hours.

### **You were in there for 48 hours, and your rules of engagement were to fire at armed men, shoot to kill?**

Fire at armed men, shoot to kill, and if we suspect someone laying an explosive charge – in other words, we see someone bending down, or handling something on the floor – shoot to kill.

### **Wait a second, what do you mean "suspect laying explosive charge"? At your**

**discretion?**

It's at your discretion.

**Was there any specific order?**

Not that I remember. Lookouts are people seen on the roofs, preferably holding binoculars, but if they aren't – no big deal, shoot them too, to kill.

**And you're given a definition for "lookouts"? Or is that left vague, too?**

Someone who appears to you as though he's observing some tank, standing and looking at a tank, it could be at a window or on a roof, or so, you shoot to kill.

**Those are your explicit orders before you enter?**

Yes.

**Who gives them, the brigade commander?**

I don't remember if at the second briefing we were issued rules of engagement, anyway it was an order that came down through him. In short, this business is very open-ended, and given to the judgment of the platoon commander on the ground.

**And at the time the area was under curfew?**

No.

**The Palestinians were allowed to move around the street, freely?**

Yes.

**Are the instructions different for daytime and nighttime, as to people moving around outside?**

No. As far as I remember this was after a tank shelled some demonstrators and people were killed... so we were very careful with this, we were told exactly what to do about demonstrations, looking for the "rabble-rousers," I don't know.

**And those were then, "shoot at the knees"?**

I think so, I'm not sure. I don't remember. Anyway, a wide variety of situations was very open-ended. Again, the front command staff – unlike what I'd expect – instead of controlling whoever sees the goings-on from the point of view of a six-footer with the life experience of a 21 year-old at best, or 23 or 25 even – no, the command staff does not control; on the contrary: it wants heads.

**Is that the expression they use?**

No, that's my own expression.

**How do they actually express that? Ask how many you've taken down?**

I told you, once in a while they get to us on radio.

**Asking why you didn't open fire?**

We didn't shoot there. Actually we shot once, I'll tell you about that in a moment. I shot, I mean my force shot and that was it. Beyond that we did not fire. For two days...

**So what actually happened to you there?**

We had two incidents worth mentioning. The first – I'll start with the worst one, as far as I'm concerned. We identified some...someone standing on one of the roofs, looking.

**Day or nighttime?**

Daytime. We reported this to the front command staff, and naturally got confirmation to open fire, even though I didn't need their confirmation. I deliberated and deliberated and finally gave the order and the guy died.

**How do you know he died? Was it reported?**

No, our sharpshooters... I think at least two if not three weapons fired there at a target we had sighted for some time, not something...it was static, I don't remember the range, let's say 150-200 meters.

**For sharpshooters that's nothing.**

Anyway we saw him, and it's all documented.

**Documented by your unit?**

Yes. There's our observation post tape and no doubt he...you clearly see, one bullet, there's this wall there and one bullet hit low at the wall, but another two bullets, three really, with certainty another two bullets hit him and he dropped dead. That was one case.

**In this case you contacted the front command staff who confirmed fire?**

Yes.

**He was looking out in your direction?**

No, at tanks and people who were down there, that's what it seemed to us. What do I know? If you ask me now why I fired? Just because of pressure. I gave into peer pressure.



## The soldiers'?

The soldiers who were not...they weren't bloodthirsty, but...soldiers ■

# 54 They came, they placed, they blew up

unit: Central Command · location: Bethlehem district  
year: 2002-2003

## ► Were there orders to photograph from a certain direction? Not to photograph other things?

There weren't orders not to photograph something, nothing. The opposite, the objective was not to ignore things, to photograph everything and if there were things that were not OK, to notify those responsible for things. Of course we didn't distribute anything to the outside, and in cases where it was for the benefit of the army they used it, like opening checkpoints or the loosening of transferring of goods and things like that. The unit was built from me as the only photographer. There was a service list for six, but something, I think it was the IDF spokesman corps, something politically in the army prevented the other six from coming. They started with six a year before I arrived. Slowly they went down. When I arrived it was exactly at the moment one of them was released. There were some clerks and editors who were responsible for adapting the material that I brought and the commanders. I was the photographer. I would go out at night for the most part with units to document operations.

## Who decided where you went?

The commanders. The commander was a major and there was a deputy commander below him. The thing that sticks out the most that I remember from that period was that the operations, that I think were called "address change," or something like that, began. The operations were blowing up houses of people suspected of being involved with terror.

## Who used that phrase? You?

That's what they called the operation. That's what they called all of those kinds. Operation "address change," an operation to blow up a house. At first, people who carried out

As time passed, after a few months, there weren't phone calls to the legal advisor, or whoever it was. Things started, they got a media response, they became more and more frequent

terror attacks. Afterwards, it was “his uncle,” “the brother of someone who knows him...” all kinds of distant relations like that, it was also something that became much more acceptable with time. That’s basically how to sum it up. At the very beginning of when it began, it was carried out in a similar way. Forces went in. Each time a different battalion. Security of the surrounding area, removing people. If they were men, arresting them. There was always a Shin Bet agent there, I think in the force, and a person from the civil administration, someone related to the military government, who was responsible for the first cases of blowing up houses, he had to get explicit permission from someone in the Ministry of Defense. I forget the exact position. Telephone permission at three, three-thirty in the morning. They call and get the OK. Sometimes we would evacuate the house fifteen minutes before. It depended upon the courtesy of the commander, sometimes five minutes, sometime half an hour. We aren’t talking about tin shacks anymore. They are houses full with everything that a house has, from couches to electronic devices to refrigerators to picture albums to everything. In most cases the order was about 15 minutes, again, children, women...from the moment the commander arrives they have 15 minutes to evacuate...and during that time the soldiers from the engineering corps are already laying the explosive bricks in all kinds of places during the evacuation of the residents. They close in, a ring around the house to prevent other victims and then the moment they get the OK, at that point it would be delayed sometimes for an hour or two until they got permission, for political reasons apparently, and then they take down the house. From the moment they take down the house, there is a final search to see there is nothing out of the ordinary, and they evacuate the area within five minutes. There were a lot of operations like that. As time passed, after a few months, there weren’t phone calls to the legal advisor, or whoever it was. Things started, they got a media response, they became more and more frequent, and at a certain point the OK was no longer needed, they just came, they placed, they blew up, and we left.

**How many incidents like that were there?**

Tens, a lot. From villages...to Bethlehem, Bet Jalah, everywhere.

**What was the procedure for evacuating the adjacent houses? Was it always the evacuation of one house?**

I remember a few cases where there were houses of other people who were really

close that were right next to them, even that didn't prevent the explosion of the house. I think that, as far as possible, the engineering corps tried to take down only the house that was supposed to be brought down, the orders were to prevent destruction of other houses because then lawsuits against the army would come because of all kinds of collateral damage, and that was one of my duties, to photograph the area afterwards, because it was rare, because we would leave really quickly.

**What kind of pictures do you bring back from an event like that?**

I bring the entrance, the entry into the house, the whole conversation of the commander and the soldiers, the evacuation of the residents, the evacuation of the materials from the house.

**With video?**

Video and stills. The placement of the explosives. After that, you get back to a safe distance. The destruction, the explosion itself. Just wherever I see something happen, I film.

**And what do you do with it? Say, the explosions?**

Things like that go to the computers in the offices, they choose six pictures. A picture of the explosion, a picture of, there is a title for each picture: "commander of the force," "the commander prepares the residents for evacuation," "the commander allows the residents to remove their belongings from the house." It doesn't matter if it's a tenth of their belongings.

**Was there a time when a family asked for more time?**

There were cases like that, I don't remember exactly, it really depended upon the commander. There were cases where they gave the order and they weren't seen again. After 15 minutes they control everything over the radio. Or there were cases where the commanders were present, there was a case where four soldiers took an elderly woman on a chair on their shoulders, it was kind of funny, they removed her from the home.

**She couldn't walk or she didn't want to?**

Apparently she couldn't ■

## 55 We killed unarmed policemen

unit: Engineering corps · location: Ramallah district · year: 2001

It was a revenge operation...they would just eliminate all the Palestinian police that were there...they ran and we continued...I put a bullet in one's head and another one crawled from behind...

► During that time there was an attack on six people on route 443. Six engineers, some terrorist came from one of the checkpoints, and by some stroke of dumb luck he killed all of them. He just came inside the whatever and shot them all, he killed six. That night we were in one of those villages, and we weren't doing anything. They deployed us to their base, they gathered us all into some room, we didn't have so much to do. All of a sudden our team commander comes from some two minute briefing and says, "listen, this is the briefing...we are doing...the operation is a revenge operation. We are going to eliminate six Palestinian policemen from some checkpoint in revenge of the six they took from us." That's the story I want to get at. It was, on 443, if you, if you cut towards Area A [areas in the civil and security jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority] there are, there are, like, four transfer posts, like, those who are responsible for them are Palestinian police, and everyone from those posts they sent us, us, the paratrooper patrol company, like I know, or the paratrooper auxiliary company and someone else, to just, like, eliminate all the Palestinian police that are there. Right? And the briefing was maybe two minutes. It was defined to us as, like, revenge, and when I even hesitated at the moment, like I asked the whatever, "what did they do? Who are they?" They said to me: "What did they do?" They said: "There is a suspicion that the terrorist who killed the six went through that checkpoint." There is a suspicion, like, but they don't know for certain. And it could be that it's one of those, but they said to me, "it doesn't matter, they took six of ours, we are going to take six back."

### That was like the statement?

That was the statement, that was, like, the the statement. A revenge operation. The day after, in the newspapers, it was also published as "a revenge operation." They didn't hide it. It was published as a revenge operation and it was a crazy halo of "proper blood revenge." And we went down into...it was a very, very long walk, we got there on foot at four in the morning, when at night there is no one there, they like...the checkpoint is closed at night, there is some building which they live in...

**And during the day they go down to the checkpoint?**

During the day they go down to the checkpoint itself and they are there.

**And you, like, sat in an ambush?**

We sat in an ambush until...until they arrived. And the idea was – the idea was that we would just kill all of them, like they would arrive and we would take them out, regardless of whether they had weapons or not...like – is it a Palestinian policeman? You shoot him. And we sat there, and the night passes and the night passes like...it's freezing...I'm trembling from fear, really, but from cold, I was the radioman. When we left, three men who were supposed to, who had telescopic sights, and they were supposed to fire first, and then we would charge in from the side. And they [the Palestinian police] arrive. And we catch them doing some search, they are like five meters from me, they are standing five meters from me, they were only three and another one far away, and we go up, I get on the radio to get permission and no one answers me. I get an answer from some...

**Female operations sergeant?**

Some, like, girl answers me. And there is no permission and no permission and they can't find the battalion commander, they can't find the battalion commander and my unit commander takes the radio. They are right next to us. He yells, he says, like yelling, "we've encountered, encountered, encountered" [we were attacked by terrorists]. We weren't encountered and or anything. Those guys [the three soldiers on the sight] gave a burst of gunfire and didn't hit anything.

**The moment they heard the yelling they, like, opened fire?**

No, "engage, engage, engage." At that moment I gave the order to the guys to open fire, but he like yelled to the battalion commander, he yelled "engagement," when we didn't encounter, like we didn't have permission to fire...

**They were close to you? He decided it was...he did it at his own discretion?**

He did it at his own discretion.

**He decided...?**

Yes. Like we didn't have to go out to...like we basically didn't have permission to act. There was a procedure of permissions that you have to go down. Which is permission to go to the place, and then you need permission to remain there, I think, and then you need permission to open fire, the permission to open fire we didn't have...so we yelled

“encounter!”...like he yelled “encounter!”...those, the three soldiers fired, they messed up the fire strike, they didn’t hit anything. They were supposed to hit the street lamps, which they were unsuccessful in hitting and also them...to shoot at them [the Palestinian police]. They weren’t successful in hitting anything. We got up, gave a fire strike, we hit two people, like two people died...but they didn’t die, I’m sorry, they were wounded. We hit one in the leg, I think, and one in the shoulder or something like that. They ran, and we continued...we continued, continued, continued. I had a rifle sight. I like put a bullet in one’s head while he was running and the other one was crawling behind...we all stood up, we ran...it was...the truth? I really enjoyed it. It was really fun because it was the first time you were like “forward charge” for real, like I did in training and we were amazing...we attacked above and beyond, and then he ran...we continued forward. He went into some storeroom, something made of corrugated tin. Four guys stop outside, we shot it up to hell...there was a gas tank there, the whole tank blew up, everything burned, burned, burned, burned, burned. In the meantime me and the...

**That’s where he ran to, that’s where the guy who was, like, crawling ran?**

That’s where the guy who...like in the meantime we had one dead [Palestinian police officer]. Another one inside the thing burning, and another one running, we ran after him, he ran into, like, a cemetery, he went into a cemetery, or something like that. I think it was a cemetery, yes it was a cemetery, he ran into the cemetery. We stood on the wall, we also fired at him and we killed him.

**Were they armed?**

Wait. In the meantime they didn’t fire back at us. They didn’t fire back. No, they didn’t... we didn’t engage them, they didn’t fire at us at any point. We gave a fire strike from afar, we didn’t hit anything, we got up to like charge, we hit one and he ran, I took him down with another bullet. Another one ran into the thing, it was, like, burning and we chased after another.

**To the cemetery?**

To the cemetery and another one who shot with me, and another one who like disappeared, we didn’t find him and then...

**They were, like, four?**

They were four. Now that’s it also regarding the story of how many they were, even in

the debriefing it wasn't clear that they were four. Like it could be they were only three and it could be there were four. We couldn't, no, no, we couldn't identify...like all of the testimonies conflicted, because like someone said that he definitely identified three, one that said...and someone else said he definitely identified two here, and like from all the connections we identified like four, but there wasn't really verification, and no one can really tell you how many they were there from among the twelve, eleven people we were. We don't know exactly. And then I come to...like they sent me to...

**Wait, you are in the cemetery, was the guy killed?**

No. We stood on the wall, we fired, he fell, it ended with that. Now, that guy who I killed, who I took down, I shot a bullet at him, he was lying on the ground, we only saw...like we only saw him from here and beyond, something was hiding him, and we were four or three people who just put, perforated him...we just kept shooting at the body.

**To verify the killing?**

Not to verify the killing, from the hysteria of the excitement. We perforated his...we like totally perforated him and then after I got back from the...like we retreated from the cemetery, and I went to like see, not to verify the killing, like to verify the killing, but to take a weapon, and then I got to him, and he was like hacked to pieces, it was a hacked-up body, with a bullet here, and another three and another one here, and on his leg from here down was nothing...like, it was just, there was nothing...we perforated it. And I tried and I turned him over like...it was a 55 year-old, if not 60 year-old guy, very old and he didn't have a weapon, like after the fact we understood, also with the one in the cemetery, that none of them had a weapon.

**Were they in uniform?**

They were in Palestinian police uniforms. They were in Palestinian police uniforms without weapons.

**OK.**

And then we went, we gave, we threw another grenade into the thing that was burning, we went back and up, our snipers, like all of the population started, they started to come and they continued firing in their direction, and then they didn't...they didn't hit anyone but there was a ton of fire and we packed up.

**Did you go through an anti-terrorism combat course or something?**

We did, yes.

**And do they teach you verifying a kill in that course?**

Yes, of course. They teach you about verifying a kill everywhere, there is verification everywhere, you always, like, put another bullet in the head even if the guy is dead.

**You know that the IDF denies it?**

What's with you? Of course. Of course you do?

**Was some of the content of the course "now charge, 'bang...bang...' verify the killing?"**

On the pack-up. Verification of killings, of course.

**OK.**

Yes. Why, you don't? No? ■

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## 56 Aim for the eyes so it will take out an eye, or at the stomach so it will enter

**unit:** Artillery · **location:** Qalqilya **year:** 2000

► One of the things, which was something that really shocked me, it was because they didn't train us for going into the territories, so they wanted to give us a very quick preparation for it. So they explained to us a bit about, I don't know what they are called, riot control agents.

**RCA.**

OK. I don't know. From that you understand that I wasn't such a great combat soldier. On paper I'm a combat soldier, but I wasn't brainwashed or anything. They just taught us things. In any case, they taught us what a rubber bullet was, and they showed us it comes in what's called in military slang a "tampon," which is a kind of nylon which holds them inside. So they said to us: "But you need to separate them, meaning tear the package and put them in one-by-one in order to cause damage." And then explained to us in a very pornographic way: "aim for the eyes so it will take out an eye, or at the stomach so it will enter."



**Who explained it to you?**

The headquarters company commander.

**To the company?**

Yes, and he says these things, yeah, and laughs. He says "separate," and shows how you separate, how you put them in. He says: "it's not effective in threes." For me it was really terrible, because it's clear they created it that way so they would aim at the masses and not directly at someone, even though that's still terrible. They really explained to us how to turn it into being like live ammunition. And he really explained how they won't be able to prove it. If someone is wounded by, like, a rubber bullet. "They won't do anything to you, you don't have anything to worry about."

**And what was the reaction of the soldiers?**

They laughed. No one was really shocked by it except for me.

**Did you talk about it with someone?**

Actually yes. The truth is that I wanted to go to the battalion commander, but before that I spoke with my friend who was the company commander's driver. He said to me: "There is nothing to talk about with him," he himself – he would go out with him into the field – he said: "he himself separates rubber bullets freely and he instructed all the others to do it." OK, so in the end I turned to B'Tselem.

**What did B'Tselem say?**

They also interviewed me. They asked me a ton of questions, their names. I have no idea if they dealt with it because my discharge date was quite close to the event. In the end, it's not something that today, like no one knows what it is. There was that thing called the Tenet report or something like that, which they submitted regarding the activities of Israel in the territories, so it went in. I got a letter about it ■

They really explained to us how to turn it into being like live ammunition. And he really explained how they won't be able to prove it. If someone is wounded by, like, a rubber bullet. "They won't do anything to you, you don't have anything to worry about"

## 57 A patrol in order to beat up Arabs

unit: Kfir Brigade · location: Hebron year: 2006-2007

► There are a lot of incidents. Just all kinds of nonsense that we would do. We would

We would only look for methods to rile up the Arabs a bit, so that we would shoot a lot of rubber bullets, and it would be interesting, and so the time would pass a little faster in Hebron

beat up the Arabs all the time, nothing special. Just to pass the time.

**Do you remember an incident where you opened fire on Palestinians?**

You know how many times it happened, when there would be disturbances and we would open fire?

**Live ammunition?**

When you had to, yes, when you had to, when enough came at us – then yes, at the knee, the knees.

**You said that you would think about how to heat up the atmosphere all the time.**

Of course.

**What does that mean?**

You know, we wanted it to be interesting, we would only look for methods to rile up the Arabs a bit, so that we would shoot a lot of rubber bullets, and it would be interesting, and so the time would pass a little faster in Hebron.

**Who thought of methods?**

You think there was a lack? Soldiers, commanders.

**Sitting with the company commander?**

What do you mean, company commander? Never, I'm telling you, it would never leave the platoon. The platoon is like state secrets, that's what we would say. No one knew.

**So you sat only with the platoon commander?**

What the hell. The platoon commander also didn't know.

**So who sat?**

Commanders and a sergeant.

**Where did you sit?**

In a room. There is the senior room, and the junior room? In the senior room.

**So what do you say: "today on patrol we do this and that"?**

Yes.

**You plan ahead?**

Of course.

**So what would you do?**

All kinds of nonsense. We would do a lot, we would say: a patrol for what? A patrol is

in order to beat up Arabs. Children, Arabs, all kinds of nonsense.

**Who would initiate the patrols?**

All kinds of people. The patrol commander wasn't to know about it.

**Sergeants and squad commanders?**

Yes, officers are not connected.

**They would say: "now we're going out to..."?**

We would know where we were going, we had a briefing before. We would go out on patrol.

**The squad commander would come and say: "now we're going out on patrol"?**

You know you are going out on patrol. Again listen, it's not with every squad commander that you do it, you know with which squad commander you do it.

**When a force goes out on a patrol, it's not by its own choice.**

Everyone knows there is a patrol. That's the mission: to patrol, to protect. We just continued, you know.

**What does the company commander say to you when you go out?**

What does he say? He also knows it's going to happen. He also takes, he would choose the people that would go with him. Let's say, I told you about \*\*\*, I would never go out with him, there is no chance in the world he would let me go out with him.

**What would happen?**

We would go out on patrol, just an example, some kid would look at us, it didn't seem like a good look to us – he would get slapped.

**Who would slap him?**

The squad commander, the soldiers ■

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## 58 We went into the house in order to be filmed for television

**unit:** Nahal Brigade · **location:** Hebron **year:** 2002

► They sent down an order, some team went to an IDF benefit concert and they told us to go into a house in Hebron. We were in that house two hours before, same owners, same procedure. We didn't really understand why we had to.

### **You went to search, or to settle down there?**

The same procedure, to take the family down...that night, all of a sudden they tell us that a TV crew is coming, a hidden unit, wants to film you – it was Hannukah – eating jelly doughnuts. Slowly we started to understand they sent us in to film us for television. Just like that. They sent us into the house in order to film us for television. And after that, we went out in the morning, or the afternoon, there were warnings or I don't know what. And they sent us in in order to film us for television. That night we were on the Channel 2 news for 20 seconds, that's it. They prepared everyone; they brought us doughnuts to show us happy and strong ■

## 59 Watching soccer in Nablus

**unit:** Maglan Special Forces · **location:** Nablus · **year:** 2004

► In Nablus, another incident that happened with my original team, I wasn't there but they told me about it afterwards.

### **The guys from your team?**

Yes. They go into the house, part of what's called "personal pressure," the whole idea is that they come...the rest is inside the house. Meaning, you remove the family to some room and you rest, you make a kind of war room in some room, meaning inside the living room, or I don't know...whatever room you fall into. But there was one incident where they came, they went in, they wanted to see something on TV. So they

took the family, and removed them. The family was sitting near the TV, they wanted to see something on TV. They took the family, they moved them into a different room so they could watch something on TV. There was an explicit ruling against doing something like this, even against sitting on the chairs. Where I went around, I normally went around with the deputy company commander, wherever he went around, he made sure that the soldiers didn't...from the team that was older than me they sat on the sofas, and removed them. But this was an incident they talked about a lot on the team. That it was pretty ridiculous.

**What did they talk about?**

The story that they came, they took the family. You get it, it's a bit ridiculous. You want to see something on TV, you are in the middle of an operation, so you take the family, you take them out to sit in their living room to watch. There is no objective.

**What was it?**

What was it? Like I know, soccer, something with soccer. It also doesn't matter so much why. That's true of most of the things I encountered during my service. It's less big things, more little things that led to a certain feeling, a certain atmosphere.

**What kind?**

A, that it doesn't matter what you do, you always come out OK. Meaning, I could slap, hit, shoot someone in the leg, I don't see a situation where I would be guilty, because it could always be self-defense. Two, the lives of the regular citizen are less [important] than the needs of the army. Meaning either they have no importance, or the importance is minimal if compared to the military objective, or the force's objective, if I tell you they are coming and taking people from the living room in their house so they can watch TV, which is totally against the directives.

**Did they do something to them afterwards?**

No. It's also, on that level I believe it's something pretty common, even with us. Even though that really where I was, at least they made sure not to sit on the whatever...it was in the briefings, not to sit on the sofas and not to go into the...meaning doing just what you are supposed to do as it were in the houses, and nothing beyond that, not sitting and drinking coffee, but there were things. People came, drank, the family offers as it were, so they drank coffee with them in their house.

You take the family, you take them out in order to sit in their living room to watch. I'm telling you that they come and take people out... from their living room in order to watch TV

### What does that mean?

They come, they enter, so you know, the families are used to it already, they don't get excited anymore by something like that, so they can even get to the place where they offer. It happened to me once that I saw something like that. They came, offered coffee. There are guys who drink. It always seemed strange to me to come into someone's house, you come, drink coffee as if you are a guest. Even if he offers, it's a bit funny ■

## 60 There are those TVs in the kiosks

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Bethlehem district · year: 2003

They started to gather, to see why an APC was standing all of a sudden at the kiosk...the store owner sat inside, watched the game with us, we're on the APC, we watched Hapoel's game just like our squad commander wanted

► There was one night, I was the APC driver on that same vehicular patrol, there was an important game of Hapoel that one of the squad commanders was a crazy fan of. We arrived with the APC, he showed me how to enter into the kiosk, I stood with the APC, we closed the whole entrance to the kiosk, he asked the owner to turn the TV towards us and the guys watched the Hapoel game.

### Where was this?

In Husan. Inside the village.

### In a kiosk in the village?

Yes.

### And what about the Palestinians who were there?

They stood around, they started to gather, like, to see why an APC was standing all of a sudden at a kiosk. You know, people came, to see what was going on and whatever.

### Did it cause damage?

It didn't cause damage but he, how he directed me, I was driving on the road he said to me to turn around, I turned around, and I see a kiosk in front of me. I listened, I rely on him. Now I understood, he said to me beforehand: "I'm looking to watch TV and whatever, don't worry we'll see the game." When we turned around I saw a kiosk, I

understood immediately: there are those TV in the kiosks...now he says to me: "Drive, yalla, go straight, drive until you see the TV," something like that. I stopped, because it wasn't..."drive, just drive." There are things outside, I stopped before. There were things, there were a few tables which were right at the entrance, I stopped right on them. And that's it. The store owner sat inside, watched the game with us, we're on the APC, we watched Hapoel's game just like our squad commander wanted.

**And was it something that the officers in the company knew about?**

They told them afterwards, we told everyone, but I don't know if the officers knew about it. I have no idea ■

## 61 The world cup finals in a refugee camp

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Ramallah year: 2002

► We got an order to go into the Al-Amri refugee camp, I think. There was an order that we were going in every week to a refugee camp, "we go over it." Going over it means you search everything. We called it, with the cynicism of kibbutzniks, we called it "Akzia" [German word for rounding up of Jews for concentration camps]. We would come, men to the school – from 15 to 50...there were always all kinds of numbers. Whoever has a moustache to the school...they stay there all day. And we are with the women and children, going from house to house with maps. You go through each house and search everything. We are good kids, we come, open the closets, look, move, put things back. Like that all day. That day was the World Cup finals, we're worn out both by the fact that it was the World Cup finals and it was extremely hot. And we go, walk around, we don't find anything as usual, like in all of those operations. Our officer was always into...we went in, like, a team of five in order to blow up every door. Blowing up was, like, concealed. It wasn't really, it was to train us to blow it up. So we would learn a bit. Also, out of the excitement of the game: each door that was a bit difficult, even though we had a crow-bar, hammer, all kinds of equipment, we had to blow it up. A door that we were working on for even half a minute. We argued with

We found  
ourselves  
watching the  
World Cup finals –  
everyone took a  
break and  
squatted in all  
kinds of houses –  
we found  
ourselves watching  
the finals with  
some unfortunate  
woman and girl.  
We sat in their  
living room in the  
refugee camp

him, we tried to tell him, “you don’t have to, in another two minutes we’ll open it, it’s also not a problem here, anyway.” It got to yelling, “don’t blow it up,” “yes blow it up,” “quiet already, don’t interrupt me from working.”

### **What would you blow up the door with?**

With those fingers [of explosives] with the wicks. That time, it was already afternoon, the heat started, you want to stop more, you want to finish. Again the recurring pattern – it comes from the officer. He starts turning things over, going into rooms, he’s had it. He starts turning things over. We got to the absurd situation that we would go and clean up after him and put things back in place. With me, as an example, it came mostly from the commanders. All the “just going over the line a bit,” and all the “just doing for no reason,” for the most part came from the commanders. That day was just terrible. We found ourselves watching the World Cup finals – everyone took a break and squatted in all kinds of houses – we found ourselves watching the finals with some unfortunate woman and girl. We sat in their living room in the refugee camp. All the teams sat in all kinds of houses. We sat and watched the World Cup finals in the living room. In the end I was knocked out because of the stairs, I wasn’t even...I didn’t even peek, I was wiped. They are talking on the radio, great, goal, this, that, a totally unbelievable scene. Thinking about it – a friend of mine said it to me afterwards, I was less aware of it – the World Cup is a holiday. During the World Cup final you send...how many men are in a refugee camp? A thousand? You send everyone to the school, and they are punished, the situation doesn’t even matter, like they make a ceasefire now for the Olympics. A bit of sensitivity. It doesn’t matter, that’s just something small ■

## 62 Posts on houses? You can seize it for years

unit: Civil Administration · location: Hebron · year: 2003

### ► **What about the army holding Palestinians’ homes?**

Seizing for posts. OK, seizing for posts, again, this concept also changed, you aren’t



speaking about straw widows [houses that soldiers take control of covertly] and the like, correct? You are talking about seizing.

[...] The seizing also changed again in 2003, there were unpleasant incidents in those houses, where soldiers dirtied it on purpose, you say, “fuck this house, I’m leaving in two weeks and I don’t give a crap.” At a certain point we started doing a 30-day rotation between a few houses, a few posts, in order to make the manning a bit more pleasant.

### **Soldiers?**

Yes, we would transfer posts every 30 days. You go to the adjacent house. We would do 30-30 or a bit more, we would ask for an extension. I remember a case, for example, of one who got married, so we changed the house, because he married someone from the family. There were all kinds of incidents like that.

### **But there are still posts in houses.**

On houses. Are there still in houses?

### **There is one, at the bank intersection.**

OK, if it’s temporary. On houses is a totally different story, if it’s on the houses as it were, and if you have a separate staircase it’s totally legal and it’s an ordered seizure, it’s half-yearly, you renew it every half a year without a problem. You can seize it for years...

### **Who decides these things?**

The brigade commander decides these things. There are very clear criteria. When the brigade commander says he is seizing, you tell him it’s an “allotted room,” there is an order of operations for this issue. How do you check if it’s legal? Even before you pass it to the legal advisor you are like a kind of mini legal advisor. You get it. There are things where you say to him, “no chance, you can’t bring it up at all. Don’t talk to me, switch houses.”

### **Does it depend on the house or the demands?**

It depends on the house. He has to mark the house. He has to explain why that house. He has to explain to me, the operations branch officer, not the brigade commander, why this house, and if there is, for example, an adjacent house, with a pair of bachelors, why he is seizing the house of a family and that the security need is specifically that house, he has to bring a lot of explanation. But he gets the permission of the legal advisor and he takes out a warrant.

Sometimes they would seize a house and not inform us. They would just throw all the people's stuff outside...

**Do you deal with evacuating the family?**

No, no...it's coming...again, at the beginning of the Intifada it wasn't like that and these are procedures which were crystallized slowly because it wasn't. They realized that, and evacuation is violent, there are violent evacuations, not during my time in Hebron, because we did all of them and we went in with them. With the exception of something when they would seize a house and not tell us. They would just throw people's things outside, so the whole thing of concentration in a certain room, of furniture, we would accompany it.

**Where is the family? Was it taken into consideration where the family would live?**

If there is a house which is clearly security-related and it sits and it's the tallest, then it doesn't interest anyone where they'll be. There is no thought. If there really is a security reason, if it's a family that has a lot of kids, I don't know what, or it lives in a small house, or it has no other place to live and there is a parallel security need, then OK, I have no problem ■

## 63 At a certain point we started breaking things

**unit:** Golani Brigade · **location:** Ramallah · **year:** 2002

► After we entered a building and found nothing inside – it was the Palestinian [Police] quartermaster's building, with only a stock of thermal suits and stuff – and after all the stress of that night, when a soldier from the Egoz unit was killed and we heard it all shouted on radio, we hung around there for a week or three days, and after a day of rest you start looking around for things. I remember that at a certain point we began to break stuff. It's really fun to smash up things, frankly, I think it's a fantasy most people have – throwing a television set out the window if they only could. But here, you're 20 years old and you have your chance to do just that, so you start to smash things. I found myself and several others in a moment of this kind of frenzy, breaking

tables and doors to bits, scattering a whole bunch of documents in each room, stuff like that. This possibility brings out all the madness in you, I'd say.

### **It's possible, so why not do it?**

Exactly. You can go ahead and smash. I think it's really like when you see people on MTV smashing their guitars on stage. There are a lot of video clips of someone going into his room and breaking things. It's the kind of fantasy that makes sense, but over there you have the power to act it out, and these are not your own things, and what's more, you're at war.

### **How much is being smashed?**

In the Muqata'a we went all the way.

### **What do you mean?**

I mean we smashed up everything we wanted to before we left, because we were sure the place would be handed back to them, so we said we don't want it to be intact. It was a kind of personal decision. Without leaving it up to the political echelons or anything. But I also remember that in house searches, when you go from house to house, there's this thing about breaking television sets sometimes. Sometimes you hear some story about an explosive belt found in a television set, and sometimes it's just for the sake of dropping the television, of throwing drawers out instead of just opening them and looking inside, and stuff like that ■

I found myself and several others in a moment of this kind of frenzy, breaking tables and doors to bits, scattering a whole bunch of documents in each room, stuff like that. This possibility brings out all the madness in you... there's this thing about breaking television sets sometimes

## 64 I would throw things on the floor, not give a shit

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2002

► If they needed a serious inspection, they would normally bring me for a serious inspection. We had to search in the apartment. I would come and find the things in the strangest stuff. One time I went into an apartment in Nablus. It was a totally normal family. It was the same apartment where I took the cell phone, by the way. We put everyone into one room, we started turning over the house. We found pictures

If someone was suspicious in my eyes, or he annoyed me, I was less careful. I would do things in a much more aggressive way

of weapons, of kids with weapons. So we decided that we had to deal with this apartment on a higher level. I came, and turned over every possible corner, myself and the rest of the soldiers there, found nothing, as it were. And then I had a brilliant idea. I went to the piano, there was a piano there, I lifted up its cover, its top part, what you open to see the strings, and I notice a long bag filled with swords. Now, these swords are swords of an art collector. You know, there are people who collect swords. I also have a sword collection. But the fact that they hid it, it was not OK. We started to yell at them and whatever, “why are you hiding things?” “We didn’t want you to take them, we didn’t want you to steal it, it’s a collection!” Of course we lifted it. The fact that they hid it was not OK for us at that moment. Now when I think about it, it was just stupid. They just wanted to protect their property, to hide their swords, they were afraid we would treat them as weapons.

#### **How did you do house searches?**

We would go from room to room, divide up into groups. Everyone would grab a room and take it apart.

#### **What do you mean, “take it apart”?**

Check the closets, look through the clothes, open boxes, open drawers, lift up the mattress, move pictures, stuff like that.

#### **How would you do it? Grab a closet and dump everything out?**

There were the careful ones and the less careful ones. I would try to be as careful as possible, but...I said that if someone was suspicious in my eyes, or he annoyed me, I was less careful. I would do things in a much more aggressive way. I would throw things on the floor, not give a shit.

#### **Were things broken?**

Yes, of course.

#### **Like..?**

All kinds of things. I said before. If you are really aggressive, things would fall. Listen, it can’t be prevented. Like, of course it could be prevented – if I didn’t have to do it from the outset. But sometimes things happen. I’m also crazy clumsy ■

## 65 You shoot at televisions for fun

unit: Oketz Dog Unit · location: General · year: 2002

► Then the instruction comes: “you can destroy, you can’t steal.”

### **What does that mean?**

Because what happened was there were soldiers who were just stealing.

### **What does that mean, “you can destroy”?**

You go in so from the standpoint of the IDF, you can destroy, you can destroy for the purpose of the mission. What we did – we shot at sofas – destruction for the purpose of the mission.

### **Are you allowed to turn over closets?**

For the mission, yes – in order to check that there is nothing in or behind the clothes, I am allowed. But I cannot steal.

### **And what’s the limit?**

That’s the thing, sometimes people would do it for fun – shoot at TVs, my friends from the paratroopers would tell me that they would sleep on the roofs in Nablus and shoot at the water tanks to see how they blew up, or that people would steal mini-discs and steal dollars ■

## 66 You just put everything in your backpack

unit: Givati Brigade · location: Gaza strip · year: 2002-2004

### **► Did you happen to witness looting?**

Yes, plenty.

### **What do you mean, “plenty”?**

Every time you got to a house, straw widows and such, you settled in for a few days and probably left the place totally trashed. Yes, after Operation Rainbow, Mosquito Sting, various big operations we took part in. I once took prayer beads myself. But

There's plenty  
of stuff to loot.  
They have really  
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these statuettes  
from their living  
room, CD players,  
cigarettes,  
daggers, a baseball  
bat, prayer beads

yes, there were lootings. A friend of mine took this large baseball bat, prayer beads, cigarettes. The Arabs – how do they make cigarettes? They don't buy them, they roll them. They have this tobacco and these rolling papers. Yes, there's looting, sure.

### **Any looting of valuables?**

Yes. A friend of mine took a disc-man. Listen, they live there, they have stuff, it's not third world, you know. There's plenty of stuff to loot. They have really nice houses, living the good life. Yes, you know, you simply stick everything in your backpack.

### **Like what?**

Like these statuettes from their living room, CD players, cigarettes, daggers, a baseball bat, prayer beads.

### **Was it something that your commanders, officers, knew about? Is this a known phenomenon?**

I can't tell you, I don't know. I assume that somewhere they do know, they didn't ask. See nothing, hear nothing. Soldiers weren't checked for stuff, although they did come back with bursting backpacks. But they didn't ask. The question wasn't raised. But yes, there was looting, sure ■

## 67 The operation was crowned a success

unit: Givati Brigade · location: Gaza Strip · year: 2008

### **► During “Hot Winter,” did you understand beforehand that it was going to be bigger?**

It was an on-the-fly operation, it wasn't something that they prepared. We were supposed to go home, and the company commander came and said – it was a day after four Qasam rockets landed and killed two in Ashkelon and there needed to be a reaction operation – it was the second operation during that time. I wasn't in the first operation because I was at home right after the course. It was my first operation, but it became clear to us that it was big.

### **What did they say to you? What was the objective of the operation?**

The objective was to kill terrorists and to search houses for weapons and intelligence, to arrest suspects, the regular stuff. Then it wasn't regular yet.

**Were there procedures, commands to open fire, like in the operations before it?**

I don't remember. I remember there was a guy who came with a cart and a horse, an Arab, and he walked past a few times, so the snipers of the operation or their officers decided that he was walking past there because he was a collaborator, and they just took him down. He was unarmed. I don't know who gave the order. There was a platoon of the operations company on the road and they were very excited. It was also the first time for me, but they were in...

**You entered at the north of the strip?**

Yes, the whole operation wasn't in the area of Sufa, rather in Jabaliyah and maybe another refugee camp.

**How far did you get?**

Jabaliyah, to the outskirts of the refugee camp.

**You go into the house, not while shooting?**

Yes. You remove [the Palestinians] to one room, you prepare for defense, you break tiles, fill sand bags beneath the tiles, you put them in the windows and you put people at posts, and it was a night with kidnapping warnings.

**Were there red lines around the house? From the standpoint of controlling the house, you seized a house and then what?**

Of course, there are sector borders for every post. The platoon commander would say to the squad commander or the sergeant, explaining that the range of every post is from here to here.

**Was there a specific point that if someone crossed it...?**

A red line like in an ambush, that if someone crosses then you shoot? No. At the beginning, again, the platoon commander said to me, "the line is like this," but it's mostly at your discretion. I think the platoon commander relied on the fact that we talked. But he said to me that if you see someone, don't report, just fire a rocket.

**After you seized the first house, how long did you stay inside?**

A few hours, really the morning hours. In the afternoon we started moving houses, the

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down

second night we spent in the house of a family and there people weren't handcuffed, they were just gathered in a room.

**Were all the houses you came to populated?**

Yes.

**Was there also fighting in Jabaliyah, in the houses you captured, in moving between houses? Did they shoot at you from other houses?**

They didn't shoot at my company, but there was a platoon in the assisting company that had to take a house. There were terrorists shooting from the house.

**You said that "Hot Winter" was crowned a success.**

Yes. They told us then, I don't know if after the fact it reduced the amount of Qasams. It was crowned a success because a lot of terrorists were killed and it created a certain warning, I think that's true. But you have to check it.

**You said that tens of citizens were killed.**

I think, they didn't say how many, but they said that 100 and something terrorists were killed, but I don't believe it, I believe that a few less and a few tens of citizens. That seems logical to me.

**What were they killed by?**

Certainly from the air force bombs, I don't think by the infantrymen. Maybe other companies fired rockets into homes, I have no idea.

**But you didn't.**

No.

**When you were guarding the family in the house, how did they respond?**

It was clear that they were scared, but it depended on the guard. I tried to give them, if there was a baby for example – to give them half a smile, and every second someone had to go to the bathroom and there are guards who respond "no." Sometimes the platoon commander says, now is a time when they can't go so there won't be chaos, so they'll understand that the norm is that everyone is there and they can't walk around, and they need to be accompanied to the bathroom. There was also an order that the door to the bathroom to be open a bit, not wide open, but open a bit. The families were afraid, but there wasn't any time that the guard would hit someone.

**Did you arrest people during the operation?**



Yes.

**Specific people?**

I don't know. I don't know who was deciding really, but I know that during the operation there were many arrests for interrogation ■



Separation

## Control, Expropriation, and Annexation – "Separation"

At first glance, the separation between Israelis and Palestinians seems designed to defend the citizens of Israel and bestow greater independence on the Palestinians. But the testimonies collected in this chapter suggest that the various Israeli mechanisms of "separation" serve mainly to assert control over the Palestinian population, leading to the expropriation of Palestinian lands, and their effective annexation by Israel.

Most of the barriers that restrict Palestinian movement in the West Bank are not spread out along the Green Line, but are located within the Occupied Territories to enable almost total Israeli control over Palestinian movement. The mechanisms of "separation" that Israel has put in place over the last ten years have not reduced Palestinian dependency on Israel, but deepened it. Despite the "disengagement" from the Gaza Strip - undoubtedly, one of the clearest examples of separation - Israel has preserved control over the population that lives in Gaza, and, often indirectly, in the West Bank as well. Israel treats the West Bank and the Gaza strip as two distinct social and political entities: for most of the past decade, Israel has forbidden transit from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip and vice-versa, implementing, in effect, another policy of separating Palestinians from Palestinians.

The separation of Palestinians from Palestinians had already begun in the 1990s, when the Occupied Territories were divided, according to the Oslo Accords into three zones: Area A was territory transferred to the administrative and law enforcement authority of the Palestinian Authority; Area B was territory subject to the security control of Israel and the administrative

control of the Palestinians; Area C, the rest of the West Bank, including the settlements, was territory under Israel's exclusive control. In practice, however, Israel has effective control over even Area A, ostensibly Palestinian-controlled territory, through checkpoints, offensive operations, and frequent military incursions into Palestinian cities and villages.

As part of the policy of "separation," Israel has spread a vast network of checkpoints and physical barriers throughout the Territories, some permanent, others portable and temporary. The various barriers and obstructions separate Palestinian residents of the Territories from Israeli citizens - Jewish and Palestinian - who live within the Green Line (e.g. testimony 21). It also separates them from Israeli settlers in the Territories (e.g. testimony 19), and from Palestinians who live in different parts of the Territories (e.g. testimony 17). Alongside these physical barriers, Israel operates a convoluted bureaucratic system that regulates Palestinians' movement in the Territories through the issuing of permits. The testimonies in this chapter reveal how Israel tightens its control over Palestinians' lives through the three-fold system of barriers, obstacles, and permits. Israel maintains a "regime of permits," that has the authority to restrict, and even prevent, the movement of Palestinians in territory controlled by the army and other Israeli authorities (e.g. testimony 25).

The main symbol of "separation" in recent years has been the Separation Barrier, the construction of which was begun in the West Bank in 2002. The Security Separation Barrier is part wall, part sophisticated system of fences and ditches. Certain segments of the Barrier are located close to the Green Line,

but others penetrate deep into the West Bank. The Palestinian territories that are enclosed by the Barrier on one side and by the Green Line on the other are called the “seam zone” (e.g. testimony 39). The Palestinians living in the seam zone have their movement restricted by an additional system of permits, licenses, and passages through gates and fences, to which they are subjected along with the general Separation Barrier system. In many cases, the Separation Barrier encloses concentrations of settlements, forming a broad land belt around them. In these cases the barriers greatly restrict, and even prevent, Palestinians’ access to their lands adjacent to settlements, especially to large amounts of agricultural land. The barrier then “adds on” this land to the settlements. In other words, the Separation Barrier doesn’t just separate human beings from one another; it also separates human beings from their lands and livelihood. The Separation Barrier contributes to direct dispossession of Palestinian land, which then becomes part of the Israeli settlements (e.g. testimony 13).

The system of “bypass roads” constitutes an additional means of separation. The areas near the settlements are closed to Palestinian entry by roads that are for “Israelis only.” Construction of the “bypass roads” also began in the 1990s in order to shorten and facilitate Israelis’ access to the settlements, and to enable settlers to bypass Palestinian settlements and cities. But in the last decade, Israel has placed restrictions on Palestinian use of West Bank roads, and in many cases, even completely forbidden Palestinian movement on roads close to settlements, and on roads that connect settlements. By means of temporary or permanent physical obstruction of the entrances and exits to Palestinian towns and villages, Israel prevents Palestinian use of many roads, thus reinforcing another system of separation between different parts of the West Bank.

At many times during the last decade, Israel has implemented a policy in the

West Bank termed “isolation,” in which the Palestinian population in one region cannot travel to another without special transit permits granted by the army (e.g. testimony 4). While the Israeli government has maintained that this “isolation” is intended to prevent the passage of Palestinian terrorists from city to city, the soldiers’ testimonies suggest that this policy has helped deepen Israeli control on the ground. For example, Israel cut off the northern part of the West Bank, where Jenin and Nablus are located, from Palestinian towns and villages in the south. At times Nablus was entirely isolated, and the army prevented all passage to and from the town, even to surrounding villages. The policy of isolation has had severe consequences on the Palestinian economy, as well as on the social and familial fabric of life. For long periods it inhibited family and commercial ties, as well as relations between Palestinians living in cities, villages, and separate regions (e.g. testimony 37).

Finally, the testimonies in this chapter reveal that the Israeli principle of separation in the Territories distinguishes between Israeli Jews, and Palestinians who are citizens of Israel (e.g. testimony 11). Testimonies from soldiers who served at checkpoints reveal the difference in soldiers’ attitudes toward Jewish citizens as opposed to those toward Palestinians, who must undergo rigorous and continuous inspections. Additionally, even though the law forbids the entry of all Israelis into Area A, Palestinian citizens of Israel are generally permitted to these zones, whereas the law is enforced with respect to Jews in many cases. Moreover, there are settlements that have an explicit policy forbidding Israeli Palestinians to set foot on the premises. In some cases the army cooperates with this policy. It seems that the army views these settlements as exclusively “Jewish,” and so forbids the movement of Palestinians, whether or not they are Israeli citizens.

The soldiers’ testimonies in this chapter show that “separation” is a policy that deepens Israeli control of Palestinians, helps the army dispossess Palestinians

of their lands, and leads to effective annexation of territories, and de facto expansion of Israel's sovereignty.

Since 2008, there has been discussion regarding the easing of internal restrictions on Palestinian movement through the limiting of checkpoints, for example. Testimonies reveal, however, that this shift in on-the-ground policy does not reflect a change in paradigm, and policy is still determined with an assumption of total control of civilian movement.

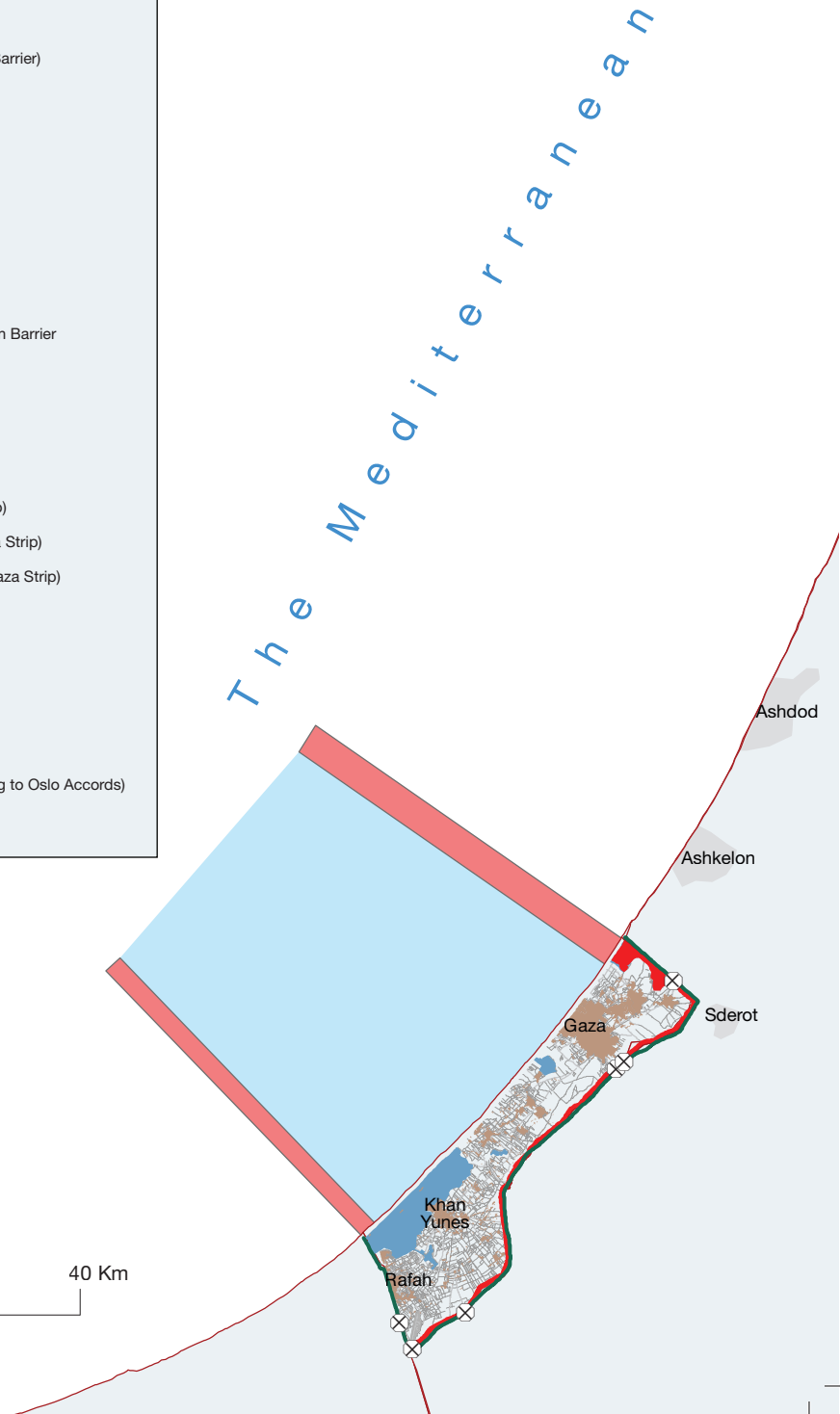


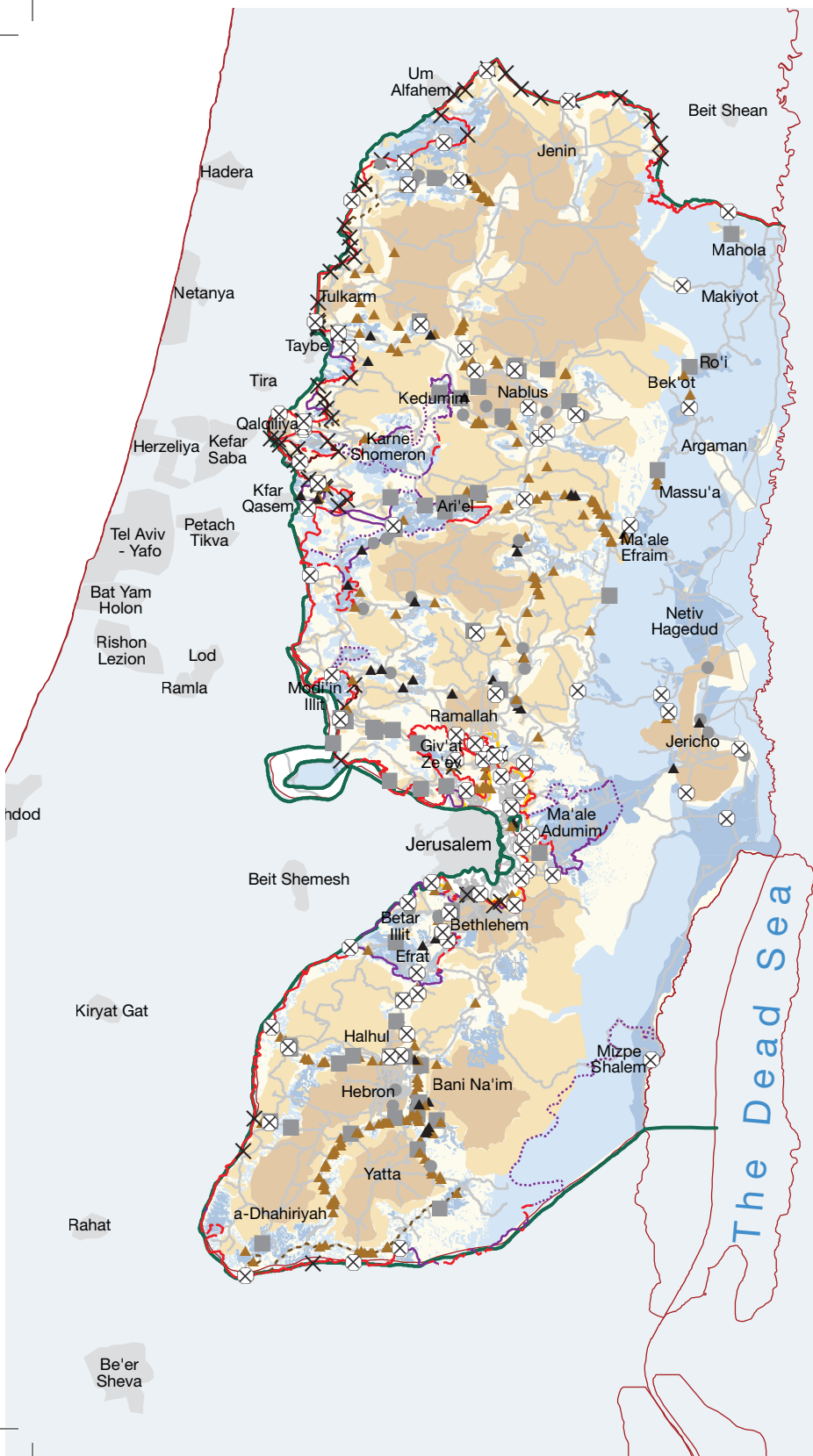


## Legend

- ⊗ Checkpoint
- Partial Checkpoint
- ✕ Agricultural Gate (in Separation Barrier)
- ▲ Dirt Blockade
- Guard Tower
- ▲ Blocked Road
- Gate on Road
- The Green Line
- Jerusalem Municipal Border
- Constructed Separation Barrier
- Canceled Constructed Separation Barrier
- - - Barrier Under Construction
- - - Canceled Barrier Route
- - - Barrier Protecting Road
- Authorized Barrier Route
- Forbidden Entry Zone (Gaza Strip)
- Populated Palestinian Area (Gaza Strip)
- Evacuated Israeli Settlements (Gaza Strip)
- Municipal Area (settlement)
- Area A
- Area B
- Area C
- No-Man's Land
- Gaza Territorial Waters (According to Oslo Accords)
- Forbidden Fishing Zone

0 10 20 40 Km











Soldiers at a road block. Nahal Brigade, 50th Battalion. Tul Karem, 2005





DCL checkpoint. Tank Corps. Jericho, 2003



DCL checkpoint. Tank Corps. Jericho, 2003





Random check. Nahal Brigade. Hebron, 2002

# 1 Until then I didn't know there were roads only for Jews

unit: Artillery [Reserves] · location: Jordan Valley · year: 2002

It was a military thing. You block everything...it's trivial but it's terrible. There is a checkpoint and it's only for a specific nation. It was another aspect of what I mentioned before, of the subservience

► The whole thing with the Jewish roads is a pretty shaking experience. There is no intentionality, there is no general policy. You drive on a road, you have no instructions of where to make the checkpoint. In principle, it is forbidden for Palestinians to drive on the road.

## What road are you talking about?

The Allon road. A long road.

## Parellel to Baqaa, right?

Yes. It is forbidden for Palestinians to drive there. In principle, if you see a Palestinian vehicle you are supposed to stop him, check his ID. You radio all the numbers, they check if there is someone wanted. I go over things that were written, you tell him he is forbidden to drive, that he should turn around, and he turns around. You stop at a random point on the road. A hypothetical situation – generally there is one jeep, but say there are two jeeps, you tell him to turn around, and then catch him another time.

## Did it ever happen that they said to you, “they told me there to turn around”?

I don't remember, because I was the driver. The function of the driver is to always stay inside the jeep. It was because of that I agreed to go, it was part of the discussion. I spoke with the company commander beforehand, and he said to me that I would be the driver and I wouldn't have to do operations. I drive them and they do everything: they make the checkpoint, even if something happens, you stay in the jeep. There was also an APC team...they would do all kinds of operations. Ambushes...he said to me that I wouldn't even come near it, I just drive. I don't know what their conversations were, I can only guess that there wasn't much logic to it. Beyond that there were surprise checkpoints. Nothing happens – you find a spot, an intersection or something, you park the jeep on the side, you put up a stop sign and spikes and the road is blocked.



### **The Allon road is blocked?**

At the point where you are standing. At another points it's open. If you arrive here, you stand. Generally the attitude of the forces is shocking: you stand, a twenty year-old boy, and you see people sitting there [sometimes some Sheikh], sixty year-old men not moving. I'm reading the book, *Lords of the Land: The War Over Israel's Settlements in the Occupied Territories*, it's exactly like that. The Lords of the Land decided: "This one you don't let cross, and he'll wait until we decide." When we go to eat, they fold up the checkpoint and everyone leaves.

### **For how long was it?**

From the outset they are forbidden to drive there, so the objective of the checkpoint is to demonstrate that we are enforcing it, to demonstrate there is a ruler of the road and that they can't do whatever they want. Another thing, we were the second reservist battalion in a row. And you know how reservists are...they look the other way more, they don't stop every car that passes.

### **You also didn't stop every car?**

No.

### **They are unmotivated?**

Yes. In principle, the order is to use discretion and demonstrate presence. If you see a car, for example a taxi with women, you say: "there is no terrorist here." If you see young men, you stop them. If the commander is forgiving, he'll let it slide, and if it's a commander who is bored, and his political opinions are more extreme – he'll stop [them].. I couldn't point to a logical program.

### **How long would you sit in the jeep and do a patrol?**

A shift, most likely 8 hours. I don't remember.

### **Unmotivated [stops] are neither here nor there, he lets it slide, meaning the group of women for example, a terrorist can dress up as a woman. So basically, what were the orders? You went for a briefing and what? Was there a briefing before you left?**

There is no mission. You have a shift of patrols. The patrols go up to the settlement points, one of them is definitely not legal because there were three caravans there, its parent settlement, which was legal, had our soldiers there guarding. You drive

through them, you see everything is OK, you go around and go on patrols all the time. The thing was that if something were to happen, the jeep would always be in the area, so it would be closer.

**Who told you what the rules were in the sector? Is there a briefing before each time you go up?**

It was five years ago, and if there was it was definitely superficial...definitely a jeep commander and not a company commander or something...going over the commands to open fire, if there were incidents. It was during the Intifada. He would tell about incidents in the sector or in the neighboring sector, what happened in the previous days.

**When you arrived, there was already an order forbidding Palestinians from traveling on that road.**

Yes.

**By the way, was it only on the Allon road?**

That was the only main road we travelled on.

**Were they allowed to drive on the side roads?**

Yes. That's like the justification, there was a main part which I also wrote you about, about the day that we got up and they told us we were securing a tractor. The tractor took dirt, it blocked all the paths with earth, the way from the road down to the villages.

**A military tractor?**

No, a civilian tractor. We secured it.

**That was unmotivated?**

No. Where did it come from? – I don't know. It was coordinated with us, we were the military part. Blocking everything. Even though it was forbidden to them, the Palestinians would go up on the road. You drive along the road, you drive along the road, you see every way up to the side roads is blocked with a mound of dirt and you can't cross it. You ask, "what happens if someone has to drive?" because the road connects Ramallah to Nablus. They say, "don't worry, there are side roads, they drive through the villages." They drive on those roads, for example, instead of taking 20 minutes it takes at least an hour. That's the road they can use.

**What side roads?**

The roads that lead to the settlements.

**You couldn't drive on them, do you remember which village?**

Right after I got home at the end of my reserve duty, there was an article published in *Ha'aretz* a week later by Amira Hass called, "Now even the Water is under Closure," exactly about how they blocked access to the villages. I'm not sure if it was in our sector or further north, but right in that same area. She wrote, the water containers couldn't enter, they don't have running water, they just leave them and their sheep without water, the goats already died from thirst and there is also a danger, or water and the price of a container of water jumped fivefold. We saw a settler who was working in the quarry with Palestinians, you know, a right-wing settler and everything, who said that something isn't right here...you can't deprive people of water and don't be surprised if it comes back like a boomerang. He was also talking about the whole thing with the blockades, he said there isn't a day where his workers don't call him and say to him they are stuck somewhere on the road even though they have permits. Whoever lives or works there receives a detailed permit.

**According to individual or occupation or location?**

I don't know according to what, but he has to hold [the permit] in his hand. If he doesn't have it in his hand he isn't worth anything. I told you earlier, a lot of times they just stop for no reason; they don't make it to the checkpoints.

**They don't check and then pass them along?**

Nothing.

**They just stop them.**

There is no movement on the road. He stands. He can wait there for half an hour for no reason.

**How long was the reserve duty?**

A month.

**Patrols, ambushes, arrests?**

No, I didn't do that. They did. They had a team that I don't know what they did there. What gave me a crappy feeling at the checkpoints, [was] that the road was forbidden for travel, it's trivial but it's terrible. There is a checkpoint and it's only for a specific

nation. How do you decide? They have their own license plates and they stop, the owners of those license plates stop. There are two lanes on the road – in one there are cars that are stopped, and in the other, an empty lane, every once in a while [there is] a jeep or a settler driving fast. It's clear to him that the checkpoint isn't for him. He doesn't even slow down. He slows down when he gets to the checkpoint itself, but he goes around all the cars, either he waves or he passes all the cars and continues. It also doesn't make sense operationally, because a terrorist who steals a car with yellow plates, then "see you later," because there is basically no order to stop [him]. From an ethical standpoint it also looks disgusting, in the heat of August, there is a row of cars standing in the sun...

**How long do they stand there?**

Up to a half hour.

**And after that they are turned around?**

No, after that that's it, the checkpoint is finished. A total lack of logic, that's the whole idea, I think it's just to be a burden on them, to cause them not to want to travel on that road. A. Delay them, take them off of the road. B. Physically block the road. C. These checkpoints, dirt embankments, but it's clear that from the standpoint of operational logic it's nothing. A terrorist with an IQ higher than 40, this is not what's going to stop him, this isn't what's going to stop terrorists, it is just to make the civilians miserable.

**If I were to go to the first briefing of the reservists, what would I hear there?**

For most of us it was our first service after the Intifada broke out, so the first thing you think about are what are the dangers, is there a chance they'll plant explosives on the road? During the briefing, the battalion commander said that we don't have anything to worry about because it's forbidden for the locals to travel on the road, you'll barely see Palestinians here. It immediately set off a red light for me, because I wasn't aware of the fact that there were roads only for Jews. I asked him if they were aware of it. "Yes, they are aware of it, whoever doesn't know – he sees the jeep and turns around, they understand on their own."

**It really happened like that there?**

Yes. If we stopped at an intersection, then definitely. Or they stop and wait, the trucks for example would stand there. Because there are quarries there. In the briefing

they told us to stop the trucks because there are quarries there. They couldn't turn around, they stood in place. That was another aspect that I mentioned before, of the subservience. You are there and you show power. People are willing to take it in stride, it was at the height of the Intifada.

**I just got back from the Jordan Valley, there is a high level of obedience. You can sit on a chair, call for them and they come, stop them from afar? No one would argue?**

Once in a while. If it was the afternoon and the heat would get to them, then they would start to scream and wave the permit from afar, and there was always a soldier who would say: "Don't come close..."

**Were there instances of violence?**

No. I'm sure they freak out, you know what can happen, you stand in your jellabiya in front of four guys with guns, you know where the border crosses. I'm telling you, even the screaming was rare. 90 percent of the cases were total obedience. The screaming was really rare ■

## 2 A life-splitting checkpoint

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Ramallah · year: 2002

► The Qalandiya Checkpoint literally splits lives. We used to call it that, "Life-splitter," another commander and myself. Families were split up entirely. Neighboring villages suddenly had this barrier stuck in the middle – here is father, there's mother, totally separated. Company \*\*\* of the 932nd [battalion of the Nahal Brigade] was there, a platoon of yeshiva students: totally insane, Arab-haters, willing to risk a jail sentence for the chance of doing something to Arabs. No God for these guys - religious guys who have no God as long as they're in the army. Eight-hour shifts at the checkpoint. There are two sides at the checkpoint, a sergeant and a squad commander. During the daytime there's an officer on duty, at night there is a sergeant and squad commander. An officer stands on one side, there is only a squad commander on the other side.

breaking the silence

That whole checkpoint is the Wild West. Everyone does what they please. No one knows, no one hears about it. No supervision... what do I mean by the Wild West? It means teargas booby traps wherever the fence is broken, where there are holes in the fence and everyone goes through. I'm not talking about terrorists - I'm talking about women and children who pass through there every day

And there are soldiers and another squad commander patrolling around, making sure no one sneaks through. It was the Wild West, the area around the checkpoint. What do I mean by the Wild West? It means teargas booby traps wherever the fence is broken, where there are holes in the fence and everyone goes through. I'm not talking about terrorists - I'm talking about women and children who pass through there every day. Kids who don't want to be late for school and women who want to go to their doctor's appointments go through that hole. So right on the loose brick, just at the hole in the fence, you put a teargas container with no safety on it, to be released the moment someone steps on it. Endless shooting in the air. And not just in the air, but preventive fire, as it's called. Aim at a stone near a person and fire.

#### **A "firing wall."**

A firing wall. Exactly. We used rubber bullets, concussion grenades, teargas. The Wild West. No one knows, no one hears about it. No supervision whatsoever.

#### **Was there no hierarchy of a commander giving an order to do something?**

Nothing.

#### **Any soldier does exactly as he pleases?**

Yes. It's the yeshiva students' favorite area, that "Wild West," because they know that there they can do what they want, beat up people as much as they please, just go wild. I remember many cases where we'd detain people just for the hell of it, because someone pushed others at the checkpoint, or he tried to bypass the checkpoint. Handcuffs, sit down here under the concrete slab, and let him wait there for the whole day. On principle. "Don't make a mess of my checkpoint."

#### **It's up to any soldier's judgment?**

That whole checkpoint is the Wild West. Everyone does as he pleases ■

## **3** The city is hermetically sealed

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus · year: 2003

► The story on that front was runaways in Elon Moreh. There were runaways. There

were people everywhere, tons of paths, dirt paths.

### **Illegal aliens?**

It's not illegal aliens because illegal aliens are in the area of the seam line, and there it's far from the seam line. The thing about Nablus is that there is a siege on Nablus. The IDF's tactic regarding Nablus is to separate Nablus from the surrounding villages. Meaning there is absolutely, positively no passage at all – at all – of people from Nablus inside and out. You have to understand the proportion: a person between the ages of 16 and 35, who lives in Nablus, has not left Nablus in the last 4 years even to go to a village next to Nablus. He could only be in that city. And because of that it creates a very large culture of smuggling. And the majority of the things smuggled into the city, because it's sealed hermetically, also go through the checkpoints. Whoever wants to pass things [into Nablus] not via the checkpoints, which is faster, creates all kinds of dirt paths there. There is a valley there that is totally plowed with paths, millions of paths, every day is a game of cat and mouse. You close the paths and you bring a bulldozer and it blocks the paths, and they open the paths. And on that deployment in Elon Moreh you separate between the valley and Nablus. So there are trucks that come from the valley and want to enter Nablus, and there are people who want to get out of Nablus, and there are people who want to go out and work and go to university, and they all flee, some on foot, and you can't stop them because there is no wall around Nablus. There are a million ways to get out. And there is a patrol there called the runaway patrol, and it chases after people all day, trying to stop things and it's really funny, because you stop someone...

### **When they catch a runaway, what do they do?**

So that's it, there is a possibility of detainment, there is the possibility of telling them to just go back to Nablus, and if you catch the same runaway a few times, then you can take him to that temporary prison camp, that same one (an improvised prison camp set up by the company to which we brought detainees from the checkpoint, who remained handcuffed there for a day or two.) That also happened. The most problematic period for the company-in-training, because again, the company-in-training normally works according to accepted practice, because the majority of the time the commanders are with the soldiers and they maintain the ethical code. But the

You have to understand the proportion: a person between the ages of 16 and 35, who lives in Nablus, has not left Nablus in the last 4 years even to go to a village next to Nablus. He could only be in that city

most problematic period was when we were given some kind of unclear permission from the deputy battalion commander, like half permission, to shoot tires of cars, because it really became an unbelievable situation.

**In the valley of the runaways or in general?**

In the valley of the runaways. When catching a car, after you catch it you flatten the tires. It was permission, which I personally had a problem with. There were other commanders who had a problem with it, and not everyone did it.

**The deputy battalion commander instructed you?**

He, like, gave some kind of permission to the company commander. After some two weeks they said: There was no such permission given, and they stopped doing it. But for two weeks the captured cars and the soldiers went wild. They shot the tires, they took a knife and perforated the tires of a truck...it really went to the level of pulling out the plugs from the cars. Abusing cars. And they defined the line, they said: Don't break windows. Don't vandalize the car, but take it out of commission.

**And what caused them to stop the procedure?**

An order came from the battalion commander. In the end it was illegal, the whole story with shooting the tires.

**And how did they deal with the fact that they did do it?**

They didn't deal with it, you don't deal with things in the army, you don't talk about it, you just move on. It was allowed, not, it's forbidden, it's over. That's how things work in the army, like everytime there is some kind of breach, someone puts on blinders, exploits some kind of ethical breach, does something, OK, smoothes things over, it's over. It never happened, let's forget it, it doesn't go forward. They treat it lightly. The fact that a few people shot at the whole car, and perforated it and destroyed it, no one cares. They are just things that happened. It happened in the valley of the runaways. The valley of the runaways was a very problematic point because you play cat and mouse every day, it's very exhausting, you feel like an idiot. You are also chasing after innocent people in the end. They want to work. It's very difficult for soldiers there to do it, the job stinks. It really stinks. It was, and you live it, and it's shit. That's it, it was also a really difficult period, 8-8 [hours of duty/rest] three months between the two checkpoints and the valley of the runaways, eating a lot of dust, living inside the APC.



A really disgusting place. It's also like a wilderness. That's it, afterwards it ended. I had enough because of that period of those five months, they really broke me, 8-8. And I decided I was going to the auxiliary company to be a soldier. It wasn't right for me to be a commander anymore under those conditions ■

## 4 We surrounded Nablus with a trench

unit: Engineering corps · location: Nablus · year: 2002

► In Nablus I was on a number of operations. To my dismay, the one I remember the most...we had a few, a little after Operation Defensive Shield. When we were sitting in a house inside, we would sit and they would send us on all kinds of operations. There was a period where we had to...there were these kinds of projects of digging ditch-embankments around the Palestinian cities. Just...

### **A ditch for what? Against tanks?**

A ditch...yes. A few backhoe teams just dug a ditch, and what they took out was [made into] an embankment. But for the most part, the truth is that they wouldn't make the embankment, they would only make the ditch. Digging the ditch around the...around the city as it were, to prevent the exit and entry of vehicles. It was an operation.

### **And are there fields surrounding [the city]?**

You did it in the fields. Who cares?!

### **Are they planted fields?**

For the most part, no.

### **What's the distance between the ditch and the city, for example?**

100-200 meters.

### **This ditch, how deep is it?**

Two-three meters. Three meters.

### **Three meters? That's a lot.**

Yes, you are digging with a backhoe.

**But around all of Nablus? What's to gain from this ditch?**

That's it. It's...I imagine that it presumably didn't make it around everything, but around the central destinations. You make...because you don't dig roads, you just block them. But it's an act, it's a few good kilometers. It's just ditches, it's not an achievement. I personally got to do it in the area of Nablus. But I think, if I'm not mistaken, they also did it around a few other cities.

**When you arrived was there already a ditch? Like, if I go to Nablus now would I see the ditch?**

No, I believe not, maybe some remnants. Because presumably it was covered up with the rain.

**They don't redig it? It was a onetime operation?**

No. I think it was pretty much a onetime operation.

**Who decided to do it?**

I have no idea who was responsible for the project and who gave the order from above. I know that for us it came from the company commander, he just sent the teams, said that is what we are supposed to do. I was with the battalion or the company that was closest to the place and from there I would go out every morning, go to work.

**How long did it take you to do the work?**

I think it was a few good weeks.

**Every morning you would wake up, and dig another section?**

Yes ■

## 5 What is it if not a ghetto?

unit: Paratroopers · location: Qalqilya · year: 2004

► As an instruction officer I would go around the tactical headquarters of the battalion commander, it was actually very interesting. The battalion commander would ask a lot of questions, talk with people. It was my first, and I think also his first, certainly my first, interaction with the separation fence. We would go around at night on a jeep, to

get to know the sector, and he would ask, see that basically there are villagers that can't cross, and it's their work. He would stop, all of sudden see some family sitting in their yard. "Tell me, how do you get to this and that?" And they would say, "You can't get there." "No, but what do you mean you can't get there? You certainly need to, so how do you get there?" "No. you don't get there." He would talk a lot with the residents there. Or they would close routes up on them, the central artery of some village. Just like that, the fence would close it off.

Qalqilya is closed on all sides and it has only has one gate. Enclosed with a wall and a fence

### **What was your reaction?**

That's something less army-related, it's about policy, it's the path of the fence. Again, it's an understanding of how terrible a thing it is. Especially in Qalqilya, the area of Qalqilya, is closed on all sides and it has only one gate. Enclosed with a wall and a fence. It won't help, what is it if not a ghetto? It's just closed. There is one gate, maybe there are more gates. When I was there they decided, there was something, they decided there would be no more gates, that they are closing them. There is one gate through which they exit and enter the city, Qalqilya. Indeed, it's not Nablus, but it's a big city. Among the small ones, but it's still a city, with a lot of residents ■

## 6 The commander said to block the road

unit: Engineering Corps · location: General · year: 2002

### **► Closing a road, who gives the order?**

A sergeant, the simplest one there is. He takes you...a few times where you just do it, they take you in the morning, you go around all the roads. Everything is open...

### **When there is a closed road, like a dirt mound. Is that what you do basically?**

#### **You put up dirt mounds?**

Dirt mounds. If there are stones in the area, stones. If there is a destroyed car, you put the car.

### **Opening a blockade – is there anything like that?**

There is. For the most part it's before they have to bring in some kind of IDF force,

breaking the silence

There was a pretty senior NCO there...he really enjoyed the whole thing. After the first blockade with the bulldozer he would get up on the hoe and ride with me

and then you have the points that are blocked more with blocks of concrete. Those that are relatively easier to move.

#### **The concrete blocks are easier to move?**

Yes. For us it's really easy. I destroyed...because of a mistaken order, I once destroyed an IDF checkpoint made of concrete blocks. It's simple. At least 20 concrete blocks. I just pushed them without feeling it with the bulldozer. I just moved forward.

#### **Does the border police commander give you the order to blockade?**

Yes.

#### **The checkpoint commander really tells you – “block this road, it’s disrupting my checkpoint”?**

He would tell me that, yes, but it's an order he gets from higher up. He tells me, just because he was from the force that guards me. There I had a standing army NCO [Non Commissioned Officer], either he was an officer, or he was a pretty senior NCO in that area who I worked with a lot. He really enjoyed the whole thing. After the first blockade with the bulldozer he would go up on the hoe and ride with me, which presumably is forbidden.

#### **What does that mean?**

Why?

**Yes.**

Because he would just enjoy it.

#### **What? The hoe? When you would move the dirt mounds...**

No, No. When traveling from blockade to blockade he would just ride on the hoe itself instead of getting back in his jeep and riding in it ■

## 7 A "sterile" route

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2005

► Here is something I really remember. Hebron, there were a few injustices I can recount, a few incidents. So we were in Tel Rumeida [a Jewish settlement in Hebron]

and there we guarded, you know how it is, there is Tel Rumeida, connected to Mitkanim, connected to the Cave of the Patriarchs, and the whole route is sterile.

### **What does that mean, “sterile”?**

Great, “what does that mean, sterile?” You see the injustice. “Sterile” means that all the stores on that street, which were once stores, almost all of them, except maybe one or two, are closed. Along the whole street ten stores are closed. That means that all of the houses, either someone lives in them or doesn’t live in them anymore, or they blocked it off so they can’t live there anymore. There are no Palestinians that enter the street. Like, a few. There are a few with work permits, and they aren’t workers there, the stores there are closed. There is one store open. There is permission only for certain people, very specific. So it’s like an atrocious injustice, because you see that basically [just] so that there can be facilities there, which include the Bet Romano Yeshiva and next to it there is another house, a house I don’t remember, some house before it.

### **Hadassah.**

It could be, and Tel Rumeida, the atrocious injustice. You see, they closed, they just closed it. The neighborhoods also, after Bet Romano, there is another neighborhood, which is like a courtyard, where there was, where a guy blew himself up there, a Palestinian. Next to Gross Square.

### **Avraham Avinu.**

Avraham Avinu. Now there, too – I also got there to guard – there, too, below, because the houses meet, Hebron is the Casbah, it’s like house on top of house, we had a patrol which just skipped between the rooftops. The patrol itself was on the roofs, not in the street, because those were trails in themselves, so they closed all the stores of the Palestinians below so they couldn’t bring explosives there or break out from there. Now it’s like logical, it’s very logical that you want to watch them in a real it’s, like, logical it really is very accessible; killing there is a clear and present danger. The problem is, the question comes up if they need to be there, do they really. And you see it. You see the poverty and the checkpoints and the great difficulty of an entire city or of an entire neighborhood to exist because of a few hundred people. You just see it. It, it also was, you see the crazy social disparity, the wealth compared to the poverty, and you see the terrible hatred ■

Along the whole  
street ten stores  
are closed...There  
are no Palestinians  
that enter, like, a  
few. There are a  
few with work  
permits

## 8 The ringing slap: Hebron

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2004

The settler said to me: "This is my city, this is my street, I do what I want here" ... You are there to serve a certain status

► This is the biggest frustration in Hebron. If we were in Gaza for two weeks...right before we were in Hebron we were in Gaza, so there was an operation, and a soldier from the battalion was killed there, and there really was a feeling that you were there because it is a kind of situation where you need to be a soldier. Hebron was the exact antithesis of that, the ringing slap in that respect. You are there to serve a certain status. One of the most frustrating things in Hebron is that the settlers don't care even from a meter away. They'll do whatever they want. The first week there were a lot of us, there is a road, the Tnuva road, which leads from the Avraham Avinu neighborhood to the Cave [of the Patriarchs]. Now, it was exactly during the time of I don't remember if it was a Jewish holiday, there was some holiday, Jewish or Muslim, I don't remember. I think it was during the period of some Muslim holiday. So they made partitions in the middle of the road, the Palestinians would cross on one side and on the other side the Jews would cross. Now, significantly, the number of Palestinians who cross the road was not two or three times, but ten times greater than the number of Jews who crossed during that period. I'm talking about hundreds every morning, each prayer. And they went to their side. If one, there was one Palestinian woman who [made trouble] just to do it and whatever, and her group started yelling at her, I said to her: "Ma'am, cross and it's..." I had a weapon. At a certain point she quieted down and crossed.

### Who yelled at her, the Palestinians?

They said to her: "Yes, yes enough, enough, come back, come back." They didn't want her to make a mess. And that same day a family of something like ten to fifteen Jews comes and they walk on the road "free style." And I go to them, I say to him "Sir, listen, we made a separation here on purpose, it's a certain period, I'm asking you to wait." "Who are you to tell me that?"

### That's what he said to you?

Yes. "Who are you to tell me? This is my road, this is my city. I do what I want here." I said to him: "I came here to protect you, please, if you are willing." "No, I'll do what I

want. We are giving in to them, you are too easy with them, you aren't hard enough, you aren't whatever enough." It was like, from that moment on I, there was a period where I said I would separate, like this whole thing of the issue of taking or not taking coffee from them. I said: "I don't want them to feel legitimacy for the fact that I'm there, for them to feel good about it." From that moment the settlers and me were at odds, until the end of my service. I wouldn't take anything that they would give me, to help me. I said I didn't want it. They annoyed me. Those were a few examples. There was that, and there was, there was a situation where a Palestinian father, again, everything is on the Palestinian road, he was walking with his son on his side, and then four settler children came. What a story, what a story. They picked up a rock, threw it at the Palestinian boy. I yell at them, and the father comes to me, says to me, "here, look, we aren't doing anything," and he comes [to me] frustrated, "look at what they are doing to us." And other than put my head down in shame, I can't do anything. Because I can't lift my hand against the settler children. I can't threaten them with my weapon. If the situation was the opposite I don't know what would happen there.

**What would happen?**

If an Arab boy would pick up a rock [to throw] at a Jewish boy, then presumably we would have to immediately handcuff him, blindfold him, send him to whatever, according to orders.

**Those are the orders?**

It's in the rules of engagement, situations and responses.

**The suspect-arrest procedure?**

The procedure for arresting a suspect, right. If a boy would pick up a rock. Forget about it, if a Palestinian boy were to go, and start doing things contrary to what I tell him [to do], like the Jew, saying to me, who are you, what are you, and whatever, I would have to start by shooting in the air, then at his feet, all kinds of things like that. Incidents happened in Hebron, there were all kinds. The company that relieved us told us about it. There was some crazy, not crazy, slightly retarded person who didn't understand what they were screaming at him. In the end he got a bullet in his leg. It happened to the 931st Nahal battalion ■

## 9 The protestors were beaten, and the officers crack sunflower seeds

unit: Armored Corps · location: Ramallah district · year: 2007

Try to visualize this: I see my officers laughing away with their backs to me, cracking up from laughter, and below I see the Border Patrolmen beating people to a pulp, guys suffocating, one bleeding...people getting beaten up, blood...they're laughing, cracking sunflower seeds, and I say, "what evil people you are." I look and they say, "look what a blow that guy just took!"

► On my second deployment to the Territories, I was in Makabim, in the front command staff crew the whole time.

### Whose?

Investigative operations officer. You don't stand at the checkpoint, but you go out when something happens, you go out to Bil'in every Friday. I'll never forget that. I went to Bil'in, we went to the fence, I was all excited, lots of action, demonstrators. All you're interested in when you're in the army is to be in on the action. These were my first days, I was happy, we see the Fence to the right, and olive groves. On the left I see olive groves and something doesn't make sense. How do people get across? I ask my commander, totally naïve, he's a major in the Israeli army, he should know: "how do they cross?" "They have special permits, they need to go to the gate." "Whenever they please?" "No, there are designated times." "And why was the Fence not erected beyond the groves?" "Why are you asking questions now? Come on, there's a demonstration." These were usually the answers. They were actually saying, "Don't think."

### There are orders.

Yes, either it will just make things tougher for you, or take out the good side from it, it's all for a good cause. We got to Bil'in, so it was more of a protest demonstration near the Fence, so we're going to protect the Fence, we warn them, "if you get close, we'll be using force." They get closer, there are shoves, stones, clubbing, teargas, rubber ammunition. Gradual escalation. I stand on top at the demonstration, above the Border Patrolmen, there are my commander and the BP commander and another officer, I don't know where he came from, some lieutenant-colonel, and they're laughing, and meanwhile people are being beaten up. I see them from behind. Try to visualize this: I see my officers laughing away with their backs to me, cracking up from laughter, and below I see the Border Patrolmen beating people to a pulp, guys suffocating, one guy bleeding. And I think, "this is just like the book I'm reading,"



and again, no comparing at all. I wouldn't want you to quote me, although this is the feeling that comes up. It came into my mind, it's not my fault, that's what came up. I feel bad about that.

**It doesn't have to be included.**

Always when people are being shot I have this image in my mind, I must have seen it in the movies, of Nazis shooting Jews into pits, and officers laughing on the side. It's not the same thing and there's no connection, but people are being beaten up, there's blood, they're laughing, cracking sunflower seeds, and I say, "what evil people you are." I look and they said, "look what a blow that guy just took!"...

**What happens down below? The demonstration started non-violently?**

Yes. They come along with their banners, the Border Patrolmen tell them, "if you get close we'll use force, this is a closed military area." They get closer, the policemen shove them.

**What triggers the shooting?**

As soon as there are stones in the air, we can shoot rubber at their leaders.

**You shot too?**

No, I was always asked if I wanted to shoot. But I said, "what for? There are all of these guys."

**Border Patrolmen?**

Border Patrolmen, the armored corps, the artillery corps, they rotate.

**What means are used first in response?**

First of all they're shoved, the soldiers used to be equipped with billy clubs. Nowadays it's lots of teargas and stun grenades right away, and occasionally rubber bullets. Now I know it from the other side...now they don't cross the Fence, but they used to, now they stand on the other side of the Fence.

**So first there's physical violence, hand to hand, clubbing, and then what's the first phase of shooting?**

Clubs are used, then stun grenades, teargas, both together.

**Did you get to see teargas canisters being fired out of launchers?**

Yes. I have a film here that I took from the side of the soldiers, you don't see that well.

**Do you recall the orders you were issued there as a soldier?**

Yes, on radio. With all due respect for the risk, what can happen from a stone throwing? But forget it, it's not important. A 15 year-old was shot with a rubber bullet in the leg...

**You hear instructions for other means too, on radio, how and when to fire?**

Yes.

**How does it sound? What kind of instructions?**

There are also lookouts looking at their screens and speaking on radio: "That guy there behind the tree, on the left," and then rubber ammo is fired at him.

**And when it goes beyond rubber?**

I didn't get to see that, the orders there specifically were not...

**All the activists with cameras.**

We were told to try to avoid being filmed. I remember once an Asian journalist was arrested, and my commander yelled at him and I was really ashamed. A journalist... My commander terrified him and I was in shock. That's all it was, soldiers swearing at leftists, "because of you guys I'm stuck here on Friday instead of eating at home."

**What were the orders regarding launchers for teargas and stun grenades?**

I happened to hear orders every Friday. They were not to fire without confirmation, neither rubber nor teargas, and the confirmation came right at the beginning – and then fire could be opened freely.

**There is an initial confirmation that holds for opening fire?**

Once, all the armored corps soldiers lined up and the commander told all the guys throwing stun grenades to do it together, there was an insane blast, and then the teargas started. Usually they are directed, but you know, when four soldiers shoot together, he can't direct each of them where to aim. The idea is that the commander really tells the soldiers where to shoot.

**Essentially you're supposed to fire at a certain angle?**

They take the trouble to say that too. The rules are fine. The problem is that when someone fires flat ahead...

**Did you happen to see this?**

Yes.

### **What was the direct reaction to that?**

It wasn't noticed, and didn't hit anyone. I don't know if he did this on purpose, it was constant. He didn't aim, but fired. When I once came back with the Border Patrolmen, one of them said, "I nearly killed someone out there," and someone else replied, "Bro, don't mess up..." And everyone laughs. There is no sincerity about the fact that someone almost died. The commander said to him, "Bro, don't mess up." These are good border patrolmen compared to what I had seen. At those demonstrations at Bil'in, I realized how unnecessary this all is, I saw the land grab, after that I went and saw the film on Bil'in and saw my commander in it.

### **You saw it as a soldier?**

Yes. I began to talk to people, and once we were on a patrol in the middle of the week and there were some guys in the olive groves and I talked with them, and I was told not to. My commander did try to drop a few words in their favor occasionally, but it was obvious ■

## **10** They would close the stores as a collective punishment

**unit:** Nahal Brigade · **location:** Ramallah District · **year:** 2008-2009

► There were consistent and daily [people who] cut the fence, throwing rocks, etc. That was the main activity, there wasn't any hostile terrorist activity. It's important to state that it was the actions of young men, twenty and over. Every now and again there were more serious demonstrations, but from what I remember there weren't weapons, it was slingshots and things like that. They were guys who went to Ni'lin on Fridays.

### **What did you do there for the most part?**

During that time I was in the operations room a bit, and we had two vehicle patrols on the fence or in the valley and in the villages a bit.

**How did it work with the fence? Was it forbidden to be a certain distance**

breaking the silence

At night there would be [people who] cut the fence...there was a short period in Ni'lin where there were some guys who shot Ruger 22 caliber sport rifles [prohibited for use by the IDF], they put sharpshooters at a certain point in the area and they had to shoot at the knees and below

### from it?

Yes, there was a distance that getting close was deemed suspicious, or that the lookouts would identify kids – at a certain point, after school was over, or at night there were [people who] cut the fence. That was daily.

### What do you do? For example, the lookout says she sees a boy coming close.

We show that we are there, so that they'll get away, we try to make them see us and if they get close or cut or throw stones, then there'll be use of means [to disperse them]. I don't remember the commands to open fire but it didn't come to live ammunition. The worst was the Ruger sport rifle [prohibited for use by the IDF], a lot of times they went into the village to disperse them. Sometimes we used tear gas.

### Inside the village?

Also. I think there was almost no Ruger. Maybe when we were on the Israeli side of the fence they would shoot to the side of the village, they were more open areas, but stun grenades, teargas, rubber bullets, in that order.

### Were there orders how to use the gas and rubber bullets?

With the permission of the commander, maybe even the company commander. Stun grenades and teargas – with the permission of the commander in the field, if I'm not mistaken, because it was immediate, and the rubber bullets was with the permission of the company commander, and perhaps at a certain point the permission of the battalion commander, because there were anomalous incidents with rubber bullets in places afterwards. There was also shooting at legs.

### Were there instances where people were injured?

I think there were. There weren't injuries from the teargas but...from the rubber bullets yes, they hit [people].

### Are you talking about guys on the fence, or the demonstration taking place in the village or at the entrance to the village, or at?

Either in the village, or four meters from the fence, or both.

### And when they disperse the demonstration inside the village?

I was never there, so I don't want to say. I was almost never at a disturbance of the peace. It was a very strange time, I was almost never present at those things.

**What did the guys who came back from Ni'lin recount?**

It's total chaos, a ton of teargas, stun grenades, at a certain point there were Ruger 22 caliber sport rifles fired. There was a short period in Ni'lin where there were some guys who shot Ruger sport rifles [prohibited for use by the IDF], they put sharpshooters at a certain point in the area and they had to shoot at the knees and below. But they told me that, I wasn't there. It wasn't every Friday.

**Were there agricultural gates along the lines of the fence?**

I think there were. I think we got there after the olive harvest, so we didn't have much involvement.

**Weren't there soldiers who were posted on your fence to open and close the gate?**

No. But there are two settlements there, I don't remember their names, and the roads were shared with Arabs and Jews, but there were rocks thrown at the cars of Jews, the road goes through the villages, a road that serves Palestinians and Israelis, there were a lot of incidents of rock throwing.

**Did you respond?**

We went, we checked, sometimes scouts would arrive, you have no way of finding a boy who threw a rock at two in the morning. There were periods where they would close the road or the stores as a collective punishment, during our time.

**In which villages?**

Qibiyah, Budrus, they were in the area, I don't remember. Not necessarily in those, but in the area of those there were.

**How many stores would they close?**

It would change.

**Would they reopen afterwards?**

After a few hours or a few days ■

## 11 "Do you think that I'm actually going to wait behind an Arab?"

unit: Kfir infantry brigade · location: Tul Karem · year: 2008

The brigade commander ordered that Jews wait at the checkpoint just 10 minutes. Because of that, we had to open a special lane for them, and the rest, the Palestinians and Arab Israelis, would wait in the other two lanes

► There was one checkpoint that they divided into three lanes. In Sha'ar Ephraim. There is a settlement, a checkpoint, and then Israeli territory. In the middle, there is a Palestinian village, so they just split the checkpoint into three lanes. There were three lanes, and the brigade commander ordered that Jews wait at the checkpoint just 10 minutes. Because of that there was a need to open a special lane for them and the rest, the Palestinians and Arab Israelis wait in the other two lanes. I remember that the settlers would come, go around the Arabs and they just did it naturally. I came to a settler and said, "why are you going around, there's a line here, sir." He said to me, "Do you think that I'm actually going to wait behind an Arab?" He started to raise his voice at me. "You're going to hear it from your brigade commander." I told him, "he is a citizen of Israel just like you, you have the same ID card, there is no reason for you to" ■

## 12 I'm embarrassed by what I did there

unit: Combat Engineering Corps – NBC Unit (Nuclear, Biological, Chemical) · location: Elkana · year: 2005

► During the time when I was a commander at the company-in-training and I moved to operations, we were at a checkpoint whose name I don't remember.

### Where?

It was in Elkana, it's a fence that separates the Jewish from the Palestinian houses, and there is one Palestinian house on the Jewish side, they put the fence up incorrectly there, and because of it they put a checkpoint. All of their access...They had family on the other side so they had to cross there, so they put up a checkpoint. There were

rules that whoever crossed, I don't remember, it's forbidden for people to enter if they don't have documentation or a permit for such and such, a work permit. There was someone there who returned from outside [from the Israeli side of the fence] and he pretended like he didn't understand that he couldn't enter. He had a bag in his hands, and he was asking why, why, and he knew very well why. After two hours he came back again and he said he was the other guy's twin, I don't remember if he brought a permit, I think not. He really annoyed us...it's not pleasant for me to talk about it... He really annoyed us, and we decided to punish him, so with his bags and everything we put him in a corner, blindfolded him and restrained his hands, and he sat there for 4-5 hours. Just like that, like, that's like something I am embarrassed about. I'm embarrassed. I don't know...

### **Why?**

Because it's, wow, a totally different world with totally different rules. In this world here, that story is unacceptable, in my eyes it's unacceptable...there it's so natural. The rules are so different. No one can understand unless he is there. If I tell it to my friend...it's a small story from among shocking stories, it's something small that I feel uncomfortable about. If I were to tell my friend who didn't do the army and she has an ideology – I don't know how she would respond.

### **You never told anyone?**

No.

### **Were you embarrassed at the time?**

No.

### **How many people were with you?**

Three.

### **What did they think about it after? Or today?**

I don't talk to them today.

### **But did you talk about it after, if it was ok or not? Maybe he deserved more?**

I remember that at some point, one of my soldiers said he would bring him water or he would go out to release him. Yes, they felt a little...But we really didn't talk about those things, what happens – happens.

### **When did you start thinking about that incident?**

There was someone there who returned from outside and he pretended like he didn't understand that he couldn't enter... we decided to punish him... we blindfolded him and restrained his hands and he sat there for 4-5 hours

When I was released, only after, also, some time after.

**How did it suddenly pop up?**

All of a sudden, a picture. A powerful image I have when you talk about, “What Did You Do in the Army.” I saw a documentary on Channel 8 about female soldiers. A lot of images came during the movie. Images that I didn’t have a chance to think about at all.

**Were there other incidents like that? Similar to those?**

All kinds, yes.

**You don’t remember?**

I have pictures in my mind, but I don’t remember details. I really repressed that period. I couldn’t stand it there, or I have trauma, but I finished the army and I started a new and totally different life. I’m telling you, the most banal concepts, I don’t remember the terms. I know what you are talking about, but you have to remind me ■

# 13 You don't know what you are doing there

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2004-2006

There is not much  
in the way of  
terrorist action  
there, but  
mentally you get  
really screwed up

**► What are the sterile roads in Hebron?**

David Road. That’s a sterile road. In our area, only David, I think.

**The wholesale market, what happens there?**

That too. But I think it’s Tnuvah Road, too, no?

**The market inside Avraham Avinu settlement.**

Okay, there too, totally sterile.

**The gate over there?**

Totally sterile.

**Were there any problems at the wholesale market?**

There were break-ins, and once these two girls tried to set fire to something.

**What do you mean, “break-ins”?**

They attempted to break in with crowbars, after all, everything there is abandoned.



Once I remember these two girls set fire to something, I don't remember exactly. I thought: two girls, what the fuck! What do they want? We also talked about the fact that Jews pass by there freely, including at places where they're not supposed to be. Jews are not supposed to walk from Shelomo post to David Road towards the school and towards the Pharmacy Junction post, but once they did. They're only allowed to travel by car there. I'm nearly certain. Once they simply walked through. We tried to stop them, so eventually we were radioed: "Okay, let them walk." What could we do? We tried to keep them back, it didn't work.

**Officially there's no ban.**

I don't know. I have no idea. Could be.

**Do the Arabs have official prohibitions?**

Of course.

**Do they tell you during the briefing?**

If you see an Arab on David Road, you perform a suspect-arrest procedure. Always.

**You know that's not legal?**

Really? No. Why?

**David Road was open to them all the time, but as a fact on the ground the army closed it.**

Too bad the soldiers are not told. I didn't know this. I don't know, listen, so I broke the law. I didn't know it. I know that back then, when we were stationed there, and I was there as deputy company sergeant major, the High Court of Justice had ruled that Palestinians could travel the David Road all the way. I remember it was a real mess, it made life really hard for the army. We didn't understand this ruling, it was pointless, really. Like I said, as regular soldiers we just didn't want rioting, violence. And this would create violence. It's not as though the Arabs have no way to get to the Cave [of the Patriarchs]. Again, obviously it messes up their lives, they're stuck with it. But you look at the balance and say: Okay, what do you prefer? For them to walk five minutes longer, or to have riots?

**You're sure there would have been clashes?**

Positive. Sure thing. You know \*\*\*, the sergeant? I remember he once told me that in his time, there was the David Road patrol. There was this market, on the Arab part

of David road, that's what he told me. At 38 post, he told me everything there had been calmer. I simply couldn't picture it. I said: how can that be? Because now, any Arab who'd show up there, as if they had intelligence, you'd immediately have all the settlers swarm there.

**Did this happen?**

Yes, sure. Plenty. All that slapping around. That's what happens there, it's very quiet from the standpoint of activity, there is no stone-throwing. Occasionally, but not... I've been in other areas where stone-throwing is the norm, every day. Over there there's none of that, there aren't too many serious outbursts. It's always a few slaps here and there, and they're separated, end of story. They keep a kind of status quo. But when there's a real clash there, you totally enter the picture. Wow, all hell breaks loose. That's what's so amazing in Hebron. It's not a deployment where lots of things happen, not much in the way of terrorist action and stuff like that, but it seems that mentally you get really screwed up there because you don't know what you're doing there. You simply don't know the reason ■

## 14 The senior soldiers pulled a prank, the workers permits went missing

**unit:** Nahshon Brigade · **location:** Yakir · **year:** 2001

► I felt that something that wasn't right was going on here...One time when we were at the battalion at Yakir, and we went to buy something in the settlement, we went and sat there...There was a gate guard from the reserves who was doing settlement guard duty. So we spoke with him. It was me and another two guys, and we were talking with him. Then he came out of his guardpost, and the guys took those travel cards of the Palestinians with the picture. Like an ID, but a card which allows for travel on the roads in the West Bank.

**From the District Coordination and Liaison office?**

Yes. Now these cards, what's amazing about them, is that you already know from

the checkpoint how hard they are to get. Because people only show you those that are expired, and they tell you stories about how they are already trying to renew it. And you realize that it is almost impossible to get while still valid. So we were shocked to see that apparently the guys that work on the settlement had valid ones. In Yakir, in the Yakir settlement, they had Arab workers. So the few workers leave their documents at the gate, and enter the settlement. So what did the two guys that were with me do? They took the documents and put them in their pocket. A guy without his documents, you can imagine what...

### **Why did they put them in their pockets?**

Because of their ill will. Just because, he went out for a smoke and they played a prank, they hid it from him. Of course nothing would happen to him [the reservist]. Like what? It's just some guy's travel document. They [the Palestinian workers] will come at the end of the work day and start...

### **They aren't ID cards?**

Travel documents that grant you passage on the Jewish roads in the West bank, and I don't know what exactly. For us at the checkpoint, for example, whoever showed us the document, nothing would happen. The procedure didn't change. You can't cross and that's it. But apparently there are places that it did help.

### **They just took it? Did they give it back later?**

No. They just took it. It wasn't, they had never seen those Palestinians before. They just took them. So I said to them, "give it back." In short, there was like...they also weren't the most sympathetic guys in the company...there was like a thing...like, I said to them "If you don't give them back, I'll tell the guard when he comes back that you took them from him." So they started threatening: "We'll fuck you up and whatever." You know all that...you know what? I'm embarrassed to say it. I don't even remember how it ended. I don't know, really. It was like when I was, what, half a year to a year in the army. I don't remember how it ended. I only remember it like...I really remember that it was the first time I realized that an 18 year-old boy with a bit of ill will can fuck up someone's life. The next day the guy can't get to work, and you already know that the guy, in order to get the card, went through seven circles of hell. You've passed through there, in Kedumim, the District Coordination and Liaison,

So what did the guys who were with me do? They took the documents and put them in their pocket... It was the first time I realized that an 18 year-old boy with a bit of ill will can fuck up someone's life

you know what happens there. And you know that you've never even seen it while valid, because it's so hard to get. And they, they just really liked the case of the Arab ID cards. Instead of a wallet it was trendy to go around with the ID card case...there are orange and green ones. So later you see the senior soldiers with them, so they took them. What would they do with it? They would do something, because you need something with a hard bark to fix your equipment, so they would you...there was something they would use the hard back for. Yeah. Listen, I wouldn't fix my equipment, I would let other people do it for me. In any case, whenever they would take something like that which was expired, then there was like permission, I think, to confiscate it. Because it was like you'd say, "if you are using it, you are trying to pull a fast one on soldiers, you cross with this and this." So they would take it. And they would use the back of it to fix equipment, maybe dog tags, something.

**Did they take things like that a lot?**

Yes ■

## 15 A bone in the throat of the local population

unit: Artillery · location: Shaked · year: 2002

► I oversaw the Shaked checkpoint near Jenin for four months.

**You were a squad commander?**

As I was a veteran in my battery, and there was a shortage of commanders, the veterans were assigned to command the checkpoint.

**Essentially most of your engagement in the Territories was at checkpoints?**

Yes. Naturally there were operations, but since I was a checkpoint commander, I hardly ever participated in them. All I know about them is from hearsay.

**What kind of training did you receive to command a checkpoint? What is the preparation like?**

In fact it's a rather short briefing by the battalion and the company commanders about the designated area. What the pending threats are, the mode of action, a kind

of five-minute practice we performed on the Golan Heights to see what a checkpoint is supposed to look like, what we are supposed to do, before we go out on the front. A short lecture from the battalion commander that the Palestinians are not our enemy, that we are to carry out ongoing security activity, that we are to prevent terrorism, explanations about the 'purity of arms' and its importance. All in all it was rather brief and marginal. Both operationally and from a humanitarian perspective, matters were left pretty much to our own discretion. This resulted in the fact that each soldier actually determined what his checkpoint would look like from a humane point of view.

### **Please describe the Shaked Checkpoint.**

In fact, Shaked Checkpoint no longer exists, because the Separation Barrier now runs right there. In principle, it is supposed to be a crossing point in and out of the Occupied Territories, but it is pretty deep inside the Territories because of a rather large bloc of settlements near the '67 ['Green'] line. The checkpoint was set up to separate the Jewish population in the area from most of the Palestinian population. The problematic aspect of this checkpoint is that the people who cross it regularly did not have permits, none of them. This was a time when the Territories were under nearly total closure, no entry or exit of workers, but the village located east of the checkpoint, Tora-something, a large part of it belongs to the Kabha clan – a very large clan, most of which is inside Israel. Villages such as Ein A-Sahle, Arrabe, certain villages in Wadi 'Aara are all of the same clan, so that a large number of the residents of this village hold blue IDs by way of marriage or other family complexities. So they do have permits to cross this checkpoint.

As for the security check, they had the standing of Israeli citizens, that's one thing. But they are Arabs, so their cars had to be literally taken apart. Another problem was that several tiny villages lying west of the checkpoint did not really have an entry permit into Israel, but nothing stood between them and Israel.

School, shopping, large parts of the family, all lay on the other side of the checkpoint, namely to the east of it towards Jenin, Nazlat Zeid, Ya'abad, the larger communities in the area. This means that we actually had to deal on a daily basis with the same people. You got to know them personally, their personal stories, what each was

We mostly inspected people who were allowed to cross, and a lot of trucks of Israeli Arabs who came from the territories and wanted to get out at the end of the work day... To him they were Israeli citizens on the one hand, but they are Arabs and you have to take apart their cars

seeking on the other side of the checkpoint, when he crossed, when he came back. And so this went on, as we actually only inspected people who are permitted to pass, and many trucks of Israeli Arabs arriving from the Territories who needed to get out at the end of a workday. This was the assignment of that checkpoint.

**How many people would cross every day?**

This is not comparable to the Tunnels Checkpoint, A-Ram or other entry and exit checkpoint from the Territories. Perhaps because at the time I was there, which was during Operation Defensive Shield, the Territories were under total closure, there were very few people allowed passage – only permit holders. The main village west of the checkpoint is Umm Al Reihan, with about fifteen families residing, and nearly all of them would cross on a daily basis - children and youth going to school, adults on their way to work, a few women.

**Crossing over into Israel?**

Crossing over into the Occupied Territories, eastwards, mainly to Ya'abad and Jenin.

**These guys are considered Israeli citizens?**

No. Umm Al Reihan is west of the checkpoint, its residents hold Palestinian IDs. Nowadays I don't know what they do, because there is a fence, a wall running between them and the reality of their lives. I haven't visited but I understand it's very chaotic.

**You monitored the passage of...**

Palestinians living west of the checkpoint and Israelis living east of the checkpoint. That was the main mess.

**There was no passage of Palestinians living east of the checkpoint over to the west?**

There was, but only of such who hold blue [Israeli resident] IDs. In fact, such was everyday reality. For the most part, there were no huge crimes against humanity committed at this checkpoint. The mere fact of its existence was extremely problematic. It was like a bone stuck in the throat of a population that had done nothing more extraordinary than go to school and then back home ■

# 16 They aim their weapons at the student

unit: Armored Corps · location: Ramallah district · year: 2006

► We provided support for the Halamish front, until the Nahal troops arrived. It was the first time I was exposed to the checkpoint. We were four guys, the privates and a young commander, who also was never at a checkpoint. You stand there, in the middle of the night, between a village called...north of Ramallah – Anata, I think. Atara? A checkpoint to the north of Ramallah, where all the students come in...Ber Zayit and whatever. The first time we were there, we were all scared. No one knew. You are in the middle of the territories. We didn't have any idea what we were doing, our commander had no idea whatsoever of what he was doing. And that's it. It passed quietly. I didn't really understand why we were checking them, because they were crossing from the Palestinian side to the Palestinian side. They don't enter Israel.

## What is the briefing, really? What do they tell you to do?

Nothing. There are people who...there is oh, men between the ages of 18 and 40 cannot cross the checkpoint.

## Why?

I don't know, we're privates. It's not supposed to interest us.

## That's just what they said?

That's what they said.

## From the Palestinian side to the Palestinian side.

Yes. Into Ramallah. North of Ramallah, to the city. It's a road that passes above a Jewish road. It's a road that Palestinians also travel on. I didn't really understand what...I asked, they said to me – there is nothing to do. You have to find them. You know, right...It's a bit, questions started popping up...nothing serious, but I always had to. I said: "Guys, we are here getting involved in their lives." I was sensitive: "Say good morning, thank you." "It's unnecessary." You know, "Try, they wait here in line for a long time in any case." So at night, there was a religious guy with me who was in a preparatory program in the territories [before the army]. He would come, he would come to me after the checkpoint and say "Every Arab who crossed, I said to him

Do you know what image comes to a Jewish soldier aiming his weapon at a group of citizens? I didn't really understand why we were checking them, because they were crossing from the Palestinian side to the Palestinian side. They don't enter Israel

‘good morning, safe travels.’” I decided, that’s it, I’m changing the situation in the territories. By the way, before the army, I wanted to be enlisted into the border police. I requested the border police. I said, “I’m gonna make some changes here.”

**In the border police?**

Yes, I was lucky they didn’t send me, in the end I would have really suffered. Or I was a little crazy.

**Why, you feel like you were successful in changing things in the armored corps?**

I did succeed, yes...but I succeeded in talking to people who were ready to listen. In any case...that’s the checkpoint at Halamish. In the morning, we were there from the evening until the day. By the way, that same night they tried to run us over.

**What do you mean? Who tried to run you over?**

A Palestinian. We were standing on the road at the checkpoint. When the man came towards the checkpoint, he started accelerating. He accelerated, accelerated, and there were clear orders – you don’t shoot at a vehicle after it has stopped. The moment it is no longer life-threatening it is forbidden to shoot. He accelerated, and the soldier and I look to the sides, we shot in the air and a patrol went out.

**They didn’t find him?**

I imagine they didn’t. And then afterwards, “you see what you Arabs do?” And then I thought to myself, “they are half-right, what are they doing? They’re trying to kill us.” And then my questioning started, like, what are we doing to them here, [but] it doesn’t ever justify killing. In any case...In the morning, the pressure of the checkpoint begins...both the company commander and the deputy company commander are there. They put me in a small guard-post nearby, not the checkpoint...I aim my weapon, I’m inside, just my weapon sticks out, the barrel, and I stand there in the event that something happens. And I see a lot of students, good-looking girls, going to university and I’m aiming my weapon [at them]...The hell with it, I’m standing there with tears in my eyes, why am I aiming my weapon at them? And I see my company commander and the deputy with weapons, holding them like falangists in the air: “You, come here!” with force. People from the line push and everyone yells, and it’s all a big mess, the Palestinians push and want to go around, and they are late to work. It’s a



crazy balagan [mess] and I'm standing there in the guard post, aiming my weapon at everyone. Do you know what image comes to a Jewish soldier aiming his weapon at a group of citizens? It popped up in my head, and caused a switch. I'm not comparing for a second, I just understand. The comparisons aren't legitimate, but the fear is...you know, it started from somewhere. What scared me is not that they would do things like that, I'm jumping ahead to the conclusions, that they don't have the same value as regular people.

### **The Palestinians?**

Yes.

### **That's also what you felt when you were there?**

Less so, but it's built up each time, I don't know, in school they give them the same value as people, also at home, and also in the army according to the rules, generally, but when you get involved in people's lives like that, and you control, and you can determine when he eats and when whatever, slowly you lose your worth. After two years they no longer have value. They are dolls. That moment was the beginning of the turning point in my thought process. I was aiming my weapon at students. It's so obvious to everyone and it's totally not obvious. I went, I spoke to my platoon commander, I said to him that today...I was with him, I also knew that he was also really to the left...I asked him to speak with everyone, that they would understand that we aren't ruling over anyone and that they would understand they should treat them with respect. There was really a tone in the distance, and I couldn't discern if it was for me or against me. The company commander was religious, and he spoke nicely and agreed with me and everything, he was a settler by the way: Everything was well and good and they spoke with the soldiers, two weeks ago I met with a soldier, and he told me that our company commander went to talk with him, because he was a soldier with a lot of influence in the company, so that he would talk with the guys and not let them do anything. I felt great: there is a response from the system ■

# 17 The gate duty of the Palestinian village

unit: Nahshon infantry battalion · location: Deir Ballut · year: 2001

The inspection  
itself, if you  
were to stop and  
think about it, is  
unnecessary,  
since he can only  
get to neighboring  
Palestinian  
villages... It is a  
road which has no  
Jewish traffic...  
Bottom line, it's a  
Palestinian  
checkpoint, there  
is no place to  
run to

► Our line of duty was in a settlement called Aley Zahav, in the Yakir sector. The battalion that sat in Yakir and us got Aley Zahav, Magen 50, the checkpoint is in a very picturesque village, it's the Deir Ballut village on its western side.

## What's picturesque about it?

There is like a path going towards it. Everything is level but the path twists, like it's Oz, without any connection to the conditions on the ground. It's a checkpoint which basically prevents Palestinian vehicles from crossing onto the new road which connects Aley Zahav and Peduel to the trans-Samaria road. So the checkpoint is there to prevent Palestinian vehicles from crossing onto the nice road they made there. Once the road went through the villages there. It's called an "only road" in military terminology. And the road would cross through the villages there, A-dikh, and Berukin, which are across from Aley Zahav. But as a result of stone-throwing they made a bypass road, and on the bypass road, of course, Palestinian vehicles are forbidden to drive. The checkpoint is there to prevent the arrival of Palestinian vehicles.

## It was forbidden for them to travel from the beginning?

When we arrived, it was forbidden for them to travel. The company didn't change anything. Aside from not allowing Palestinian vehicles, they also checked all the vehicles that passed. It was basically a gate to Deir Ballut, because from that road...

## That's the only road to Deir Ballut?

Yes, that's the road to Deir Ballut from which you get to the villages, you have a left turn, if they come from Deir Ballut you have it, you can travel in the direction of the villages, Refet and then Bidiya, Misha and everything, or a right turn towards Rantis. At first they didn't allow the right, later they did. In short, you really had the feeling that you...At a certain point we knew everyone from the village. It's a very small village. Just like someone with gate duty stands in a settlement, so like that they had a kind of gate for the people in the village who, even if they travelled, the inspection itself, if you

were to stop and think about it, is unnecessary, since he can only get to neighboring Palestinian villages. It's a road without any Jewish traffic, and there also isn't really access from it. So it shows how you really just make a checkpoint there every day for no reason. To prevent hostile terrorist activity. Like during the briefing, before going up to the checkpoint they'll say to you: [it's] to prevent hostile terrorist activity on the "just road," which is the Jewish road. And really they prevent the Palestinian vehicles from going up on it, and they examine Palestinian vehicles to prevent the trickling of hostile terrorists into the sector.

**Was anyone caught there?**

No, there is nothing there. There is nothing to check, there is no incentive to cross. There isn't. Bottom line, it's a Palestinian checkpoint, there is nowhere to run. If he continues, he can drive on the road as much as he wants. He'll encounter another checkpoint or another concrete block, he won't connect with anyone, he won't find Jews. The Jews he'll meet are soldiers. Like, there aren't any there. In any event, it's a very unnecessary checkpoint, which is why they gave it to a track company in the Nahshon battalion, which is a small, not so well-known battalion. It was only established in '98, they didn't give it such a hot sector, certainly not to the company that just went up to the front. So at the checkpoint there very quickly became an atmosphere of like...I know that I was at the checkpoint, so generally I would just let the vehicles pass. Because again, the inspection was pretty unnecessary. There was even a dirt road which could bypass the checkpoint.

**And you let them bypass?**

You could see that there were vehicles traveling there, and whoever cared about their car and didn't have anything to hide would come to the checkpoint. But still...you know, stubborn people...they check who comes to you and doesn't travel on the dirt road – because the dirt road, people traveled on it to show you the absurdity of the whole thing. But it doesn't matter, that's not why we gathered here. That's from a philosophical standpoint, how retarded it is ■

## 18 There is no passage for Palestinians

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Neve Tsuf settlement · year: 2002

The local population doesn't travel on the roads that we travel on, that the Jews travel on. The only thing that we did there was chase away settlers who threw stones at the Palestinians during the olive harvest

► As a young company they didn't give us a lot to do. There was a checkpoint and there was a patrol. And the local population there, I mean the Palestinians, they are in the villages and they don't have the ability to travel on the roads that we travel on, that the Jews travel on. If they do cross, they cross through the fields, and generally they cross the border to work in Israel. But we didn't get to encounter Palestinians there, with the exception of one thing that I remember from there. It was three weeks, it was really short. One thing that I remember was that there was the period of the olive harvest, and there was a mess there because the settlers from Neve Tsuf I think, and some other place, I don't remember anymore. We had to deploy and chase them away from there every time, because they were throwing stones, the settlers, because they reported to us that they were throwing stones at the Palestinians during the olive harvest. Really close to the road, the groves. We would arrive, no one would be there, they already had run away. That's the one thing I remember that we did.

### And at the checkpoint?

They didn't cross at the checkpoint, there was no passage for the Palestinian population ■

## 19 Every Friday: A Closed Military Zone

unit: Kfir Infantry brigade · location: South Mt. Hebron  
year: 2004-2005

### ► So how do you remember your time in Susiya?

In Susiya there were a few things. There is an area between the settlement and the post, the post isn't too far from the settlement itself, but there is a two-kilometer or so road that had a few families in tents, that's the first thing. There were a lot of encounters with left-wing activists in that area. All kinds of complaints about Jews

bothering them while they are harvesting olives and things like that. It was a period during which every Friday the army would more or less declare the area near Susiya a closed military zone.

### **So how did the settlers get home?**

Of course not the settlement itself, and not the access road to the settlement. I'm talking about the area between the post and the settlement, which is a distance of about two kilometers. Where a few Palestinian families lived, and that's what started the whole mess. Because the Jews were suspicious of the proximity on the one hand and on the other hand, the Palestinians complained that they were always bothering them in their farming, and wouldn't let them get to their grazing areas with their sheep. The left-wing activists came to support the Palestinians and went with them to their grazing area, and the Jews on their side called the army to move the Palestinians away from there because they were getting too close to the settlement.

### **Then what happened?**

What would happen normally is that we would move the people away. Each encounter wavered between more and less extreme, where the less extreme is that we stood there dividing between the area that was close to the settlement, and where the Palestinian shepherds and left-wing activists were, and separate between them. Those were the more minor cases. The more serious cases was a patrol removing the Palestinians from a certain area where they were, once or twice we arrested left-wing activists on the basis of their being in a closed military zone, which is forbidden to them. Beyond that...I remember one afternoon when there was an argument with one of the...We returned with the company commander's vehicle for access and we saw a Palestinian shepherd in an area where he wasn't supposed to be close to our access road, we stopped to talk to him. I don't know what the conversation was and how it started, more or less he refused to move away. The men from his family arrived in our area, some kind of violent struggle broke out...

### **What does that mean?**

In simpler language, basically at some point someone said a few wrong sentences and they started fighting.

### **One of the Palestinians said a few wrong sentences?**

The left-wing  
activists came to  
support the  
Palestinians and  
went with them to  
their grazing  
areas, and the  
Jews from their  
side called the  
army to move the  
Palestinians away  
from there  
because they  
were getting too  
close to the  
settlement

It started with the basic refusal, because it was really after a period of a few months, we knew him, he knew us, he knew exactly where he was allowed to be and where it was forbidden for him to be, and for some reason that same day he decided to stand up for himself and say: "This is my grazing area and I'm allowed to be here." What I remember is that his family arrived very quickly and too late, after that confrontation left-wing activists came to the area.

**Wait, but what happened during the confrontation?**

The confrontation was the first stage. It was only our company commander's jeep, later another patrol Hummer arrived, meaning about 7 or 8 people in total, on the other side there were 4-5 people, and there was a violent confrontation. If I remember correctly it made it to the media. There weren't serious injuries or something like that for either side, but there were blows. There is no other way to describe it.

**And later?**

Afterwards those guys dispersed, at some point they ran away to their tents. More forces came to our side. On their side they ran to their tents. There was one guy, the one who started the whole thing, that shepherd who stood up for himself as it were, the police also came to the area, we decided we were going to get close to their tents to look for him. At some point, one of the guys, we were walking around with a policeman from Hebron, and if I remember correctly, the guy saw him from a tent 50-70 meters away from us and the company commander, together with the policeman, decided they would try to chase after him. They took off most of their equipment and started running after him as fast as possible. There was also a funny thing, somewhat unrelated. A policeman drew his weapon, a dog came, one of the dogs that went around in the area there with one of the families it seems, it was barking which apparently threatened the...it started running in the direction of the policeman, the policeman shot near the dog in order to scare it. That's it. In the end, the guy at that point managed to run away, the chase continued more or less all night. A confrontation kept going quite intensely on the access road, constant, between the left-wing activists, the army, and the settlers. On an almost weekly basis. There was almost no direct contact between the settlers and the Palestinians. Normally what they did was that they saw the Palestinians too close for their liking to the settlement,

or in the areas which they declared from a certain point were too close, and it was forbidden for them to get close, the moment they got too close they would call us.

**Now that time there was that confrontation, generally it's not acceptable for a Palestinian to hit a soldier, like here you are talking about a situation where they actually hit?**

Yes, there was definitely a hand raised, that I remember, the first hand raised was actually on the Palestinian side, from there it all went downhill, everyone tried to help their friends. On the one hand, we weren't concerned to the point of using weapons, shooting in the air or something like that for example, it wouldn't help. So everyone's first instinct was as soon as one of the Palestinians would hit, raise his hand at one, our guys were to come and help, on the other side there was the same thing from their side, and then we started to call for backup because presumably, as you said, it's not an acceptable situation and you cannot allow it. The response was very...I don't know if I should say sharp, but yes, people came there and as fast as possible in order to suppress the thing ■

## 20 They closed the road for a month

unit: Kfir Infantry Battalion · location: Emmanuel · year: 2005

### ► How long was the road closed to Palestinian traffic?

It could be for a period of a month sometimes.

### A month?

Yes. I don't want to give numbers but it could be a long time.

### What were the reasons?

Attacks on the road.

### There are attacks for a month?

No, there is an attack so they block the road for a month.

### Where was the attack?

I can't tell you, I don't remember what the story was there...It's the same story, OK, it

also works for me chronologically. It was when I started to be a platoon commander, when I arrived as a platoon commander in the line of duty, I was deployed with my soldiers.

**It was the first time you were a platoon commander on a long deployment?**

Yes. The first time I was a platoon commander on one deployment. It was on the Otniel line, the South Hebron Hills. A week before the whole company went up to the line, I went up there for some briefing. On that day there was an attack on Bet Haggai, a Palestinian fired shots from a vehicle.

**From the Sheep Junction?**

No, not from the Sheep Junction, a little further south, Junction 200.

**Do you remember when it was?**

Around June 2005. It was an attack where they shot, they basically shot from a driving car, a drive-by-shooting towards hitchhikers. Two 17 year-old boys who were standing in the hitchhiking stop were killed, they wanted to go from Bet Haggai, into our sector, a little before Hebron, in the direction of Otniel. The vehicle came, got there, turned around in a traffic circle, came back, shot at them, turned around, and drove away. They weren't able to catch the vehicle. As a result of what they did there, they said: "great, Palestinian vehicles are forbidden to drive on the road, vehicles with green or white license plates, are forbidden to drive on the road, and it will be a road reserved for Israeli traffic."

**Then the blockades of all the villages begin?**

Yes. Then what happens basically is front-end loaders and stuff come and you block the, there are all these dirt paths which run from all the small villages into the main road, they blocked them. Your objective is basically you make a lot of check posts which are meant to prevent people from getting on the road. But it happened in a few other instances, when they put explosives on the road, all kinds of things like that. Now, it's a road which runs north-south, it's a route that is considered essential for the territories by the army. Meaning, if there is no Israeli traffic on the route, if Israelis think they cannot use it on a regular basis, then the objective of the army has basically failed, that is, to create a normal life style.

**How long was the road closed since that incident?**



I can't tell you exactly.

### **Did it happen other times?**

Yes, there were a few other times that the road was blocked. Every time there were explosives on the road, basically every time there was a security reason for which the road had to be blocked. Every time they, every time they, like, tried to attack the road or someone traveling on it.

### **Every time you found explosives, [it was closed] for a month?**

No, not for a month. It's per the decision of...generally less than a month. A month is the longest that I remember. It was around a month. I think it was a month, I don't know exactly how long. In principle it's generally a few days, a week, two weeks, something like that. But yes, it happens a lot in that sector. At least in the period of summer 2005 it happened a lot ■

## 21 We played Tom and Jerry

unit: Lavi battalion · location: Hebron area · year: 2005

► There was the whole thing with the trucks transporting marble. There are quarries in the Bani Na'im area and all the factories in Hebron, in South Hebron. And none of the drivers have a permit to drive on the road, they drive on the Mamila road and bypass all of the blockades. The battalion commander and the brigade commander went crazy. The battalion commander gets up in front of you: "Why are there Palestinian vehicles on the road?" He would go crazy. And you can't stop them. It got to the point where we would take keys, IDs – by the way, taking someone's ID is illegal. Taking someone's keys is also illegal. And you just can't stop the traffic. The majority of the people are just innocent people who want to make a living, right? There was some meeting, the brigade commander came to speak with the staff, and I said to the brigade commander, "I'm receiving an order that I cannot fulfill. If you really don't want any traffic here, give me one magazine of ammunition, live rounds, permission to destroy two trucks and to shoot someone in the leg, that's the price." He said to me: "What? How can you do

Whoever bypasses  
the blockades and  
drives on the road  
without the  
necessary  
permits...  
sometimes you  
take a guy to the  
base...handcuffs,  
blindfold, you put  
him at the gate so  
he'll "dry off"

something like that, it's unethical." I said to him: "Yes, that's right, it's not ethical, but that's what we need to do if you don't want there to be traffic. Give me the means, you are giving me an order without the means to do it, and that's the price." That's after I was there, like I don't know, eight months, when I understood what was going on, right, he said: "You can't do that." I said: "OK, don't give me the order, or don't get annoyed when you see trucks." At least he was shocked, like I wasn't seriously suggesting it, right. I don't want to shoot anyone, I wanted to shake him up a bit, that's what you need to do if you really-really want to, you have to use force, a relatively large amount of force. And he said: "OK, we won't use force." There still was the order, but OK.

### **It ended there?**

Listen, the whole thing with Palestinian traffic on the road that surrounds Hebron is a game of cat and mouse, it's really like that. It's really like you are in a Tom and Jerry cartoon. Someone goes out from here, so you go, and he goes like this. And it got to the point where we were trying to stop the truck from working. As far as I know it didn't get to the point of destruction of property. Why? Because you stop a truck, you take the person's keys, you take his ID, you remove all the air from the tires, you don't puncture it, you just take out the air, right? You even take the person.

### **To where?**

Sometimes you take a guy to the base...handcuffs, blindfold, you put him at the gate so he'll "dry off"...

### **A truck driver transporting marble on route 60?**

Yes, sometimes marble, all kinds of things. Whoever bypasses the blockades and travels on the road without the necessary permits, etc., etc., a Palestinian. Sometimes you just bring the guy to the gate, put him in the booth and he sits there, sometimes for an hour, sometimes half an hour, sometimes for a day, from morning to night, but it doesn't matter what, even if you take the guy, you pass where the truck was on the side of the road where you stopped it, an hour later, sometimes even five minutes later – there is no truck. It drove off. Always. It doesn't matter, you take the keys, lock the truck, a truck without air in its two front tires, and they have some kind of compressor, right. And you take out all the air from the air compressor, you don't cut the wires, there is just some tap, you just open the tap and all the air goes out, and

the cabin is locked and the motor is off, meaning there is no way to create more air – you come back, ten minutes, half an hour, an hour, the truck disappears. Amazing, it's just amazing. Listen, when someone is in trouble and he needs to make a living, OK, he'll do a whole lot of things. Until it gets to the point...if he'll be afraid that they'll just burn his truck or he'll be afraid that they'll shoot it – then he won't drive it. It's too much of a risk. But if they take his ID? OK, let them take the ID, who cares. If they take his keys? OK, he has another ten keys at home. Or sometimes you start it with a screwdriver, those old Mercedes, a screwdriver, or a nail, the same thing. His motivation is high ■

## 22 Limiting the traffic in the area

unit: Field Intelligence · location: Jericho · year: 2009

► **You were at the checkpoint on the way to Jericho, does anyone even cross there?**

Jericho, you have to get to route 60 and you cross there. Israelis don't cross there.

**It's a checkpoint at the entrance to Jericho?**

Yes, look, here is Jericho and here there is a village. Only those from Jericho can travel to that village, because although there are also people who come from Ramallah who want to take a shortcut to that village, so they travel via Jericho but they only let them cross from around the other side.

**The checkpoint is for the use of only those who live in Jericho?**

Yes.

**Other Palestinians who live in Ramallah have to travel around?**

Yes.

**Why?**

I don't know. I also think that the checkpoint was taken down in the most recent removal of checkpoints.

**How would you know someone lived in Jericho?**

Only those from  
Jericho can travel  
to that village...  
sometimes they  
looked the other  
way and let them  
cross and  
sometimes they  
said to cross via  
Ramallah

According to his ID. By the way, for the most part they let them cross.

**Did you inspect the vehicles that crossed?**

Yes. They wouldn't degrade – remove them from the car and have them spread their legs – rather they would talk to them nicely: "You know that it's forbidden for you to cross here." Sometimes they would look the other way and let them cross and sometimes they told them to cross via Ramallah. If they were to turn to me and ask me if he had permission to cross – I would see from where he was going and to where he was crossing, and I would use my discretion whether or not to let him cross. In the end I was the last conscience.

**Were there other instructions at the checkpoint aside from that?**

That was the purpose of the checkpoint.

**To verify that the people driving on that road were people who live in Jericho.**

Yes, in order to limit travel on the roads in the area as much as possible.

**Why limit?**

I don't know ■

## 23 We would get conflicting orders

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Bethlehem · year: 2005

The orders at the checkpoint were according to the Jericho DCL, so the guys who came from Bethlehem couldn't get back home

► There was a crazy story there, we realized there were conflicting orders from the DCL [District Coordination and Liaison]. It was shocking. There was a DCL in Hebron and a DCL in Bethlehem. It was shocking. So these guys came with these orders, and those guys came with those orders. And you received an order, and the orders of the checkpoint, for example, were according to the Jericho DCL, so the guys of the Bethlehem DCL couldn't get back home. All kinds of stuff like that.

**Did you understand the orders?**

No. we didn't understand anything. We had to figure it out ourselves. We felt that something was rotten, we uncovered that there was this issue of two DCLs and the

contradictions between them. It was shocking ■

## 24 A kind of complete arbitrariness

unit: Paratroopers · location: Hebron Area · year: 2001

► Each time they would open and close the road with a front loader, their road, building like a mound. And every time they opened it we would have to guard the crossing. It's hundreds or thousands of cars, even pedestrians. You stand there, three-four soldiers with an APC. There isn't even anything to do, at least one has to guard the APC, it's also a gigantic area because it's like a checkpoint on both sides of the road, on each side there is like a 4-5 km line of cars. And then basically, what's important from an operations standpoint, is that there should not be a block in the road, that a traffic jam won't start on the road.

### **On the Jewish road?**

Yes, yes. And then you let them drive, they start driving, and there is no room for two cars at the same time, like in both directions. So immediately there is a traffic jam, and you start directing traffic because you have to somehow release it.

### **And what happens at the checkpoint ? You inspect everyone?**

No. There is a surge of people. Thousands of people.

### **What is it a checkpoint for?**

It's a checkpoint to limit their traffic at night, or at the hours when they begin curfew. Sometimes you inspect suspicious things. There are cars which are allowed to enter which arrive from route 60, trucks, with yellow license plates, of course, other plates don't travel there. Each time the order changes, who can cross and who can't cross. So a line builds up again, because truck drivers who don't know they aren't allowed to cross because either two hours ago, or yesterday, or two days ago, they were allowed, so a traffic jam is created again. How many times a day can orders change. It's a kind of complete arbitrariness, which I at a certain point... One incident I certainly remember, was there was some restriction on trucks with yellow plates, that such and

Truck drivers who don't know they aren't allowed to cross arrive, because either two hours ago, or yesterday, or two days ago they were allowed... How many times in a day can you change orders

such, and they can't enter anymore, and traffic jams started to build up. I said I'm not letting them enter. Until now they could enter, I don't care, I'm not endangering the road and my soldiers because of it ■

## 25 Incoherent information

**unit:** Otef Jerusalem [Reserves] · **location:** Ramallah district  
**year:** 2004

Suppose that you  
were to come  
now, I'm just  
throwing  
something out,  
from Bethlehem,  
and you want to  
cross. It could be  
that in this line  
there is a soldier  
to whom you will  
arrive for  
inspection and he  
will let you cross,  
and it could be  
that in this one he  
won't let you  
cross... because  
this one heard one  
thing and that  
one heard another

► Something that really, really bothered me – and I can't begin to imagine what it's like to go through it for three years, now there are guys there from the military police, there is also nothing to refresh them because in reality this is their entire service – is the lack of order. By chance I know, I have a friend who was there before, he was the checkpoint commander before they brought the military police there. In reality it was a group, they were in the armored crops, it was a kind of deployment, with them they were very organized and knew briefings, today we allow passage from Jenin, today we don't allow passage from here, today we allow passage from there, warnings from here and there...when I was there, on the other hand, no soldier could give...he would go totally crazy. You are in a kind of absurd situation in which A, during the briefing they don't tell you anything. Briefing...just to fulfill the obligation: the sector, this and that and whatever, and you go up to the checkpoint. So then rumors start that today there is a warning about this, I don't remember who the parties are, but let's say the intelligence office says like this, and the DCL says like that. So everyone is sure of different things, not that it really interests them, meaning I'm talking about the soldiers themselves at the checkpoint. Suppose that you were to come now, I'm just throwing something out, from Bethlehem, and you want to cross. It could be that in this line there is a soldier to whom you will arrive for inspection and he will let you cross, and it could be that in this one he won't let you cross because this one heard one thing and that one heard another. They are sitting right next to each other but there is no communication. And you feel like every...you are forced to argue

with someone afterwards, explain to him that he can't cross, what are you arguing about really? Meaning, what's your leverage in the argument if the guy next to you is contradicting you completely? You feel like everything you are allegedly fighting for, you want to have some kind of feeling of a national mission or a goal by the mere fact that you are there, actually it has no basis. Because nothing is based on some kind of warning that you can rely on. All of the information is completely crossed, and it's something that totally drove me crazy. It was really out of control. I tried, I said: OK, if I'm already there I would go, try and understand, go around with a notebook between the posts and update the soldiers, but it was impossible to get something, some kind of coherent information. It's something that really bothered me and I can only imagine [it bothered] the soldiers there too, a lot ■

## 26 The orders were not clear

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Tapuach settlement · year: 2007

### ► Did you do anything in Tapuach aside from the checkpoint?

I was in the settlement without a fence for a week, I guarded the entrance gate for twelve hours [a day] with a friend. It was fun.

### **The road that you described that was only for Israelis, do you remember which one it was?**

There are two roads. For them it leads to the villages, it's blocked and they can't go up. It was used by them to get to other villages. It caused a lot of disturbance because they used the roads, so they paved a road which they were forbidden to drive on. They have to walk 300-400 meters, and whoever isn't strong enough, they would come with vehicles [to get them]. There wasn't an organized checkpoint there, so it was impossible to stop their vehicles. The orders there were unclear, it wasn't black and white.

### **What would you do? Turn them around?**

Yes, but what difference does it make? Even the brigade wasn't sure of itself.

### So what did you really do in a situation like that?

At first we turned back all the cars in the direction they came from. It was also dangerous to turn them around like that, for example, turning around a truck ■

## 27 I'm just a cog in the machine

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2006

They came to me all the time with official documents: "Look, it says here... They are allowed to walk on this road, it's blocked there too." In the end they said that some lieutenant colonel gave permission, that it has an expiration date, he can [now] give the order that it's forbidden. And that's how it ended...

### ► Do you know about the Palestinians, where can they go, where can they not go, do you know?

No, it also was, I had a lot of arguments about it. There were all kinds of people from all kinds of organizations like TIPH [the Temporary International Presence in Hebron], do you know all those organizations? TIPH are OK because they are just observers and they don't bother you, but CPT [Christian Peacemaker Teams] are a group of, like, old people who bother you all the time. It could be that they are very nice, I don't know, they bothered us a lot. So I had a few conversations with them about this too, because they would always tell us that the roads like Shuhada street, is in principle permitted to Palestinians. But they told us that it's forbidden to Palestinians, only Jews can walk there. This too: there wasn't a crossing for Palestinians. And there was also a certain point where they came again, like legally: "Wait, what are you doing? They are totally allowed to walk there!" So there was about a week of a feeling that in a second they would allow Palestinians to walk there, and then we would have to secure the entire road. Something, as if there was going to be a crazy and terrible riot which we were concerned about, because it would mean grinding out more guard duty, and that there would be a lot of riots and disturbance and fighting and I don't know what. In the end they said that some lieutenant colonel gave permission, that it has an expiration date, he can [now] give the order that it's forbidden. And that's how it ended... They came to me all the time with official documents: "Look, it says here. They are allowed to walk on this road, it's blocked there too," all kinds of things like that.

**What did you say to them? You went on the radio and waited for them to give**



**you some kind of order?**

No, at first I clarified it, afterwards I already knew it was an order. What I normally said to them, because let's assume that for a lot of decisions that were made, either at that moment or in general, they came to me with complaints. What I said to them, bottom line, many times, was that I have no authority, I'm just a cog in the machine. I tried to explain to them what I know, but bottom line they should turn to the commander. The commanders can have influence with these things and I can't. In that case I tried to explain as much as I could, there isn't much to do. Just to explain to them as much as I know, patiently and politely that this is the situation and because of this or that this is why it's like that. I couldn't do more than that. Other places that were forbidden to them? On the street there was also, I don't know what it's called, some kind of road from the Cave of the Patriarchs towards, it connects with the Shuhada street – which I'm not sure what it's called. The name changed a few times already. A lot of names were changed from one place to another. They are very strange things. Even now I don't even remember its name. That road, like a road perpendicular to Shuhada street, so there were also restrictions there. Palestinians are permitted to go to a certain point. It was where the 4/5 post is. Next to it there is a kind of triangle, a triangular building. So the building line, until there Palestinians are allowed to go, beyond that is forbidden. It's only for Jews. Many times they [Palestinians] came to me, when I was at 4/5, "What, I need to cross to there." Which was exactly a meter and they weren't allowed to get there. They wanted to exit the Casbah [city center], to go something like 5 meters to get to their mosque or to the triangular building, which I think was a court, and they were forbidden to go. There also was, I remember one time when they came together with CPT, and CPT came with a kind of self-righteous tone that was a little annoying: "We are here and we'll save you," "Here, what are you doing, it's forbidden," and all kinds of things like that. CPT were annoying in general, they came with this kind of annoying approach. One time there was a tour in the Casbah, for Jews...like every Friday there is a tour inside the Casbah. No, on Saturday, I think. Every Saturday there is a standing tour, something fixed. A tour of Jews in the Casbah. So like half a post goes to secure everything, to send away all...I think they send all the Palestinians back into their homes.

**Is it arranged with the IDF?**

Exactly. It's fixed.

**How long is the tour?**

About an hour. An hour during which they go through all the...and then they cross from one side to the other side with a lot of stops and everyone they see: "Go in, go in." So there was something like that, and part of the policy is that if you see someone with a bag or something that seems suspicious you ask them: "OK, show me what you have here." And then, I wasn't there, I was nearby, and then a boy with a bag or something and someone said: "Show me the bag," and he showed him the bag. And by chance the CPT were there, and she came with a kind of, you know, taking the bread out like: "It's only bread," like that, with a kind of annoying self-righteousness. OK, you're right ■

They say to you:  
"Ok, if there are  
humanitarian  
cases, allow  
them to cross."  
What exactly are  
humanitarian  
cases? It's very  
much up to the  
interpretation of  
the person  
commanding the  
checkpoint at that  
moment. It could be  
according to  
what's going on  
with the person  
commanding the  
checkpoint or who  
isn't commanding  
the checkpoint  
with his girlfriend  
at home, or how  
long he's been on  
base

## 28 Everything is up to individual interpretation

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Ramallah · year: 2001-2002

**► We spoke about who would want to cross into Ramallah.**

Suppose that someone comes with his child, with his grandmother, with whomever, shows me documents, he needs to get to the hospital in Ramallah, he has a doctor's appointment. The procedure according to, as I understand it, as someone who was in the briefing, is that cases like that need to cross. I let the guy cross, and after a few minutes I get, they get on the radio from the next checkpoint, they say to me: "What the hell, why did you let him cross?" There are directives, he can cross. They, they don't want to let him cross, I don't know why.

**They would say to you "I don't want to," or "You didn't understand the briefing?"**

No, it's all very much up to individual interpretation. The briefing wasn't up to par, saying to you: "OK, if there are humanitarian cases, then they can cross." What exactly are humanitarian cases? It's very much up to the interpretation of the person commanding the checkpoint at that moment. There, the guys at the next checkpoint, they started calling

me the “UN guy” all the time, because I would always let people cross who they decided didn’t need to cross. They would say, “what the hell?” They like, it’s really not organized who can cross and who can’t cross. It was totally....It could be according to what’s going on with the person commanding the checkpoint or who isn’t commanding the checkpoint with his girlfriend at home, or how long he’s been on base. Really according to what the guy’s personal issues are at that moment. It’s not, it doesn’t get to the level of like someone who comes to you, there is no one who coordinates it, not [even] the operations room. There is no procedure [of] getting on the radio to the operations room, asking “OK, there is a guy like this...Can he cross? Not cross?” Sometimes you do it. Sometimes, whoever is in the field decided. It was all a very, very big mess ■

## 29 The IDF's great wisdom

unit: Armored Corps · location: Jordan Valley · year: 2001-2002

► Company A was at a checkpoint called Noam, which is on the way to Jericho. I think that it separates the Jordan Valley road and Jericho. It was winter, the beginning of 2001, and it was a pretty difficult winter as far as I remember, raining and cold. There are “the bases,” which are basically a few buildings, where the unit who runs the checkpoint are, and outside there is an open-sided shelter which is basically the checkpoint. A very...checkpoint...I think it was improvised, I don’t remember if it was, not like the checkpoints today, which are like an airport terminal.

### **That’s only very specific checkpoints.**

Yes. No, but I think that it was erected a little before we arrived there. And I sat there with an officer, the platoon commander of Company A, who was really of rare quality relative to battalion 433. And we sat there and the covered the shelter with plastic sheets because it rained a lot. And it was nighttime and aside from us no one was awake, it was the middle of the night. And really, when I think about it now, it’s really scary that you are sitting in the middle of nowhere, the wind is gusting around you and the plastic that is covering you makes it difficult to hear and see what’s going

The order that day was to not allow cars that only have men in them to cross... They needed to have either a child or a woman... so it seemed ridiculous to me, today it’s shocking... it just adds further proof that the IDF’s job is to make Palestinian lives bitter

on around you. And basically you wait for a car to come, and how would you know? Because it has, because you see the headlights. And we sit there, two of us, and the orders are – again, yes the great wisdom of the IDF – the order that day was to not allow cars that only have men in them to cross. They needed to have either a child or a woman in order to be able to cross. Yes, of course it's a specific target, very specific.

**Did you ask...**

Did we ask why? Even if I asked, he was an officer, that's his duty. When I asked why, the answer was: "Those are the orders, what can you do." You aren't supposed to ask why in the army, and when you ask...

**But there are pretty strange orders.**

That's right, there are orders that are strange and your duty as a soldier is to carry them out and not ask why.

**Would you look for the logic?**

There is no logic. If you were to search for logic in the army you would go crazy. They would institutionalize you.

**So what would happen? You would stop cars?**

No, there were almost no cars, it was the middle of the night, it was raining. But there was one car, I remember, it was a Subaru with two Palestinian men in their forties, I guess. They were very nice. They stopped, they asked to cross. And that same officer, who was a guy with a head on his shoulders, didn't say to them what every other person in the army would have said, which is: "no, you cannot," rather he said to them, "either a woman, or a child" [in Arabic]. So they argued a bit, and he said to them, "those are the orders, what can I do, either a woman or a child." They turned around, went into Jericho. Ten minutes later, they arrive with a boy in the back seat, and he says to them: "Please, go ahead." Smiling at them and they smiled back, everyone understanding how idiotic and ridiculous the situation is. Yes, you know it just adds further proof that the IDF's job is to embitter the Palestinians' lives. Because if you think about it, there is really no operational need for it. What's the difference if the same men in the same car bring a child. They take, they grab some kid, pay him a shekel and a half, "come with us for an hour or two." Yes, so there. So it just seemed

ridiculous to me, it didn't seem shocking. Today it seems shocking ■

## 30 There are no people who just want to work?

unit: Paratroopers · location: Hebron · year: 2001

► It was the first checkpoint I did in my life. So at first they tell you: "Crossing is only allowed with the permission of the civil administration." OK, you arrive, first person: "Do you have permission from the civil administration?" "No." "What do you have?" "A student ID." You say: "Wait, in principle he isn't allowed, but let's ask." You get on the radio, you ask the company operations room. Who sits in the company operations room? \*\*\* the company clerk. You ask the company clerk: "Listen, do you allow passage for a student ID or you don't allow passage?" She doesn't know. She calls the brigade operations room, they definitely know. Who sits in the brigade operations room? The operations sergeant. Does the operations sergeant know? She doesn't know. She should ask the officer. So she asks \*\*\*, the operations officer. The operations officer doesn't know, but because he's the operations officer he can't show that he doesn't know, so he says: "yes, you can allow passage with a student ID." OK, fine, you can allow passage for a student ID. You allow the student ID to cross. Someone else comes: "Do you have permission from the civil administration?" "No, but I have a teacher's license." Wait, if you can allow passage for a student ID, then what, you should be able for a teacher's license, but I don't know, I should ask. Again to \*\*\*, \*\*\* doesn't know. \*\*\* calls \*\*\*. Just then \*\*\*, the operations officer was in some meeting so \*\*\* says: "OK, if you can allow passage with the student ID, you can allow passage for the teacher's license." You of course don't know, it's only after the fact, when you do you rotation in the operations room that you know it. So you accept, that's it. You can allow passage, you can't allow passage. Who decides? It's decided by the operations sergeant ... Who is allowed to cross and who isn't allowed to cross. And it's when you are still young and when you care about it. Slowly you realize that no one will come to the checkpoint and say: "Listen, I just want to cross.

You can allow  
passage, you can't  
allow passage.  
Who decides? It's  
decided by the  
operations  
sergeant

I just want to cross because, I don't know, I want to cross, I want to get to there." Either he's sick or he's a student, or he's a teacher, or he's from the Red Cross, or he's from UNWRA. They take out papers, stuff, until you realize, it hits you. It hit me after a month, which basically, isn't it a little weird? There are no regular people in the territories? There are no people who just want to cross? No, everyone is either sick or whatever, or this or that ■

## 31 Today you don't allow gravel to cross

unit: Golani Brigade · location: Nablus · year: 2002

These things were very, very arbitrary. They read to you in the morning which things are allowed to cross and which things are forbidden from crossing, and you act according to those instructions

### ► What were the procedures at the checkpoints?

In principle it varied greatly: there are the normal procedures of the checkpoint that there is some lookout from afar, and the people who check the vehicle itself, and that you have to inspect everything, both the people and the whatever. It's a checkpoint that was also there for a long time, so the local residents are used to it, they know to stand in a line, and they know to make space, and not whatever. The majority of the checkpoint there was goods-related, not citizens who were crossing, with the exception of citizens crossing to the hospital. And the goods, you would receive a report in the morning from the central operations room of the sector which goods are allowed to cross and which goods are not allowed. So it's things...someone can arrive, go on an entire trip, bypass all kinds of checkpoints and whatever, and then get to us and then they say: "Oh, stones and gravel? Today it's everything except that...I don't know, except for stones and gravel." Or tomorrow it's....all of a sudden, they allow iron. All kinds of things like that which you don't understand. But certain kinds of goods you can transfer on certain days, and there are things which you cannot transfer. And these things in principle have some kind of order, Sunday this, Monday, this, Tuesday this, these things were very, very arbitrary. They read to you in the morning which things are allowed to cross and which things are forbidden from crossing, and you act according to those instructions ■

## 32 There are products which are forbidden from entering the West Bank

unit: Military Police · location: Qalqilyah · year: 2006-2008

### ► What's the checkpoint in Qalqilyah called?

There are many: The Eyal crossing, the Eliyahu crossing, which is the fruit checkpoint, the Zufim blockade – which is a funny story. In principle, it's an agricultural checkpoint only for Palestinians, but the residents of Zufim who live very close to there, think they have privileges, so they complain to the officer responsible for the residents in the area, it's in the brigades jurisdiction. So as a result of the complaints they decided that the residents of Zufim can cross there.

### Did the Palestinians' ability to cross there influence the operation of the checkpoint?

I think that an agricultural gate is an agricultural gate, Bolem 7 is an agricultural gate, Jews don't go there, why would the people of Zufim cross there? Even though it wasn't only residents of Zufim, rather people who had permits, I don't remember exactly what it was. In any event, it's a pretty funny checkpoint, in my opinion. On the one hand, in the beginning there was no inspection of a person coming from the Israeli side of the fence toward the Palestinian side, but then the [border] crossing administration, which is basically a body which was established in order to oversee the transfer of all kinds of goods. Customs, for example, deal with certain goods like textiles and furniture, and there is also the agricultural oversight. The crossing administration dealt more with dangerous substances. The operation was done in a way such that the military police is the authority at the checkpoint assisting them, because they don't have documentation. The number of people working at the checkpoint would always change. Regarding the goods that were entering the territories, there was a concern they would start making Qasam rockets in Judea and Samaria, and I remember that I stood at the checkpoint at the entrance to Tul Karem. An Israeli Arab came with two and a half iron poles and was sent to court, because on principle, if you bring in dual-purpose goods, so you used to bring in iron, but you

If the guy from  
the [border]  
crossing  
administration  
defined the items  
as "dual purpose"  
or "dangerous"  
- it just doesn't  
cross

can use it to make...

**Is it prohibited to bring things like that into the West Bank?**

If I'm not mistaken it's prohibited to do business in the territories. Buying fruits and vegetables, the Israeli Arabs are limited to, for example, to three kilograms of meat or three jugs of olive oil, during the olive harvest it's five, it's all limited. An Israeli Arab cannot go back in with twenty jugs of oil.

**And in the reverse, bringing things into the West Bank?**

Things like knick-knacks are forbidden from being brought into the West Bank unless it's approved by the administration. From what I remember, the inspection was only if you were coming from the Palestinian side to the Israeli [side]. For the most part, if you went from the Israeli to the Palestinian, there isn't too much inspection, but it also changes according to the thinking [of that time].

**Are you saying that if they catch someone bringing in iron it's a court date and a fine, even if it's from Israel to the West Bank?**

In principle, I am the authority, if the person does not cooperate, let's say that all that I want to do is to check documentation. If someone has specific goods and he doesn't have documentation, I can't know where it's going. I cannot say that he has delivery documentation to where he's going with the goods. I get the delivery documentation and see that only that which is listed is what he has. You learn to identify if delivery documentation is valid or forged. For the most part, if it's from the Israeli side, it's either goods that can be transferred or it isn't, or it's possible that a person was summoned to court for a pole or two of iron and he cannot cross. You don't need delivery documentation or a receipt if the guy from the crossing administration defined the item as dual-purpose or dangerous – he just cannot cross.

**Is there a list of products which are forbidden from being brought into the West Bank?**

Yes.

**What are dual-purpose or dangerous items?**

Dual-purpose is like iron – it's brought by weight and only with the permission of the platoon, all kinds of trucks, say from the Palestinian side to the Israeli side – you allow. If, say, a truck filled with iron comes, if it doesn't have permission from the platoon



– you turn it around. A person who comes from the Israeli side, so those people from the administration took a course. I also once saw a list of materials like that, materials that you see and you get a fever because you don't know how to read them. I can't list them for you, but I rely on them because they are people who served as military police and now they work in the administration. They know which materials should be allowed and which should not. If it's a dual-purpose material, any scrap iron or something even in small amounts, cannot cross, especially from the Israeli side.

**Fertilizer and things like that?**

That also doesn't cross. Presumably if you have fertilizer, acetone – it's explosives.

And those are the things which you say even in small amounts can't cross.

There are specific cases where they ensure it's enforced. The guy from the administration will use his discretion and I'll back him up.

**Is there room for discretion...Is there a situation where you can get permission to bring dual-purpose materials into the territories? For example, someone is building a home and he needs metal beams, what does he do?**

From the standpoint of construction, they got along very well and they don't need to bring things from Israel.

**Where do they bring them from?**

I don't know, but they build there. I dealt a lot with trucks transferring dirt, concrete, etc. As long as they have delivery documents which detail what they have in the truck – for the most part it's Israeli Arab construction companies.

**Was there a list of what is and isn't allowed at each checkpoint, or only at the terminals?**

It's different at every checkpoint. If you are near Bet Iba and there is an asbestos quarry nearby, I imagine that a truck can cross there, not from the Israeli side, but if it were from the Israeli side it would need to go through all the levels. There are also restrictions on the Jews, not just on the Israeli Arabs.

**By the way, is there differentiation in the transfer of goods if the driver is Israeli Arab or Jewish?**

Each checkpoint has its own procedures. At Eliyahu there is a lane just for residents of Samaria, and the red lane is just for Israeli Arabs and Israelis. The next lane is only

for Palestinians. Palestinians can also transport goods, but the border police allows us to participate when we inspect his goods, which he can only transport if he has a permit allowing it if it's for his business – it's OK. It's all according to the permit.

**Who produces the permit for them?**

The District Coordination and Liaison Office.

**What is the “three circle operation”?**

The crossing administration normally does an inspection, but to us what was relevant was that the military police would guard for them, sometimes you encounter someone who is a combat soldier for whom you would guard. They emphasize the entry from the Israeli side to the Palestinian side more. There are checkpoints where no one stands [to guard], so the guy from the administration will do the inspection alone but he'll have documentation, he has authority or someone with him who has the authority. Let's say that a military policeman has more authority at the checkpoint than a civilian policeman. With the exception of the regular duties of the police, there are all kinds of places where there is a military policeman here and there in order to inspect items entering from the Israeli side. Like I said earlier, because of the concern for the transfer of Qasam rockets.

**Bottom line, the significance of the “three circles” was that someone from the administration would inspect on the Israeli side.**

There are checkpoints where you have someone from the administration, and it's problematic because there are two directions at the checkpoint. There are places which have more. Even in this situation it doesn't matter, he needs to have someone with him who has authority at the checkpoint. That's why they would normally be on the side where goods would get to the Palestinian side. Again, when speaking about goods it's normally goods which arrive in Israeli vehicles. If it comes from the Palestinian side in an Israeli vehicle, then there would normally be an inspection and the guy from the administration would be on the side of the checkpoint to which the Palestinian vehicles arrive. Generally, they don't care about what comes from the Israeli side, rather it's [what comes] from the Palestinian side. It's goods, which can be inspected. If you verify the type of goods, for Israelis you give a look and for Palestinians you check the whole crate, but generally the amount is 20 percent of a

large truck, like those Volkswagens.

**Basically a “three circle operation” in practice means that they emphasize the inspection of trucks coming from the Israeli side.**

Yes.

**Was there more than one of these operations?**

Yes, I think there were two ■

## 33 Don't allow an ambulance to cross the checkpoint

**unit:** Nahal Brigade · **location:** Bethlehem · **year:** 2005

► There was another procedure in which Palestinian ambulances could not cross that checkpoint. They had to come to one side of the checkpoint, an ambulance came from the other side, and the patient had to be handed over.

### **Back to back?**

No. The Palestinian ambulance stood behind the concrete blocks, the patient had to walk some twenty meters to the other ambulance, or be led in a gurney. Now I don't know if you ever saw a 90 year-old woman cross a checkpoint with an IV in her arm and medication, but it's not a pretty sight. Certainly no fun for that Palestinian woman. The even crazier part is that our instructions were to inspect both ambulances. You get an ambulance that is defined as a humanitarian vehicle, you let the old woman pass because they obviously have the right permits, and she's old – the elderly, children, no matter – and she crosses all nice and dandy, and then you inspect both ambulances. Now this whole time the patient has to wait. It was never to the extent of placing the patient's life at risk, and when these were really hard cases we didn't really inspect although we were supposed to, but in the meantime the person suffers. I mean, there's nothing to do about it, they stand there and suffer. And the accusing look in the eyes of a 90 year-old woman that most likely did nothing wrong, is something that stays with you ■

I don't know if you  
ever saw a 90  
year-old woman  
cross a  
checkpoint with an  
IV in her arm and  
medication

## 34 To the Jordan Valley? You need special permission

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Jordan Valley · year: 2006

If you live in  
Ramallah and you  
have to get to the  
valley you can't  
cross unless you  
have a work  
permit

► At the checkpoint it goes, whoever lives in the valley, a Palestinian who lives in the valley can cross, it doesn't matter for what. Without a work permit.

### **He can cross the checkpoints in the valley?**

At our checkpoint specifically, in Gitit. I also think he can at other checkpoints. Everyone else needs a work permit. If he doesn't have a work permit he can't cross. The permit is obtained at the District Coordination and Liaison office.

### **Where is the DCL?**

There is a DCL in Nablus and a DCL in Jericho, I think they got it from the DCL in Jericho.

### **Can they get to the DCL?**

They can get to the DCL, yes. Oh, no, I'm sorry, but they don't have to, those from... I'm not even sure which DCL they are supposed to go to, Jericho or Nablus. There is a DCL in Jericho and a DCL in Nablus, they are connected to one of them.

### **Do the majority have signatures from Nablus or Jericho?**

That's it, I'm not sure.

### **If it's Nablus, then it's absurd.**

Why?

### **Because he doesn't have a permit, and the permit is on the other side of the checkpoint.**

No, if it's Jericho it's absurd, yes. From the checkpoint they have to get to Jericho. The work permit is only for those from the territories who work in the valley.

### **And if someone in that valley needs to work in the territories?**

They are free to travel in that direction, everyone can pass. If you come from the direction of the valley and live in Ramallah you can cross. If you live in Ramallah and you want to get to the valley, then you can't cross unless you have a work permit.

### **Do they sometimes send orders down to the checkpoint: "Today we allow**

### passage to those with this or that kind of permit”?

No. In Gush Etzion it's really like that. Every shift would go up with entirely different orders. Here not at all. Always the same orders ■

## 35 A truck entering Ramallah? You need a permit!

unit: Nahal [Reserves] · location: Ramallah district · year: 2005

► A year ago I had reserve duty once in Qalandiya. It was two weeks in the end, half a term.

### What happened there?

What happened there? It was terrible.

### Why was it terrible?

First thing, I was happy to see that the whole method of the checkpoints improved, at least by the fact that they have procedures. It was a much more organized checkpoint there from what I remember from my standing service. Soldiers who are meant to be... soldiers from military police who have the training to be at checkpoints, with procedures and things. I came, it was the first time they called me for reserve duty in three years. But it was still very frustrating, because indeed there are procedures, but I'm already a civilian and I think about the procedures and I don't like them, and I try to do something about it. There is a directive that trucks are forbidden to cross into Ramallah without a goods permit. A guy comes with a truck without goods, he wants to enter.

### But he doesn't have a permit.

He doesn't have a permit, but he also doesn't have goods, he has an empty truck. I say: "What do you want?" "I want to go home to my wife and children." "You can't." "What do you mean I can't?" I go: "You can't enter with the truck. If you want, go put the truck somewhere, and enter in a cab." He comes, says: "Listen, it's my truck, it costs a million and a half shekel, I'm not leaving it anywhere that's not next to me." No, no chance, you don't let him in. All kinds of things like that, things which are

Once someone  
came with an  
empty truck.  
"What do you  
want?" "To go  
home, to my wife  
and children."  
"You can't. If you  
want to? Go put  
the truck  
somewhere,  
enter in a taxi."

frustrating. I had a thought that when I came to reserve duty that maybe, walla, I could do something. There is this thing, that it can't be that the only people in the field are the ones who want to be there. If the left-wingers don't do reserve duty, who will be left there? It'll be the people who do all the terrible things. I said: No, I have to go to reserve duty. There really isn't anything to do there inside ■

## 36 So how many permits does a person need?

unit: Civil Administration · location: Jordan Valley · year: 2006

They need a  
business permit,  
green...if you  
want to get to  
Israel, there  
is like a blue  
permit. If you  
drive through the  
valley, you needed  
a crown permit...  
If you work, then  
you also have  
more hours. You  
can travel more:  
From 5 to 12 or  
from 5 to 10

### ► Were you responsible for issuing permits?

Yes, issuing permits, magnetic cards, and things like that.

### What permits did you issue there?

To Israel, for movement within the territories.

### Is there a special permit for Palestinians who come from Nablus to work in the valley, in Jericho, for example?

There was in the past, now I think it's open. Don't take my word for it because I haven't been there for 7 months. The last time I was there, in Beit el Kabr, I think they opened traffic from Nablus to the valley but there were once lists submitted to us by the council.

### Which council?

The Jordan Valley council. For Palestinians that work in the settlements, that's what you are referring to.

### And Palestinians that don't work?

They need a crown permit, a red permit. Like everyone else.

### What does that mean?

A red permit.

### But what if you are going from Jenin to Jericho?

You don't need one. In the past you only needed it in Nablus if you were traveling through the valley. You needed a crown permit. Now you don't need it anymore, I

think. If I'm not mistaken. I think you don't need it anymore. But they would issue it in Nablus, not where we were. Residents of Jericho could travel freely, as it were. The restriction was only on residents of Nablus.

**And not on Jenin?**

Jenin, maybe...I don't remember.

**Because you also need to go down from there to get to Jericho.**

Yes, but from Tubas for example, you could enter Jericho freely, you didn't need a permit. I think only from the Nablus sector.

**Tubas is Nablus.**

Tubas is considered the Jenin sector. From the standpoint of District Coordination and Liaison it's considered the Jenin DCL, and because of that I think it's only for residents of Nablus, because then there was a wave of terrorists from the Nablus sector. And the thinking then...I think it was only for residents of Nablus. That's what I remember. There were also Palestinians who worked in the settlements in agriculture. So they would submit a list and they would get...

**Permits.**

No, they didn't need it. The lists were in some binder and they would bring the list and we would know. Now they also need a business permit, green. There are special permits for business.

**So how many permits does a person need?**

There are a few things. If you need to get into Israel, there is like a blue permit. For travel from Nablus...I think, all that's left from the crown permits, the red permits, are for taxis and public transportation. Don't take my word for it, I'm not sure. I'm not up to date. And there is a business permit for if you work, then you also have more hours. You can travel more: From 5 to 12 or from 5 to 10.

**The permit is according to hours?**

Yes. It has hours.

**The crown permit is only given to taxis? Private citizens don't get them anymore?**

Private citizens don't need them anymore, I think. It's no longer necessary, I think.

**Was it cancelled during your time?**

It had started to be cancelled. [There was no longer] the need. I don't know if...I think they still issue them. But I'm not sure it's needed. Don't take my word for it. I'm not sure.

**What did you issue?**

All of these permits ■

## 37 Two villages, two different DCLs

unit: Civil Administration · location: Nablus · year: 2005-2008

► There's a bride who lives in the Marda village in the area of Nablus, and a groom who lives in Dir Istiya. They want to leave in a car from her village to the neighboring village to get to the beauty parlour. The checkpoint commander in the morning let them cross, and when they came back another commander wouldn't agree to let them return. He asked them, "how did you leave?" She had to go back to her village in Marda, and after she was to get back and prepare she would leave with her family to Hawwara, where the wedding was in the evening. The transportation was supposed to be carried out by the groom's family. We are talking about two villages that have two different DCLs: One is Qalqilya, and the other Nablus. In the end, everything went through and they went above and beyond and allowed an extra eight vehicles to enter for the wedding. I remember that I dealt with it for half a day, half of my last day.

**You had to coordinate between the DCLs?**

No, just one DCL dealt with it, it's between two regional brigades. There are two different sectors of two different DCLs, it's a very complicated area. Marda is Qalqilya, which is basically Shomron, and Dir Ista is Qalqilya and Efrayim, and Hawwara is Shomron and Nablus. You know why the borders don't match? Because the civil administration's borders, what was once the military governance, is based on the Jordanian directive. When the army occupied the territories in 1967, it didn't take the old map, it made its own map ■



## 38 It's called "segregation"

unit: Civil Administration · location: Nablus · year: 2006

► In 2006, we received a complaint from students of the A-Najah University in Nablus, because they didn't allow them to enter from the Bet Iba checkpoint, which is a checkpoint that was open, I think was open until a few months before this, and then was just closed. I don't remember why. I think it's related to the settlements there, because the checkpoint leads to them, among other things. The checkpoint closed for almost every possible case. The army, the brigade, call it "segregation." Segregation means that you only allow residents of certain ages to enter. Men above a certain age, say around 35, 40. And women from a younger age. They didn't allow the young students to enter. They live in the villages near Nablus. It's as if you were a resident of Ness-Tziona and you would want to go to Rehovot and they wouldn't let you. I remember it specifically because it was the first complaint I received. A nice English-speaking student called, I was happy that I was able to communicate with him, and it's very disappointing to give the answer, there is segregation, do a make-up.

They didn't  
allow the young  
students to  
enter. They live  
in the villages  
near Nablus. It's  
as if you were a  
resident of  
Ness-Tziona and  
you would want  
to go to Rehovot  
and they wouldn't  
let you

### **Did they give you the reason for the segregation?**

I also gave it to him. I explained to him what it was, and that he can't enter at his age. I don't remember the exact age, but that if he was a different age he could have entered. In a different incident four women, some sick and some escorting, were detained at the Bet Iba checkpoint. They were sick and needed medical attention. This was two months after the thing with the students.

### **Was it still the same segregation?**

I can't say, but it was still segregation.

### **You don't know the ages?**

Now I don't know, then I certainly knew. We applied tremendous pressure, both myself and \*\*\* who was a coordinator in the civil administration. We applied pressure so that at least the sick women could cross the checkpoint. The escorts had to take a long detour to the checkpoint in Ein Bidan, and then they apparently met up.

### **Who gave the segregation order, and when was it repealed, allowing entry**

**again?**

There are segregations which can last for months. I remember a segregation that stretched from all of Samaria to Jericho, the whole Eastern part. A Palestinian from Ramallah who wants to get to Jericho only has one route, via Jenin. A resident of Jerusalem who wants to get to the Dead Sea? Go via Afula.

**Which checkpoints can you pass through?**

I don't remember the names, I think via Beqaot, Tiasir.

**Did you know exactly which checkpoint you could pass through?**

Yes, the Palestinians also knew.

**What was the reason?**

Terrorist attack warnings. It was explained to me that it's in order to prevent terror attacks.

**How long did it last?**

I don't remember. There are certain segregations on certain days and at certain hours, and sometimes it lasts weeks.

**Who removes the segregations?**

Someone on the major-general level if it's more than a few days, and it can go up to the brigade commander.

**Are there segregations which don't have a time limit, if you were to want to verify when the segregation ends?**

I think there is a certain limitation. There is a military orders group, which there is no reason to get into, but there is segregation, they establish it for an amount of time, and they extend it for an amount of time.

**And you know when it ends?**

Yes, and I tell the Palestinians. The Palestinians know because there are rumors that run from mouth to mouth, and the village leaders and the Palestinian police announce it.

**You are less involved in the announcement?**

I don't announce at all. I have no connection to the village heads. But if a Palestinian calls me and asks if he can transfer goods via Efrayim, which is a "back to back" checkpoint in the area of Tul Karem, even though today is Memorial Day for the fallen IDF soldiers, then I tell him yes, until 12 noon. We are also a kind of information

service, which are another few undocumented conversations during the day.

### **It's a whole story to roam between the checkpoints...**

The real story is that this lousy checkpoint only protects the settlements.

### **Bet Iba?**

Yes. Another interesting story is the story of a taxi driver who took a sick person to the hospital in Nablus, and he wanted to return to his house in Bet Furik so he had to cross the checkpoint there. The checkpoint closes at eight. Israelis move to daylight savings time in April, the Palestinians change the clock two weeks later. He and the sick person are waiting at the checkpoint, but the checkpoint is closed. The soldiers that were there didn't open it for them, and they only let them cross in the morning. They stayed the night in Nablus.

### **No one did anything?**

No. Here is a sixty year-old Palestinian with cancer. He was called, and he had permission to receive treatment in the Asuta hospital. A volunteer waited for him at the Reihan checkpoint who would take him to his appointment in the hospital at ten in the morning. The soldiers wouldn't let him cross. It was seven in the morning and it takes three hours [to get there] and he doesn't want to miss his appointment. It seems that this man had a permit for the Gilboa checkpoint, and not for Reihan, so it was made clear to him that he was requested to go to the Gilboa checkpoint which is an hour ride for Palestinians, and from there he could leave to [enter] Israel. I can only say one thing: Why? He is a sixty year-old with cancer, what difference does it make if he accidentally went to a different checkpoint, which I'm not sure helps him from the standpoint of transportation. If he had been traveling from the beginning with the permit that he had, then maybe he would have arrived faster, disregarding that they didn't let him cross. But what's with you? All of a sudden you'll start following procedure. It goes without saying that he missed his appointment, and I think he just went back. A twenty day-old baby sick with jaundice. This happened. They didn't let the ambulance with the baby cross the A-Zaim checkpoint, a Jerusalem checkpoint. They let her pass only after forty-five minutes. A twenty day-old baby doesn't carry out terror attacks, as far as I know. Another incident. In Jenin at the Reihan checkpoint, it's a checkpoint which today is more established, but then there were

four border policemen who sat there, “yalla go ahead.” They didn’t allow humanitarian equipment, for example, to be transferred into Barta’a and Reihan. A truck driver who transports fruits or vegetables called me and said: “I’m coming from Jenin, I want to enter the village because the people there don’t have anything to eat.” Only at the end of the day, after he spoke with us at nine in the morning, only at a quarter to five did they allow him to cross.

### **A truck or a van?**

He sat there for eight hours and waited and afterwards they let him cross. There were a few trucks there.

### **Did they inspect it?**

They inspected it, but that’s not it’s function. They just didn’t let him cross, because it was the orders of someone, and that guy was stuck somewhere. There were very basic complaints that they didn’t open the agricultural gates. I didn’t see it as intentional that soldiers were one, two, three hours late. Meaning that a Palestinian would wait for three hours to get onto or leave his land and to get back home, and it happened more than a few times. It happens because of the negligence of the soldiers, or the operations room, or an operation which presumably prevents soldiers from opening it. Because who opens the agricultural gates? Soldiers ■

## **39** An impossible reality

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Shaked area · year: 2005

► I was at the Shaked base, patrolling the Fence. Shaked is near Reihan, which means total burnout. You do eight-hour shifts [eight hours on duty, eight hours rest], driving back and forth along the Fence in a secured Hummer. Burnout here is even worse than in Hebron. You do something totally uninteresting, like constant static pressure.

### **Were there any incidents?**

Not while I was there, but there was always this matter of the farmers’ gates. That

was tough. And I was then a dumb, young commander.

**Not that young.**

No, about a year and a half into the job. Forget it, I was young and dumb. Really. A commander who tries to show his soldiers how to cope with Arabs. And I did plenty of things there, again, not like some gung-ho Golani infantry guy, but yes – shouting and shoving. You sometimes find yourself dealing with a gate full of Arabs, fifty at a time.

**What is your role there?**

To let them through, check only their IDs, clear them for passage, something in that vein. Because anyone who had gone through in the morning, has to go back home in the evening, so there's follow-up. Something like that. You call them one by one, check their IDs. Everything there is simply run down, you stand behind some stinking concrete slab, calling out like an idiot: "Go on, come here, stop, lift your shirt, turn around, give me your ID," this and that.

**Thorough inspection?**

Sometimes, depends on the person.

**You check fifty people one by one?**

Yes.

**Call out to them one by one?**

Yes, or ten by ten.

**Like a regular checkpoint?**

Yes, but that's the problem, it's basically an improvised checkpoint. These improvised checkpoints bring out the worst in you... Sometimes I felt totally out of control there. As a young commander you're scared and all your crap comes out, see? Because if you're a young commander and not in control, you don't want your soldiers to feel that you're not in control, you don't want to feel out of control, so you resort to means that you don't ordinarily want to use, see? Later you give it a thought.

**What happened there?**

Nothing exceptional, it's only that feeling, the yelling. There was a sense of constant yelling: "Shut up" and stuff like that, "come over here." No physical brutality, no violence.

**At the farmers' gates you let them out and back in?**

It's a huge  
checkpoint filled  
with people and  
you are three  
soldiers... how can  
you control it? It's  
destined for  
trouble

Yes, there are certain times of the day, and you know exactly when the gate is to be opened.

**It's a deterrent fence, isn't it?**

Not on the other side. Only on one side.

**Only one side is deterrent? Their side?**

Yes.

**And you work where?**

On both sides. We let them into Israel and let them cross back again.

**They touch the Fence in order to summon you?**

No, they know when the opening times are.

**And those were never delayed?**

No, essentially not, except when there's some incident.

**Were there cases where people were not allowed in?**

Not that I remember. This was rather strictly kept. The shame of it was that sometimes you get a checkpoint with a huge crowd of people, and you're just three soldiers, how are you going to control it? There are always problems, always yelling, a lack of communication, few soldiers, a young commander, all of the above. A stinking concrete slab and one guy behind it tries to find shelter with the door of the Hummer. It's looking for trouble, really. No way things can be conducted properly. I kept thinking about it, how to place the Hummer to have better shelter. I don't know.

**How many hours would you stand there?**

Depending on the people. Two hours.

**Two hours to let fifty people through?**

More or less. Or three. It changed. Depending on the timetable and the number of people present.

**What happens when it rains?**

Screwed all the way.

**Umbrellas?**

Are you kidding? Storm gear.

**But the Palestinians?**

I don't know. I don't remember what they did about it.

**Did you happen to detain someone because he had no permit?**

Obviously.

**How long would he be detained?**

Until we got confirmation for him.

**From whom?**

Brigade ops-room. Bullshit. They check his ID number [cross-checking with their database].

**You take each ID number and read it out on the radio?**

Yes. It's horrible. I'm almost sure. Yes, you take each person's ID number for clearance. There were lists, and I remember it was individual. Listen, it wasn't always fifty people at once. Sometimes there were five, or ten. I just remember that one time when I was looking on, as a young commander, and thinking: My God, what do I do now? How do I do this? You want to get it over with.

**But that also works in heavy farming seasons, harvest time, olive harvest time.**

Yes. I was there for only two months, so I have no idea. The "at your own discretion" was the problem there. That's why I felt that the army is not... There are instructions. I don't blame anyone because I realize it's really impossible, it's an impossible reality. I had a friend who served as a sergeant in Reihan, a religious fellow. He was there at the checkpoint for the last four months of his military service, had also been in Hebron, a super-moral guy, I never met anyone like that. He really got screwed up there, he couldn't take it any longer. I remember he said that to some general there on a visit, a very senior officer: "I can't do this. You're placing way too much responsibility on the shoulders of a twenty to twenty-one year-old kid. I can't do this. I really can't. I cannot determine who is to be let through and who isn't." He was a checkpoint commander. He said: "I cannot do this, let me go, I'm losing it, I just can't do it." Why? Because I think there's a lot of gray area there, it's not all black and white. Again, there's no choice, but that's how it is, gray. And letting a twenty-one year-old cope with this gray zone, that does no good at all. If you're humane, you get screwed. If you're inhumane, you screw them [the Palestinians]. Someone gets screwed either way, you see? No matter what happens, someone gets screwed, one of the sides, no matter what. Because of that gray area, because of "your discretion" ■

## 40 There is nothing to do: whoever is late, doesn't cross

unit: Kfir Infantry Battalion · location: Tul Karem · year: 2008-2009

They open gates... Make lists who crosses and who doesn't, who crossed and didn't return, all kinds of things like that

► Patrol is to be an active force in the field that can be called when needed, just to go around and if something happens at a checkpoint, they immediately send you because you're the closest. Sometimes it's to open gates.

### What does that mean?

There are places where there are fences that Arabs have to pass to get to their lands, so you open the gates in the morning when you need to – each one has a fixed time, you make lists of who passes and who doesn't pass, who passes and doesn't return, all kinds of things like that.

### Access to their agricultural lands that are on the other side of the Separation Barrier?

Yes, something like that.

### Does it happen like it's supposed to?

It happens like it's supposed to unless there is a problem. Even though sometimes the operations get hurried up, so there are people who are a drop late and there's nothing to be done, they don't pass because they were late. It's already not our problem. Sometimes we push the time boundaries a little bit and wait for people a few minutes. But if they don't come, there's nothing to be done ■

## 41 We blocked his access to his livelihood

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Jenin district · year: 2005

► It's known that in the territories you are exposed to a ton of paradoxes, dilemmas, all kinds of areas which...For example, we were in some pillbox [guard tower] in Mevo Dotan where it was forbidden to go up to the hilltop above it, because it controlled the pillbox a



bit. But the hilltop was someone's orchard, and he was forbidden. And every time he went up, and we told him "go," and he told us, and we tried to help, and he said to us: "but the area is mine." We told him we'll get him a permit, then the next company commander really tried to get him a permit, and he just encountered, you know, the gerontocracy and the impenetrability. Just a guy who, like, just because we put up a pillbox there we blocked off his access to his livelihood. It sounds trivial, it sounds whatever, but you know, like hey, if someone had told his parents that suddenly he couldn't make a living anymore. It destroys a home, there is nothing to say, it just destroys ■

## 42 The farmers burst into the area in tears

unit: Artillery · location: Qalqilya district · year: 2002

► The operation was routine, the operation was to go out on a patrol with vehicles to the nearby Arab villages. There were a lot of excavations there. And it's really a heart-breaking place, the whole separation fence. We were exactly at the point when they dug the fence, residents whose fig or olive groves you were uprooting, and it was personally difficult for me to see.

### **Are you a farmer?**

No, but you know... Someone comes and says to you: "OK, your home – is mine. Your land – is mine. Everything you invested in for forty years." You know, older people, farmers. People for whom this tree is food. And you say to them: "Forget about it, get out of here, now it's not yours."

### **Did you oversee the work?**

No, but I guarded. There weren't violent incidents there. Again, because of how close it was to Israel. And if there were – then there were various operations of other more combat units who actually went into the city.

### **Do you remember the encounter with these people whose trees they basically uprooted? Did they go there?**

Yeah, you meet them. You get to... It's hard, because a person comes to you in tears.

You, as a citizen of the state with a blue ID and all of the privileges, you try to get money from the National Insurance Agency and they tell you "yeah, good luck with that"... Like, so who is he?

**Do you remember a specific incident?**

Specifically, I remember one incident. It gives me goosebumps just thinking about it. Someone whose olive grove they uprooted came in tears, I'm sorry, his fig grove, and he said to me, "I planted this grove for ten years, I waited ten years for it to bear fruit, I enjoyed it for one year, and they are uprooting it." The guy had worked already thirty years, and he says to me, "I worked for thirty years to buy the land, I planted for another ten and I just waited for the trees to bear fruit." Only a year had passed for him to enjoy the tree and the IDF back hoe comes and says: "Forget about it." Best case – you encounter a back hoe which is prepared to plant his tree somewhere else.

**There wasn't a procedure of replanting?**

No, not really. The back hoe operators were Arabs, and anyone who still had some kind of relationship...whose heart still broke, then he would take the hoe, dig, and plant it on their side of the fence. It was rare that a professional like that...It costs a lot, and his boss says to him, "why are you playing, stop playing." So it happens on that same day and that's it, afterwards they are already digging.

**When you are there, this work started, or it was already happening?**

It started. The very first time we went into the field.

**With the surveyors?**

Yes, our main duty was to protect the surveyors. When surveyors come, they get someone with a radio who walks kilometers.

**The surveyors don't see even before the back hoe arrives that there is a tree you know on the land?**

Yes, but the landowner doesn't realize the guy is walking on his land, he only sees the back hoe. And even if he were to see – so great...

**They didn't speak with them beforehand?**

I don't think so. I don't know. I imagine...They don't have mail or cell phones for the most part...Another authority comes and takes you...It's as if I were to come and take your cellphone...who would care? "Get out of here...if you want, sue me." You, as a citizen of the state with a blue ID and all of the privileges, you try to get money from the National Insurance Agency and they tell you, "yeah, good luck with that"...Like,

so who is he? You know it's going to happen. You know that even if he sues and everything – he'll just get lice.

**The people there didn't argue, or did they stand in front of the back hoes? Trees, you know. You can't give it back. There is no compensation for something like that.**

They promised them they would give them money or something...different land. There is a law that if the State takes more than 40 percent you are entitled to full compensation. They can take up to 40 percent and you have to remain silent. For the 41st percent, you get full compensation. Which is a general rule in the State, it doesn't interest them if it harms them or what's on the land. I was unsure if they would take it. There is nothing to do. What do I mean, there is nothing to do? It sucks to see it, because they promised him – your sense is that he won't get anything.

**How long did the uprooting and the work last there?**

When I left it was still...

**So it took time.**

Building a fence is a lot. Because you are talking about mountains...you dig the land, measure.

**So the people didn't resist at all?**

In the first stage, when the back hoe came to uproot the trees, farmers burst into the area in tears, trying to stop the back hoe or standing on the side crying.

**There is no physical resistance, protests, even a sign.**

Yes, I saw them standing on the side with a sign, but you are talking about farmers, not political activists. One man, who really has bad luck. You can't say you are harming an entire population. Because a single person controls 40 dunam (1/4 acre), and until you get to the next 40 you don't find another person. Each time is per person. It's not like you come to a university and then it's full of people. You don't hurt a single sector that is full of a lot of people, each time you encounter a single person. And then he has no power – he can [only] stand on the side and cry. There is no union of farmers. That was heartbreaking itself, it's not fair. You know, with the idiocy of this country – they took his land, and tomorrow they'll say they're stopping the fence. Which happened more than a few times. Where they decide the fence would cross

here – inside the guy's land, in the courtyard, on his private house, but tomorrow they decide, after there are already roads that they destroyed, that the fence isn't good: "Let's get it out of here. Get it out, it's not good."

**Did they move the fence in your sector?**

A change in route.

**No, in your sector – where you were.**

A change in route. They started digging, then all of a sudden they decided it wasn't good.

**What's the whole thing with the surveyors?**

A surveyor gets an order. The surveyor is the cheap part, what are the hours of the excavator?

**But the surveyor checks before.**

OK. It works on a delay for us in the country. First they do, and then only afterwards they check why it's not good.

**To where did they move the fence?**

Sometimes 10 meters, sometimes they decided to cancel it or go around...because what's the fence? It's going around settlements. Once the settlement was included in the Green Line, and once not. If they decide to go around the settlement, or they decide not to go around the settlement. And what is its distance from the settlement – they dealt with crap, in other words ■

## 43 He looked me in the eyes and said: "I live in a prison"

**unit:** Border Police · **location:** Allenby Bridge · **year:** 2002

► In the place that's called the border, I tried, in order to continue being humane, to somehow cross the lines. When I say cross the line, I don't know, I'm talking about Mussa, for example. Mussa was...we worked on the bridge with people who came from Jericho, Palestinian civilians who came from Jericho everyday to the bridge to

work. It's janitorial work and things like that.

### **Inside the checkpoint?**

Inside the terminal. Let's call it a terminal, it's not a checkpoint. You have never been to the checkpoint, OK? Let's call it a terminal because, again, the airport authority finances the whole thing.

### **That's important to know.**

No, really, it's not an IDF checkpoint. The documents there are from the IDF. Meaning the IDF was indirectly present, I didn't see soldiers there, but it was a place that was more civilian, civilian and police, not military, OK? Mussa was one of the young guys who came to work there: A 22 year-old husband and father of two. 22-23, yes, you know, they get married earlier because there isn't anything to do except...when you are under siege there is nothing to do other than be with your wife in the bedroom, and to continue reproducing and doing good deeds. In one of my conversations with him – what do I mean, one of my conversations? As much as I wanted to sit and talk with him, I couldn't do it. There was no chance I could do it. So at most, he would work, I would come, say good morning, Salaam Aleikum, and things like that, and that's it, no more. So one time when I encountered him in passing, I just asked how are you, what's up, and somehow we got to, he said things that are with me until today. Meaning, you stand in front of someone who lives an hour and a half from the sea, and he has never been there.

### **An hour and a half from the Mediterranean?**

An hour and a half from the Mediterranean, fifteen minutes from the Dead Sea. I think they were at the Dead Sea before the Intifada, but they are things which they, I don't know, he said to me, he used the term "prison." He said that as quiet as they are in Jericho, both from the military standpoint and from the standpoint of the refugee camps near Jericho, and from the standpoint of the people themselves – meaning, you are talking about a religious-agricultural population, it wasn't involved in a lot of the problems there – and despite all that, you see the anger in their eyes. I felt that he was accusing me when he said that to me. He looked me in the eyes and he said: "What, I live in a prison, I can't go to the sea, I want to go to Tel Aviv, to buy things for my wife." And it eats you up inside. Statements and situations like that, slowly

It eats you up.  
Statements and  
situations like  
this...you stand in  
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who lives an hour  
and a half from  
the sea, and he  
has never been  
there

you start changing your views. Meaning, I went in, I enlisted in the army very, I don't know if you can say right-wing, but very into it, wanting to do everything for...And the service arouses doubt, meaning I, what I experienced, I started doubting.

### **When do you get it?**

It was slowly, I don't know if there was a moment when I got it ■

## 44 The battalion commander's driver said: "I beat them up"

**unit:** Paratroopers · **location:** A-Ram Checkpoint · **year:** 2001

A calm protest,  
walking on the  
road, full of  
children and  
families... the  
border police  
started... they  
brought backup,  
they beat up  
three people in a  
few minutes

► There are a lot of incidents for which I can go into deep detail, another incident that's ingrained in my memory is the straw that broke the camel's back, there was a protest in A-Ram on Friday of Palestinians and Israelis, I was with the security patrol jeep. We were on a base in A-Ram, a small base, half of the company was there. This was an emergency deployment. We went on a Friday afternoon. It was a calm protest, walking on the road, full of children and families. A protest against the Occupation. It was before the Separation Fence, in 2001. The commander and myself are standing, and the protestors start walking, and my commander kindly says to them: "Please don't cross this line," it was on the main road in A-Ram. They cross the line. There were hundreds of people. They went from the Qalandiya checkpoint inwards. He let them pass and then he sent me, and 100-200 meters behind were the border police, and I arrive and say to them that the protest is coming. They get excited and start taking out their crates of stun grenades and tear gas, they go outside and start throwing. And I'm on my way from them to my commander, we were all full of gas. Immediately they started throwing stun grenades, an elderly woman fell on the floor ground, a stun grenade exploded near her and she fainted. My commander sent me to the medic, the Palestinians said not to touch it, I go to my commander and ask him why they threw the gas, nothing happened, people were walking on the road, everything was under control. We were there and the jeeps were on call. And a few of the Israelis yelled at us,

“Nazis, Nazis...” I was really upset and I said to my commander that I’m not prepared to participate. The border policemen started, they were the ones who threw everything. Immediately it developed into stone [throwing] and within a few minutes, other security patrol jeeps arrived. Do you remember they shot 0.25? In Lebanon they shot at the lamps, and in the Second Intifada they shot them at kids throwing stones?

### **What’s 0.25?**

An M16 which fires very small bullets.

### **0.22?**

0.22. My battalion commander told me to fire them and I didn’t agree. He gave it to someone who likes to shoot. The security patrol jeeps arrived, they see people are throwing stones, and they have no idea what happened beforehand. They immediately start breaking up packs of rubber bullets and fire single rounds [a single round of a rubber bullet is lethal]. I tell them, “I’ve been here since the beginning, they didn’t do anything, the border police started it.” I tell it to my friends, they know I’m not bullshitting them. They say to me, “What different does it make? You bleeding heart!” They start firing. The battalion commander arrives with his driver and I got into the security patrol jeep and I said I wasn’t going to do anything. My company commander brings me teargas and tells me to throw it. I say that I won’t throw it. In the end I throw it, I open the window and in front of me there are three cameras. I threw it at them, with force. I told the driver to stop and I got out and said “sorry.” The battalion commander’s driver came and said to me, “I beat them up.” He brought his weapon, the butt of which was full of blood, he just beat people up with the butt of his weapon. The next day there was a picture in the paper, in *Yediot Ahronot*. The medic who was with me got hit in the head with a stone and fainted. The border police threw the teargas, they started throwing stones, one stone hit the medic and they raised the level of violence and immediately all the patrol jeeps arrived.

### **How many patrol jeeps?**

3-4, I don’t remember exactly.

### **What was the level of violence?**

They shot directly from the moment they fired the 0.22.

### **Live rounds.**

Correct. They brought backup, they beat up 33 people in a few minutes. I saw the beginning and it wasn't relative. That very day I lost it, I went to my commander and said, "take my weapon."

**You said that you went into houses and took Masbaha prayer beads. What was different this time?**

You see people beaten up without blood on their hands. They were walking and they just shot at them. My company commander agreed with me, he was with me and he saw the border police started it. I asked him why was there use of force, he said "what do you want? Your friend was injured." The medic was injured so you can show them they injured him, so it seems to them: "you hit one of us..." so everything is allowed. That was the feeling. It was shocking. The next day there were pictures in all of the newspapers. I have the pictures in my album.

**What did they think about it later in the company?**

What did they care? I told everyone what happened, they said to me "what do you care? What difference does it make?" What difference does it make who started.

**Did you feel alone at that point?**

I didn't care anymore. Aside from the fact that no one cared, [they're] simple soldiers

■







Fabric of Life

## Administering Palestinian Civilian Life – "Fabric of Life"

The testimonies in the present chapter describe the influence of Israeli security forces and authorities on the lives of Palestinians in the Territories. Israel's official spokespeople argue that Israel does not withhold basic life essentials from Palestinians or engender a humanitarian crisis, but does, despite its security needs, allow for a Palestinian "fabric of life" in the Territories. These claims and others like them, e.g., that there is a prosperous economy in the West Bank, are intended to lead to the conclusion that life under the Occupation can be tolerable, and that nothing prevents the Palestinians from living good lives.

On the basis of these claims, defenders of Israeli policy can portray the Occupation as a justifiable defensive measure. Any harm toward those living under occupation is considered reasonable, i.e. proportionate. Representatives of the Israeli authorities claim, for example, that by granting passage and entrance permits for "humanitarian" cases, Israel enables a normal fabric of life. But it is the precise dependency of millions of residents on a complex and convoluted bureaucracy, one in which they play no part and which does not represent their interests, that exemplifies the degree of control exercised by Israel over Palestinian fabric of life. The soldiers' testimonies reveal that in order to maintain orderly life, the Palestinians are dependent on the good graces of Israel. Palestinians who seek special permits, for example, rely on the benevolence of the soldier at the checkpoint, or the pity of the Civil Administration officer, to reach a doctor, or their workplace, or their family (e.g. testimonies 10, 20). Palestinians find themselves constantly pleading with various representatives of Israel to be recognized as "mercy cases" and to have their needs considered "humanitarian needs" (e.g. testimonies 5, 6, 22).

The government body in charge of the civil sphere in the Territories is the Civil Administration, which is subordinate to the Ministry of Defense. Soldiers in the regular and standing army serve in the Civil Administration, as do civilians who work for the Ministry of Defense. This body is responsible for administering and allocating infrastructure and resources in the Territories, including determining the status of lands, issuing building permits and planning permits for Area C, providing work permits and transit permits at checkpoints, organizing trade, registering the population, and many other services (e.g. testimonies 7,9). The Palestinians also turn to the Civil Administration for various humanitarian requests, and to submit complaints and claims regarding damage to property and injury to persons connected with the IDF's operations in the Territories. Among the testimonies in this chapter are those of soldiers and officers who have served in the Civil Administration. These testimonies provide a rare glimpse into the bureaucratic world on the other side of the Green Line.

Since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, Israel has tightened its grip on the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories. In addition to offensive military operations, which received widespread public attention, Israel set up physical barriers and complex bureaucratic systems. In order to drive a wedge between the Palestinians and the Israeli citizens living over the Green Line, Israel has increasingly inhibited Palestinian movement. Thus, for example, a resident of Nablus who wants to reach Jericho for business purposes or for a family visit needs a permit from the Civil Administration. The Separation Barrier, the building of which began in 2002, has created a new and even more complex division of the West Bank. More permits and certificates

have been added to the already convoluted bureaucratic mechanisms in accordance with this new division. The “regime of permits” that prevails today in the Territories impacts virtually every aspect of Palestinian daily life.

The soldiers' testimonies in this chapter also reveal the inability of Palestinian governmental bodies to guarantee a normal life for their people. The Palestinian Authority does not control aspects of daily life in the Territories: it is the Israeli authorities who control passage through the Separation Barrier of civilians and commercial goods, movement of civilians and goods internally in the Territories, the opening and closing of private businesses, the transportation of children to school, of university students to their campuses, and of those in need of medical attention to hospitals and clinics. Israel also holds the property of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians on an ongoing basis, with confiscations sometimes coming about ostensibly for security considerations, other times for the purpose of expropriating land, while in a notable number of cases, the decision to confiscate a Palestinian's property is completely arbitrary. Houses, agricultural lands, motor vehicles, electronic goods, and farm animals can all be taken at the discretion of a regional commander or a soldier in the field. Soldiers can also “confiscate” people for the sake of a training exercise: troops will burst into a house in the dead of night and arrest one of the inhabitants, only to release him later - all in order to practice arrest procedures. Overall, Palestinian life is made conditional and impermanent, dependent on the caprices of checkpoint guards, area commanders, and settlement security coordinators.

The Israeli military forces make use of code-words like “fabric of life” and “proportionality” to describe and characterize different sorts of assignments: checkpoints, house and infrastructure demolitions, forced entry into Palestinian houses, and even targeted assassinations. The soldiers' testimonies in this chapter give a more accurate account of the Palestinian “fabric of life” under Israeli Occupation: arbitrary, temporary, and empty of dignity.

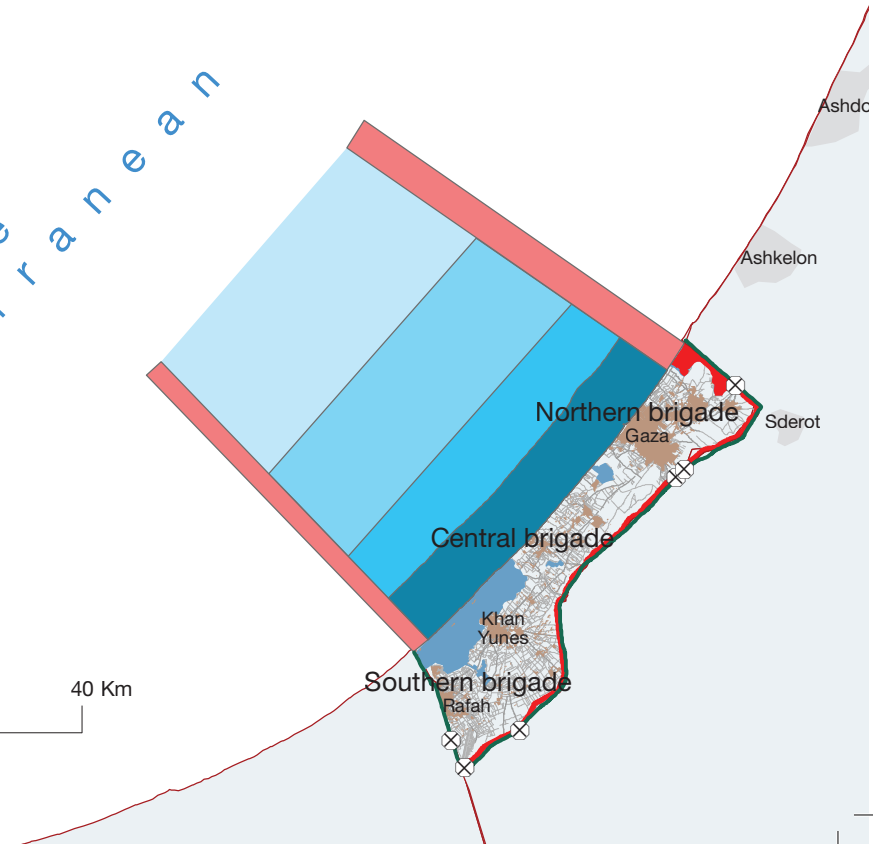


## Legend

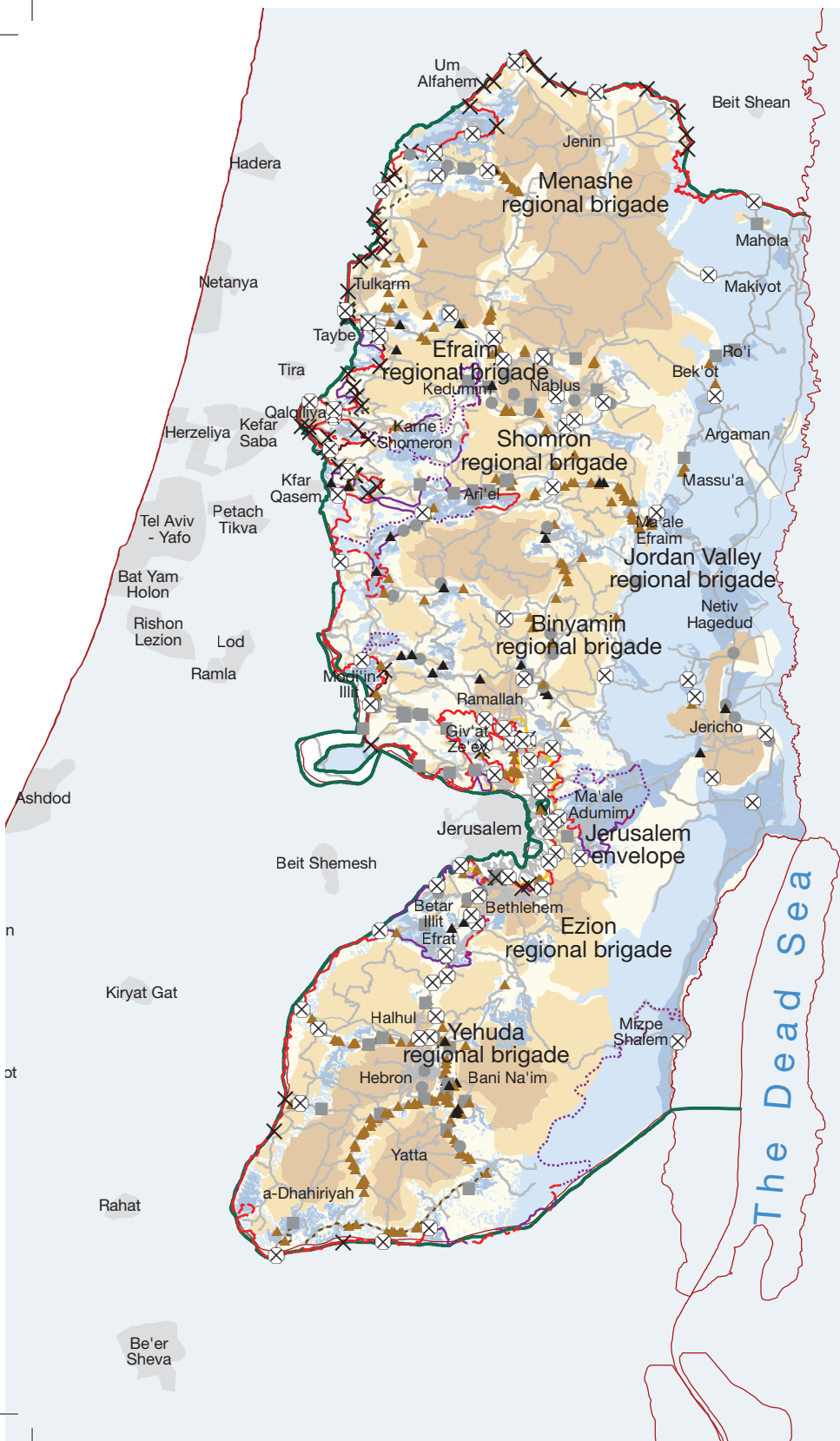
⊗	Checkpoint	■	Municipal area (settlement)
○	Partial Checkpoint	■	Jurisdictional area of regional council (settlement)
⊗	Agricultural Gate (in Separation Barrier)	■	Area A
▲	Dirt Blockade	■	Area B
●	Guard Tower	■	Area C
▲	Blocked Road	■	No-Man's Land
■	Gate on Road	■	Forbidden Entry Zone (Gaza Strip)
—	The Green Line	■	Evacuated Israeli Settlements (Gaza Strip)
—	Jerusalem Municipal Border	■	Populated Palestinian Area (Gaza Strip)
—	Constructed Separation Barrier	■	Permitted Fishing Zone since "Cast Lead" (2009) 3nm
—	Canceled Constructed Separation Barrier	■	Permitted Fishing Zone 2006-2009 6nm
- - -	Barrier Under Construction	■	Permitted Fishing Zone according to Bertini Agreement (August 2002) 12nm
- - -	Canceled Barrier Route	■	Gaza Territorial Waters According to Oslo Accords 20nm
- - -	Barrier Protecting Road	■	Forbidden Fishing zone
—	Authorized Barrier Route		
⋯	Planned Barrier Route - subject to further inter-ministerial examination		

Mediterranean

0 10 20 40 Km









Soldier watching a soccer match in a Palestinian house. Nahal brigade. Ramallah, 2002



Routine check. Paratrooper brigade, 202nd battalion





Palestinian house turned into a military post



Soldiers checking Palestinians. Paratrooper Brigade. 2005

# 1 Gas and stun grenades into the market

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2002

The commanders say: "Throw as hard as you can in the center." I threw in the center, it hit a chicken coop. The stun grenade hit the coop and killed the chickens

## ► Did you get to enforce a curfew?

A lot. There was a period, it was half a year after Operation Defensive Shield, something like that. Half a year, eight months.

## What does that mean? What about the population?

The whole situation there was still very sensitive. They wanted to distance the Arab traffic from the area where the Jews walk, below, from Avraham Avinu to Tel Rumeida, so they made a curfew.

## What does that mean, "made a curfew"?

So first of all it starts in the morning, when the border police go by in their jeep, they go into an area which has a curfew, and they call out an announcement that there is a curfew from such and such an hour, until such and such an hour. And they have their Druze policeman or something like that who knows how to speak...they understand everything, they know. He says to them where it's closed and where they can go, which neighborhoods are closed, which stores are closed. You go out on the patrol later, you see, they normally signal it with something, or there is barbed wire on the road which borders the whole area, which basically cuts the streets that have a curfew. You arrive, you see there are no people, you go around, you check that the stores are closed, everything is closed. There is a curfew, and the duty of the patrol is basically to verify that really no one is going around where there is a curfew. And if they see that there is someone, if it's a lot – a lot is a group – a group going past there, walking on the line of the barbed wire, then it's riot control agents.

## [Tear] gas, rubber bullets? What do you shoot?

Gas and stun grenades especially. Rubber bullets was in more serious situations.

## Did you throw gas a lot?

Gas, yes, and also stun grenades. The thing with the gas and stun grenades, when we were there, it was just free, totally free. We would get to the front, up to the barbed wire, go back and throw them behind us, without looking. It was in the area of the

market where there are tons of people so it was totally...

**You threw gas grenades into the market?**

You throw it inside, it doesn't matter where, even if they didn't cross. You just throw it inside.

**In the market?**

Inside, yes, wherever. I remember that I threw a stun grenade inside. The commanders say: "Throw as hard as you can in the center." I threw in the center, it hit a chicken coop. The stun grenade hit the coop and killed the chickens, I don't know. There were tons of yells and screams and then the rocks started and that was it, it deteriorated. And then they cross the barbed wire, and again, it starts up. And again gas, and again stun grenades, and like that. And if, say, you see one or two people during the curfew, small things like that, then you don't really deal with it, you yell at them to get away and they run back ■

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## 2 A road closed to Palestinians

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2008

► Shuhada Street was closed in principle to Arabs, with the exception of certain people with a permit. That was the story, because they would come to the Gross checkpoint in order to request a permit, and it was a mess but almost none of them crossed there. I think that with vehicles they were totally forbidden, and I don't remember a situation where they crossed there.

**In your sector there were roads that were open to the Palestinians?**

Abu Sneina and the Casbah had free movement for the Palestinians and Shuhada Street was closed or half closed. It's hard to understand the rules there.

**What are the orders you go with there?**

It's forbidden for Palestinians to cross there, except for those with a permit.

**Were there stores that were taken control of, like the "House of Contention"?**

**Were you there, by the way, during the period of the "House of Contention"?**

Yes. When we were there, there was still the red house, but it was evacuated after a few months, around October I think.

**Were there other houses that settlers took control of when you were there?**

If I'm not mistaken, when we were there nothing new happened. Before that, there were stores that were closed, but beyond that, no ■

### 3 Spilling out crates as "an example"

unit: Military Police · location: Qalqilya district · year: 2006-2008

From the  
standpoint of our  
procedures it was  
legitimate...  
sometimes there  
were people who  
took it personally,  
because he  
annoyed you, you  
spill out all his  
crates

► **After the fact, if you look at your company, were things run correctly? Is there a gap between what they taught you and expected from you and how the checkpoint looked at the end of the day?**

People from my company did things in a very strict way, mostly in Reihan. In Qalqilya it was less strict from the standpoint of what they did at the checkpoint. They were strict in Reihan, but at the same time there weren't too many deviations.

**How are they strict? How does it manifest itself?**

The DCL [District Coordination Liaison] sets up certain Palestinians, coordinating the transportation of goods. A guy who had a Mercedes mini truck was transferring agricultural goods in crates, all kinds of vegetables. In general, we had to pass a magnometer [metal detector] over the crate, above it and below it. You put the crate on the side and continue to the next one. You can also tell him to spill out the contents of the crate. It's not a large crate, it's a crate of old plastic. Of course you don't help the guy empty the contents of the crate. You tell him to spill it out, and afterwards he collects it. From the standpoint of our procedures, it was legitimate. They told us to spill out a few crates as an example. The same guy, I remember, had a ton of goods. We spent an hour after the closing of the checkpoint to keep checking him. With regard to him I remember there were a few times they told me to empty out his crates.

**Why him specifically?**

There was a girl who came to him at the \*\*\* facility at the pedestrian crossing and he

said to her that he would give her father 40 sheep if she would marry him, but I hear from her that he was annoying her. But that's nonsense, you aren't strict because of that, rather they are strict professionally. Sometimes there were people who took it personally, that because he annoyed you, you dump out his crates. But we were supposed to do it as an example. You don't dump out everyone's.

**How many crates did he have?**

In the small truck there aren't crates, it's a bath. There are Mercedes trucks for example, there is the Isuzu, which are small and they have crates, but this was a bigger truck, like medium size and you have maybe 200 crates.

**And in that case he dumped out 200 crates?**

In her case? Yes.

**Is that a common "punishment"?**

It's a kind of punishment, but it happened more rarely. It happened because he annoyed her ■

## 4 You enter the veins of the population

unit: Artillery Corps · location: Hebron · year: 2003

► Once in a while our team commander took us as, like, an organic team, we did a kind of patrol of the city or I don't know what you call it, mapping, something small like that.

**What is mapping?**

Mapping is when you get an address from above, I don't know why, and you like go, go from house to house. You enter a house, you take IDs. I remember that you do searches in the room afterwards, and then one of the senior guys came, dumped out the closet, so you also dump out the closet...then you dump-dump-dump and then leave, you move to the next house.

**What are you looking for? It sounds very organized.**

When I was a soldier I didn't understand what it was. Afterwards, I became an officer

We did "mapping" ...  
one of the senior  
guys came,  
dumped out the  
closet, so you also  
dump out the  
closet... then you  
dump-dump-  
dump and then  
leave, you move to  
the next house



and then I understood that mapping is basically, you collect information in order to... afterwards you pass it over to intelligence and the Shin Bet. It's information which, so you know who the people in the house are, how many people, who lives there. Very, very specific details about the house. And then, at some point the Shin Bet has information about the whole city, they know who is in each house, how many rooms are in the house.

**It doesn't change? I'm in your house now, but I don't live here.**

The mapping doesn't, the mapping is routine. You can, they can do mapping in your house this week, and again, in a month or two months.

**They turn my house upside down every month?**

It's possible.

**So how is it that you turn the house upside down?**

First of all, it really serves, it serves the army a ton, because the army has to make arrests, so the army, the routine that they go into houses and out of them inside the city is not foreign, it's not abnormal. So the moment you made an arrest, then OK, you made an arrest, but the area is used to it. In the past I would go into some house inside the city, then the whole city was up on its feet, it was something. But now the army has gotten so deep into the veins of the population that it turns into a routine and it serves the army. But what does it do to protect itself? It says to the citizens: "OK, they went into your house, they turned over your this and that? Great, you go to the DCL [District Coordination Liaison]. You stand there in line for a few hours, and they pay you compensation." There is a kind of...they protect them, meaning, they give the compensation for what happened to them, that they destroyed their house.

**Did you ever see it given to them?**

I know that is the job of the DCL, I know that's what they do. They are the connection. They are like the UN of the IDF. They have, really, white jeeps, and they help them.

**Do you remember the first time you did a mapping?**

Yes.

**What did you think, that they were wildly dumping out someone's closet?**

I had it in my head that they were terrorists, or that they, that we...no...you come after the training track, after like 12th grade, they put you into basic training, the training



track, and then you come and it's your first mission and you go into the house. You think it's very...that you don't know what – that you are saving the country, that maybe he's hiding a weapon. Every moment you are inside the city you think that they are I don't know what, terrorists or something. You don't really understand that they are innocent and all they care about is raising their kids and bringing food home.

**When do you understand it?**

I understood it when I became an officer and I was doing those missions every day, and I understood that the commanders, the brigade commander, and the battalion commanders, explain to me exactly what's going to happen. And I understood the whole system. My duty in field intelligence, as an officer you had to understand the whole intelligence system of the brigade, everything, how it works. You understand how they retrieve information. You understand that it's, he could do eeny-meeny-miney-moe on those houses.

**What does that mean?**

Let's say I want to, I have a specific destination and I want to choose a house to enter to look out from it, for example, a controlling location or something like that, then I can, I look on the map and I have a few houses, so I choose, I choose this house. I could have chosen the house next to it, it doesn't matter. And then you check it with the Shin Bet as it were, but what are they checking? That it doesn't have some kind of, that he's not a terrorist and he's not connected to some... ■

## 5 I didn't understand the purpose of these "mappings"

**unit:** Paratroopers · **location:** South Hebron Hills · **year:** 2003

► What I really remember there which really angered me was the mapping of the houses.

**Why?**

Because arrests I could understand. They say to us: "OK, we're going out now to

You go into the  
house, you wake  
them up, start  
asking them  
embarrassing  
questions

arrest a man who has blood on his hands, he carried out an attack, who participated in the planning of an attack.” I could still understand it, OK. When we would go out to mapping it would really bother me because I couldn’t understand the purpose, the reason for the mapping. It seemed to me like it was something that crossed the line a bit.

**You are a platoon commander now?**

Yes, I’m a platoon commander. Why does it cross the line? Because I understand that mapping has some operational need and it helps our operations somehow, with intelligence and how we perhaps can deal with terrorists later on. But it was very hard for me to come with eight other soldiers or ten other soldiers in the middle of the night, wearing flak jackets, helmets, weapons, magazines loaded, going into the house, waking them up, start looking in their house, start asking them embarrassing questions.

**Which?**

“Who are you, and what are you, and what’s she doing here, and how many people live here?” I don’t know, questions based on the situation.

**There wasn’t some form?**

There was some form, but beyond the form, it doesn’t always work like it is on the form. Sometimes it also...In short, what really bothered me there was the act of going into people’s homes in the middle of the night in this threatening way, I remember that it really angered me how the little kids took it. It really angered me. You see a small kid, three, four, five years old, a young girl, you go into their house in the middle of the night, you come, you take...she sees her father trembling – her father the man, the authority figure, is trembling – they come, take him aside, interrogate him, ask him questions. If there is some soldier, sometimes there are people who do it in a more aggressive way, if it’s speaking or maybe with a shove here and a shove there, if they encounter some kind of lack of cooperation. And it was really hard for me. These mappings were really hard for me. Because now the mapping is for some kind of intelligence need, I’m not going to arrest a suspect now about whom it’s known that a week ago he shot at a passing car and killed some, killed innocent civilians. So here it was really hard for me. And listen, I wasn’t, I didn’t have a level of influence where I could say: “OK, we’re

not going out for mapping.” There is no such thing as not going out for mapping. So I would try, when I would do the mapping, I would try and to do them in the best way possible from the humanitarian perspective. I wouldn’t bother the families too much, I wouldn’t throw stones at the door in the middle of the night and wake them up in a start because that’s what they do, it’s one of the steps in the procedure.

**But isn’t that the procedure for an arrest?**

Yes, but there too there is also a kind of procedure, because you knock on the door and no one answers you, so you throw a rock. And people get confused between an arrest and a mapping, so they throw a rock.

**Straight away?**

Yes. Sometimes they also break a window, they throw the rock at the window.

**Is it mapping in a rural area?**

A rural area, rural-urban. The Yatta area, Dura area. The whole area of the South Hebron Hills. Mapping in that area.

**Is there really an official form? Have you seen it?**

Yes.

**What’s written there?**

I don’t remember exact details, but ID numbers, names.

**Of all of the people in the house?**

Of all of the people in the house.

**Kids too?**

The children don’t have IDs, but how many kids there are.

**How would you map the house that we are sitting in?**

Everyone who lives here, everyone who’s inside the house I write down the ID numbers, I write down the names.

**In Hebrew, of course.**

Yes. I write down how the house is built.

**Do you draw a blueprint?**

I don’t draw a blueprint, but I do write how many rooms there are.

**And it’s according to the form?**

Yes, according to the form. How many rooms, how it’s built, if there is storage, if there

is some structure, if there is some kind of attic. Really mapping it.

**If you were to get a form like that, would you be able to understand how the house is built?**

Not always, but I'm not sure that we really did serious work. It could be yes, it could be no. That I don't know. I also don't know who gets it and what they do with it. As much as I know the army, it has some kind of use, but not significant, and not always. I don't think that it always has a function. I'm sure that in many cases they were just done and they don't really use the mapping. Mapping is also done on houses which have already had mapping done.

**How do you know that?**

It could be that they would say: "They were here already, you already did this last week, here already, there already."

**And you did it anyway?**

Yes, as part of the mapping. This page is maybe some kind of way to cover there, but going there again is to show presence, going into their houses. The issue, in the army they say it's like, I remember what they said to us, that you have to be active, you have to go out and act so they won't come to you. So you have to be active in their territory.

**What else did you have to check?**

Who the home owner is, who really lives there, who is there now. Just because, if you have someone who doesn't live in the house then it's worth checking why he's there. That's it, mostly. Maybe their occupations too.

**What else did you ask that wasn't on the form? You said embarrassing questions.**

Embarrassing questions are dependent upon the situation. Because if now all of a sudden, it really depends on the situation. Of course embarrassing questions were thrown out, I remember that embarrassing questions were thrown out. I can't tell you exactly what.

**Were there questions that really delved into private matters?**

Of course they were like that. Maybe not regularly, but there were questions like that.

**Were there mapping operations?**

Yes, sometimes there are mapping operations.

**How many houses did you all map?**

In one operation?

**No, in total. Did you cover all of Yatta? It's a huge place.**

We didn't cover all of Yatta, but the mission was to cover all of Yatta. So our company comes, they map a certain amount, and then another company comes, and they map more houses. The objective is to map all of Yatta. I'm sure that they mapped Yatta a few times already.

**Could you really go into Yatta, into the village?**

Yes.

**You went around there freely?**

On vehicles, two armored vehicles ■

## 6 The mission: disrupt and harass the residents' lives

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2005

► When we made the rounds in Hebron it was shitty, but I can't say it was anything special. It was Ramadan indeed, and we kept chasing children who threw fire crackers.

**Arabs?**

Arabs, yes, Ramadan. The point is I had been in Arab villages inside Israel the previous Ramadan, traveling around, and it was just the same there. It had nothing to do with Hebron in particular, nothing to do with the fact that they hate you there, they simply throw fire crackers, everyone at everyone. It's more fun to throw them at soldiers. But our platoon commander didn't think so, he thought they were all potential terrorists, so we chased them. Two whole weeks. Not a kid caught. It was really pathetic.

**You were chasing children for two whole weeks in Hebron?**

Yes, and we didn't catch a single one.

We chase after  
kids... go into  
houses, do  
completely  
random  
searches... in the  
territories the  
ones who suffer  
are the local  
population

**Now I'm driving around in Hebron, catch a kid...**

Driving. But we were on foot patrols.

**So what did you do for two whole weeks?**

Well, in fact we never caught children. We'd chase them. It always reminds me of the tales of Romans entering caves with all their gear and getting stuck inside. Like you're with your heavy ceramic bullet-proof vest and all that bullshit, and they hold the fire cracker and run. The fact is we never caught them. I don't remember catching anyone. Perhaps we did, one single time. Truth is, I once heard our platoon commander caught a child and it had nothing to do with him. He caught him, yelled at him, and let him go. What else could he do. That was our mission, in practical terms. By definition. I remember being told quite distinctly: "our mission is to disrupt" – in these words – "disrupt and harass the people's lives." That was our job description, because the terrorists are local residents, and we want to disrupt terrorist activity, and the operational way to do that is to disrupt people's lives. I am sure of this, and I think it's written this way to this day, if the order has not been changed. Disrupt their lives, disrupt residents' lives by definition, because this disrupts the activity of terrorists. That's the whole point.

**How does it work?**

You mean what we do, in fact? Hang around the city like...Guys there say they have nothing to do? It's simply like this. You go around the town, enter abandoned houses, abandoned at least by the time we get there, sometimes we'd enter houses that were not abandoned, and carry out totally random searches. Sometimes, say we saw a kid throw a fire cracker, we'd run to there. But this could just be a lie, we could just pick out any house. It's not like there'd be any intelligence in advance. We'd carry out searches in houses and the inhabitants were totally used to it. They were not surprised, not stressed. They'd get irritated, depressed, they have no more tolerance for this bullshit, but they're used to it because it's been going on for so many years by now. Soldiers come along, turn the house inside out, make a huge mess, and leave. That's what they do. Sometimes they do all kinds of lookout shifts. There's a cemetery there, so we'd sit in the cemetery and observe all kinds of couples or I don't know, anyone walking by there. That's what we did for a rather long time. Sometimes we'd

put up checkpoints for vehicles. Stand at some junction and check cars inside the neighborhood, that's what we'd do.

**What would you look for inside cars?**

It's ludicrous, but this was not clear. It's like searching for weapons, I know, but no one really believes you'll find anything there.

**Not even your commander?**

I don't think so. It depends which commander. If he was a highly motivated officer, then yes.

**But everyone does this?**

Yes, that's the designated mission. The company commander says to the officer who says to the squad commander, in charge of the patrol: your mission is to be there and there for an hour and a half and do this and that.

**You didn't feel asinine doing this?**

Terribly. That's what I'm saying. It's one of the reasons I didn't want to be squad commander. I felt to what extent these commanders have no say, they're such little screws in the system, almost like the privates. And then I thought: why should I bring that on myself?

**You do it and the population suffers.**

Exactly, totally fucked. That's just the point. That's what is so bad about this. As long as we were up north, no one suffered from this, it was the trees we either saw or didn't. But in the Territories it's the population that suffers ■

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## 7 Every incident resulted in "limiting civilian movement"

unit: Civil Administration · location: General · year: 2001-2004

► **Were there incidents after large operations, large terror attacks or someone was killed, where something happened and then suddenly the administration hardens its treatment of residents?**

Fewer permits  
into Israel...  
lessening hours at  
the "back-to-back"  
checkpoints for  
the transfer of  
goods, and mainly  
economic steps:  
not transferring  
money through  
banks

That's natural, isn't it?

**Yes, but do you remember things like that which happened?**

I don't remember a specific incident – that period was replete – but yes, each incident results in a civilian punishment, there is nothing to do. It's not a civilian punishment, it's limiting civilian movement.

**Like what?**

Like giving fewer permits into Israel for example, which is a step the administration takes, there is nothing to do. Lessening hours at the "back-to-back" checkpoints for the transfer of goods, and mainly economic steps: not transferring money through banks...it sounds inconsequential to you, but it's not inconsequential.

**How is that related to the administration?**

The administration approves the transfer of money between banks, from Palestinians to Palestinians, between an outside bank and a Palestinian, between an Israeli bank and a Palestinian.

**Is there a division of the DCL which is responsible for that?**

Then it was the economic [division], yes, it would approve all transfers. The economic branch, I think there was a reorganization there, but I think that the economic branch is still there, I don't know.

**What do they decide?**

It's a government policy, there is nothing to do, it's policy.

**How is it defined? You are saying that they didn't call it a punishment?**

It wasn't a punishment.

**Rather what is it, how did they define it?**

They didn't define it. It's not a punishment. Not transferring money is not something humanitarian, but it's not a punishment. A punishment is not allowing the transfer of bread, flour, oil and eggs. That's a punishment, and that never happened. They don't do things like that. Money is something that isn't elementary, nothing you can do about it. Again, you don't transfer money for a week. It's not that you don't transfer money for months, and then it's humanitarian. But money isn't something that's... believe me, it never happened that the bank was missing money for a withdrawal. That never happened, I never heard of it. And if it were to happen, I promise you they



would transfer the money.

**What other kinds of response steps? Could you influence movement on the roads?**

Yes, then there was the famous program of separating the roads, of...which wasn't implemented as far as I know.

**What was the program?**

The program was to separate Palestinian and Jewish roads. And then the issue was submitted to the Supreme Court, I don't remember what the ruling was.

**What was it following?**

It was in 2002, the end of 2002, terror attacks on the roads, shooting attacks, a period of shooting attacks, and they decided to just separate the roads. They didn't do it in the end, there was a plan, we started on it for a very, very, very long time and...in the end it didn't happen, I don't think they ever implemented it, because they just had to build infrastructure.

**What was the plan?**

A Palestinian and a Jewish road, based on the idea that this would allow free Palestinian movement in the West Bank, there wouldn't be disconnects between blocs, there would be humanitarian movement without them having to go on roads with Israeli vehicles, and carry out a shooting attack...it's easier to secure a road on which only Israelis drive. It won't help. There are security considerations today.

**Who formulated this plan?**

I think it was a directive of the Central Command, and who formulated it? Some division, but mostly the civil administration, what's called the infrastructure branch. They separated roads and built possible roads. Tunnels, bridges, and maybe part of it was implemented – I don't really know ■

## 8 Do you know what a naval blockade is for them? There is no food for a few days

**unit:** Navy · **location:** Gaza strip · **year:** 2005

► It works mostly on punishment. I like this the most: They gave it to us, so we'll give it back to them. Do you know what a naval blockade is for them? There is no food for a few days. It could be like, for example, there was an attack in Netaniah, a naval blockade for four days on the strip. No sea-going vessel can leave, a Dabur patrol boat sits at the entrance to the port, they try to go out and within a second they shoot at the bow and if it's not us they'll even deploy attack helicopters and it scares them. We had a lot of operations with attack helicopters, they don't shoot too much because they prefer to let us deal with it, but they come to scare, they circle about their heads. All of a sudden a Cobra is standing on your head, it passes low, it makes wind and throws everything around. There were a lot of incidents like that. Those worked with us a lot.

### **And the blockade, how common was that?**

Very common. More than a special isolation, which was relatively rare. I wouldn't say more than once a month, but it could be that it would happen three times in a month and then three months of nothing. It depends on the time.

### **It's a day, two days, three days, four, or more than that?**

I didn't encounter more than four days. More than that, they'd die there and I believe that the IDF understands that. 70 percent live on fish, they have no choice. For them it's not eating. There are whole families who don't eat because of it for a few days. They eat bread and water. Like in the Holocaust ■

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## 9 How can you have so much curfew and think that people can live?

unit: Civil Administration · location: Hebron · year: 2002-2003

► **You threw out half a sentence earlier about complaints that you could understand.**

Yes.

**Like what?**

Not to me specifically, but things I heard in the media, I heard about things that happened, about delays, that they didn't want to allow a pregnant woman to cross, situations which presumably happened. They opened checkpoints all the time, and one of the biggest duties was to understand where all the checkpoints were located. They would be opened randomly on the roads, and presumably it was unpleasant, and the complaints were about how they couldn't get to work. I remember something that personally bothered me, I didn't understand the whole thing with the curfew. In Hebron there was a ton of curfew, I don't remember the number of days, but I do remember that I was just in shock at how we make curfew so often and we think that people can live. I really didn't understand how they expect people to exist. If you make people's lives so difficult, how do you think you'll advance some kind of solution to the problem, you are only creating more people who are going to harbor hatred towards you deep in their hearts for the rest of their lives. I'm sure that if they were to put me under a curfew for 360 days, what would you do, exactly? It wasn't realistic from my standpoint, and I remember that I talked about it and no one understood what I was talking about. They said to me, "security risk." Great, security risk, but they are people, and they need to live. Where do they get food from? How can you make money to eat when you are under a curfew?

**You spoke with officers, friends?**

I would talk to officers and friends. I did 8/6 [8 days on post, 6 at home] and I had a lot of time to forget that I was in the army. The six days when you wander in the country you easily forget what you do. The eight days on the base go by quickly because you sleep there ■

## 10 Three thousand Palestinians at five posts

unit: Military Police · location: Qalqilya and Tul Karem districts  
year: 2005

At the "terminal  
checkpoint" you  
have to direct  
them through the  
box and you don't  
always know  
enough Arabic

### ► How does Reihan work? There's you, the combat soldiers?

The combat soldiers are with us at the checkpoint, then there were artillerymen, there was a certain period when it was one of the units from Kfir. Anyone who came got a full inspection, and it worked more on intelligence, because there were strong and precise intelligence warnings. They said that a blue pickup would arrive with weapons, and there really were weapons there. The intelligence was exact, it was a quality inspection and more sensitive. Now, in the Eyal area, it's like at the mall – they check the trunk and you drive... That's why there was bitterness...

### **Some of the soldiers were in the vehicular terminal and some were in the pedestrian?**

Yes.

### **Let's talk about the pedestrian terminal with the glass box, because that's the newest part of the way the checkpoints work today. A guy comes, what process does he go through?**

He goes to the crossing himself, he goes through an inspection on foot – a large magnometer which identifies weapons and bomb belts with a beep, so there won't be a threat at the crossing itself. Afterwards he comes to the x-ray, and at the magnometer there he removes all of his equipment, down to his change, and then crosses there. All of his equipment is examined through the x-ray, he gets dressed again, he goes on to the ID check, and he crosses. There was a lot of pressure in Reihan, once in a while the Palestinians would cross three at a time, and they didn't wait a long time. In Eyal, in the morning, it was a different story because that was the peak of the morning, three thousand Palestinians for five ID posts. There was a contest, out of boredom, who could allow more Palestinians into Israel, so that the shift would go by quickly. There it was really five hours without rest, maybe the last half hour, but you worked and pushed people through. You got up at 2:30, at 4-5 you are already at the crossing with swollen eyes, pushing through Palestinians before your eyes.

**At what time do they start coming to the checkpoint?**

Before 4 [a.m.], the checkpoint opens at 4.

**What time does the congestion lessen?**

After four or four and a half hours.

**It's like that every day?**

Yes. Five days a week, and on Friday there is less congestion because the majority don't work. Sunday is the busiest day, by far. On Sunday you wouldn't even get a break sometimes until the last minute. I would get a break only after five hours. The shifts there were divided up, there was a possibility of doing ten straight hours or five hour shift, five hour break, and another five hour shift. It was crazy because you were stuck in a small box, alone, the directive was no music, nothing. After the peak hours you would [want to] commit suicide, silently. The soldiers would slack off and bring mp3s, and I even brought a portable DVD in order to pass the time. My head was burned out, I felt things that I never felt in my life. When I was released, I blessed the day that I ran away from that thing, because I hated being at the crossing on the level...

**Going back to the pedestrian terminal in Reihan. They go through x-ray screening and there is no human contact?**

None. Only through the microphone. You talk with them, and it's crazy because sometimes they play it stupid, sometimes they know what they are doing and they just want to annoy you, and you go crazy because you can't show them, you have to direct them via the box, and you don't always know enough Arabic in order to explain it to them, you improvise sentences.

**Are men and women together at the checkpoint?**

Yes, but the moment there is a need for a deeper investigation, removal of clothing, they went to a separate cell where a male or female soldier would check him, depending on the gender.

**If there is an x-ray machine and a magnometer, when is there a need for deeper investigation?**

When the magnometer doesn't stop beeping, or when the people being checked don't do what you tell them, then you take them aside.

**At the last part, you said that there is a check for crossing permits, does everyone need a crossing permit?**

Yes, otherwise there would be no permission for them to cross.

**From what age do you need a permit? Kids certainly don't need it.**

I don't remember the directives there, but a kid crosses with an adult escort, or copy of his father's ID to show what city he's connected to, or that he's allowed to cross.

**As for baggage, are they allowed to transfer a suitcase?**

They can transfer anything except for electronics, because you couldn't check that. At the x-ray machine there were people who knew how to see, but that they couldn't see.

**A person who comes with a car?**

If he has a permit, he can cross in a vehicle.

**Does a vehicle permit allow for transfer of goods?**

There was a list of who is allowed to transfer goods.

**What is the definition of goods? If a person has a vehicle permit but not a merchandise permit and he comes in a vehicle with half a liter of oil, can he cross?**

Yes. It's more sheep, sweets, vegetables, things like that.

**It's about the kind of good or the amount?**

Amount. I remember 24 baking dishes, for example.

**Everything was defined?**

Yes ■

## 11

### Defined hours for crossing the checkpoint

unit: Military Police · location: Qalqilya district · year: 2006-2008

► **At the Zufim checkpoint, were there crossings also for pedestrians or just for vehicles?**

Certainly for pedestrians. There were pedestrians at the Zufim checkpoint. In the

morning it was people who were in Zufim as permanent residents.

**Who had free movement?**

With inspection, but yes.

**Were the agricultural crossings always open?**

Of course. The Zufim checkpoint was open 24 hours for the residents. For the most part, the agricultural gate is open at certain hours. Aside from that, there is a facility in every area where they do an inspection of pedestrians.

**Permanent residents couldn't cross at that point?**

They could. It's a bit vague.

**A Palestinian comes at 2 a.m., can he cross?**

No. There are defined hours at the checkpoints, even if you are a permanent resident.

**But a Jew that comes after him can cross?**

Yes. In Reihan, as meticulous as the work is carried out, there were people who would cross as long as we were at the checkpoint. Only if they came from the Israeli side, for example, they did cross because there was no reason to keep them on the Israeli side. It was because the authority to inspect was ours specifically and no one else's.

**You said there were blockades between the Palestinian villages, Azun-Atmah and Beit Amin.**

It's like Hawara, you play bingo, you have a short form of the ID number, the four last numbers, you have the program on the computer. You check, for the most part there is not so much of a reason. The thing is that there is no fence which prevents people who live in Azun-Atmah from crossing into the Israeli side because they are there. If they leave the village – they cannot leave the village because there is a prohibition because they are Palestinians – but if they travel west they will be thought of as illegal aliens. The thing of the crossing is to prevent the passage of Palestinians who want to visit Azun-Atmeh who don't have a permit, or to catch a wanted person who wants to get there.

**If he's not a resident of Azun-Atmeh can he go there?**

No ■

## 12 The line wasn't straight, the officer shot in the air

unit: Armored Corps · location: South Hebron Hills · year: 2001

He hit him in the face with the butt of his Galil [storm rifle], kicked him in the balls, spit on him, cursed him... there were those who photographed a Palestinian they bound like a contortionist

► There is a checkpoint at the Dahariya intersection. South Dahariya. From there they cross to work in Beersheba. They have to cross, some on foot, tens of Palestinians a day. One of the officers with us wanted to keep order, he wanted them to stand straight, level. He ran next to them [the Palestinians] and told them to straighten up. They didn't do it so well. So the first person he saw at the beginning, 50-something years old, and next to him an 8 year-old or something like that, a small boy...the officer shot in the air and it became ordered.

### In order to straighten the line?

In order to straighten the line. And another time he just beat a guy up...He hit him in the face with the butt of his Galil [storm rifle], kicked him in the balls, spit on him, cursed him...he just shat on him. Right next to his little boy. He just degraded him. That was rare...it would happen...

### An officer from your company? From the armored corps?

Yes, we also had another soldier there...who prepared especially. He invested two weeks, so that he could beat up the Arabs. And just anyone who wasn't...who didn't do exactly what he said, whoever wasn't obedient – he would give it to him in his knee, leg, stomach, head, and anyone who wouldn't answer him directly: “where is your ID,” “where are you from”...like those thugs who beat you up...anything that didn't seem right to him – [you get a] beating. There are people who need this power, and they get power crazy and they become violent. I'm not talking about Arabs who were running and shot at them, those who bypassed...but the issue of beating, it was really idiotic.

### And when you're standing next to it, you...

At that moment you are silent...and you...you can't stop it. You are also in regular service. It wouldn't happen on reserve duty. If I were to see something like that now, I wouldn't let it continue. We fought with border policemen, we tried to distance them



from there, we really fought with them. It was difficult. Look we're...the majority are good people, it's not that most are problematic, there is a problematic minority. The problem is that then it was legitimate. So beating an Arab up, cursing, degrading him...pointing your weapon in his face and then shooting in the air a second later, those were legitimate things. It was pretty individualized, It wasn't, let's have four, five soldiers beat him up and...but there were people who they knew that they would beat someone up every day. They talk about it freely, they photograph...they photographed a Palestinian they bound like a contortionist – shocking things ■

## 13 They would stand them in a line, yell at them

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Ramallah district · year: 2002

### ► Were there engagements? Did you catch people, detain people, or vehicles driving during a curfew?

Yes, yes, quite a few. We argued with him, chased him with an armored vehicle because we saw him driving during a curfew. We would detain him, we had many such chases, we would stop in front of them and detain them. Take their keys, like we used to do then, in the beginning of my service, take their keys, tell him: go home, do you understand? And we wouldn't confiscate the car, we would leave it there, in the middle of Ramallah, doesn't matter where, and "go, we are taking your keys." And in general, if an officer at that patrol remembered that the same vehicle had done it before, then he would make them stand in a row and I don't know what.

#### What?

Make them stand in a row, I'm telling you. There was no physical violence. All the times I was there, no. I remember that in those cases they didn't hit them with the stocks and so on. I hear stories. Let's put it this way, mainly that. I didn't come across such things, but they would make them stand in a row, yell at them. In one case somebody treated them, Arabs, Palestinians, like soldiers in formation, "you are behind schedule," stuff like that. "It's the last time you..." You know.

In one case  
somebody treated  
them like soldiers  
in formation, "you  
are behind  
schedule... you are  
slacking off..."

### **What do you mean, "formation"? He put them, like, in an open square?**

Not a square, a line-up. Saying: "you don't give a fuck about me," the way sergeants speak. "You this, you that." And they are clueless about what he's talking about, they don't get it. This is what they did to them ■

## 14 They told us: "dry them out"

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Tul Karem district · year: 2001

They tied his hands behind his back, blindfolded him, took his picture...in all kinds of poses, with a weapon in the air and things like that, like they caught some serious terrorist or something. And it was just some guy on his way to work

► It was just after the terrorist attack at the Dolphinarium club. They wanted to establish a brigade on the seam line. So they sent us to the Taibeh area. We sat in Avney Hefets and our duty was to go on patrol, to prevent the passage of illegal aliens. There is an open field there to the north of Taibeh, we were there. There was nothing to do with the people. The majority of the people who cross are, of course, people going to work. We never caught...with the exception of some drug addict who lived in a cave, which was maybe the most interesting thing we found there, most of the people, all of the people who we detained there, were people who tried to infiltrate Israel to work. And there was nothing to do with them, there weren't facilities to jail them. It's impossible. So the procedure was just to take their ID, keep them for a few hours, so they'll sit, and send them back home...

### **And you would give them back their ID?**

Yes, after a few hours. You catch someone, run his ID number, yes, illegal alien – it never happened that they detained one of these people – you keep him on a rock for a few hours and continue with your own thing. There were some guys, the Russians, the crazy ones. I remember, they just grabbed...I once saw, generally they sat at a different post, they sit among themselves, the Russians go together to the post. And I was young, I would go wherever they put me, so one time they caught someone and for no reason – deciding they would give him the treatment, meaning they would just take his ID. In principle they were at a lookout post, which they are generally – we were down below, they were looking out, saying to us, "there is someone crossing

there.” We were going, catching. Or we had some pickup truck, or we were on foot: you go, grab him, take his ID, a few hours in the sun or the shade, or according to the whim at that moment, and send him home. Yes, it could be between two hours, between two and six to eight hours, it depends what hour you caught him. There were not very clear directives because they didn’t know what to do with these people. They said to us: “Dry them out.” “Drying them out” is very general, it leaves room for imagination...

[...] So these Russians, so they were in principle at a lookout post, which was more of a “fucking and not exercising” post. They didn’t have to run from place to place. So by chance someone walked by close to their post, so they grabbed him. And so they grabbed him – bound him straight away. When we would catch them, we would sit them down, give them water...

**Do they sit them down together, or everyone wherever he is caught?**

Sometimes this and sometimes that. Sometimes we would also catch a few together so we would sit them down together, or we would decide that we didn’t want them to sit together: “You sit here, you sit there.” So when the Russians caught him, they tied his hands behind his back, blindfolded him, took his picture in all kinds of poses, of with a weapon in the air and things like that, like they caught some serious terrorist or something. And it was just some guy on his way to work.

**Were there instances of violence?**

Really aside from that incident, which I don’t know exactly what happened there because I only arrived at the end. When we came to collect them, then we saw that they were, they said: “ yes, one second, we have to release the guy, cut his restraints...”

**At the end of the shift with the Abir, do you have to go back to the post?**

Yes, so we collected them. And we saw that they caught this guy and what they did to him. I don’t remember incidents of violence there. Yes, there is the issue of them knowing that we are in control, right? But real violence?

**Which includes what?**

Included that they don’t talk to you – you talk to them. You tell them what to do. Whoever talks, “shut up! I don’t care what you have to say.” Because they always tell you, their family and whatever...and “I need to work and I need to...” You don’t care

– “shut up, sit!” and they lose...I take their ID, and it’s gone. “Sit here, you won’t want to not be here when I get back.” They are always there, when you get back. No one moves anywhere without his ID ■

## 15 Taking a person and controlling his life

unit: Lavi Battalion · location: South Mount Hebron · year: 2003

My fuses jumped a bit... he started arguing and yelling a bit... so right away two things: restraints and blindfolds... he just sat all day at the gate... he had some 2,000 liters of milk. All of the milk spoiled

► There was one incident which I think is the most...personally, that I regret the most. The most...during all of my service in the territories, the most not OK thing that I did. It’s a guy who came out from Yatta, went past a blockade. He was on his way from Yatta to Hebron, to the milk production plant. He had a truck with containers of milk. There was a curfew, I think, in Hebron at the time. In short, he was not allowed to cross. I caught him right as he was crossing the blockade, and it was the third time that week that I caught the same guy, in different circumstances, but the same guy, more or less the same place. My fuses jumped a bit, because I took him out – like I asked him to get out of the car, this and that – but he started arguing and yelling a bit, so right away two things: restraints and blindfolds...into the jeep, I brought him to the gate of the post. It was, like I don’t know, ten in the morning, something like that...between eleven and one in the afternoon I released him. Meaning – it was the summer – meaning, all day. He had some 2,000 liters of milk. All of the milk spoiled. It was all day, he just sat at the gate with a blindfold and restraints. When I look at it [now], I feel embarrassed from two perspectives. A, from the standpoint of how I treated my fellow human being. Just taking a man and taking control of his life like that? I physically took him, bound him, brought him to that place, said: “OK, sit here.” I took him as a bound prisoner. And no other person was responsible for that act. It wasn’t that I got an order, right? No, it was what I decided. And by the way, it was acceptable. From the standpoint of all those in charge of me there was no problem with it. OK, you detained, from the standpoint of treatment of your fellow human being, and from the standpoint of the whole thing with property, meaning, there was milk. It was something of monetary value that was

lost. Meaning, I lost the man, who knows how many shekels, but let's say the milk was worth at least 500 shekel. In Yatta that is a lot of money. Really. Fine, so I didn't take the money from his pocket, but my actions caused him to lose it all. And in my eyes that's less important than the whole personal treatment. It's not ok. Because really, what's the big deal? He's not a terrorist, he wasn't wanted, he's not someone who approached me physically or threatened me with a weapon. He's a regular guy. From the standpoint of personal responsibility, what was the benefit of my actions? Nothing. Did it contribute to the security of the State? No. It just caused someone injustice. And that's not OK ■

## 16 I made him crap his pants

unit: Border Police · location: Wadi Ara · year: 2003

► The work with the population was the entertainment. At least in Katzr, I don't know what was going on at that time in Jenin, but it was entertainment. To work with the people was...

**“Working with the people” is a nice turn of phrase.**

Yes. Work over. That was what there was to do. Then all of a sudden, when they built the fence there was no population. There was the Israeli population who you have to be careful with, there is Barta'a which you could still a little...

**So the operations move to Barta'a?**

A little more, yes. But again there was the tendency with Barta'a, they kept Barta'a for the IDF, so the work was mostly along the fence.

**And when they caught someone?**

Then we went in. If you capture someone then you can go in. Really the majority of the time when I saw the violence was in the period before the fence, when it was just routine. Pouring out the kids' bags and playing with their toys. You know, to grab one and to play “keep away with their toys.”

**Did the kids cry?**

All the time. They cried and they were afraid. Meaning, you couldn't miss it.

One of the goals was always: I got him to cry in front of his kids... I think that if an officer says that he didn't know, he's totally lying

**The adults cried too?**

Of course, they were degraded. One of the goals was always: I got him to cry in front of his kids, I got him to crap in his pants.

**You saw situations where people went to the bathroom in their pants?**

Yes.

**Why?**

From being beaten, for the most part. Being beaten to death, and threatened, and screamed at, you are just terrified. Especially if it's in front of your kids, they yell and threaten and scare them, so you also are scaring the kids. One time, again, there was some man we stopped with his kid, the kid was small, like four or something. They didn't beat up the kid, but the policeman was annoyed that the adult brought the kids so they would have mercy on him. He says to him: "You bring your kid so they'll have mercy on you, let's show you what that is." He goes and beats him up, screams at him, saying, "what, I'll kill you in front of your boy, maybe you'll feel more..." It's terrifying. Again, there are a lot of stories of honor.

**Did he piss his pants out of fear?**

Yes.

**In front of the boy.**

Yes. A lot of stories of honor, like check me out, I got him to crap, I got him to whatever. They talked about it routinely all the time, it's not some kind of...

**Where did they talk about it, in the cafeteria, in front of the officers? Was it openly?**

It was openly. I think that if an officer says that he didn't know, he's totally lying. At least, the officers, the high-ranking officers knew. The platoon commanders had less to do with it, but the company commander, the assistant company commander, the operations officers – even encouraged it to a degree. Again, not directly, they didn't come and say, yalla beat them up, but there was a kind of legitimization, otherwise it wouldn't have happened. Again, it's a fact that it happened less in Jenin, and in my opinion not just because there was less work with the population ■

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# 17 In the company we had a kind of temporary prison camp

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus district · year: 2003

► I was a squad commander at this point. It was also one of the crazy periods, the same story as Hebron, only inside Nablus. No static posts. I remember that I would say to the soldiers who card, that they should say thanks they aren't in Hebron. One checkpoint is called Havah 7, Bet Porik, one checkpoint is called Meteg 3, which is at the northern exit between Nablus and Ein Bidan, northeastern, and one that is called "the valley of the runaways," which brings back a lot of memories that I didn't remember when I think about it now. The valley of the runaways...in the majority of the checkpoints there, unusual things did not happen because there was a squad commander there. The unusual things started happening when the number of available squad commanders dropped, and afterwards the soldiers started being squad commanders, and then the "neighborhood" always starts...the central checkpoints in Nablus, Hava 5, Hava 7, Hava 6, normally nothing unusual happens there because they are very open to the media. Those people are always there, Machsom Watch, B'Tselem, etc. Where it's not clear where the checkpoint is, a moving checkpoint, what's called a check post, or an unestablished checkpoint, which you try with the use of an APC to close an area and prevent Palestinians from exiting from a wide area. You always patrol or set up the checkpoint each time in a different post, and there no one sees you, and no one knows where you are, it's abandoned land. Not too much happened there either when I was there. But it could happen there because there is no real supervision.

**Are there things that are part of the procedure, like detainments, "dry-outs," confiscation of keys. Are those things that you recognize?**

Ok, yes. Look, at the checkpoint, detaining is the most correct thing to do. I can tell you that today, from all perspectives, detaining is the preferred method and it's the least terrible thing. At the checkpoint a soldier finds himself in a situation where he is endangering his life. If there is a lack of order at the checkpoint, then the soldier is liable to die. It's an

You have to keep your authority, you have to keep the relationship at the checkpoint so they respect you. What can you do, it sounds terrible and it is terrible. That's the reality of the checkpoint

issue of life and death, because all of the checkpoints there are very dangerous, it's a very vulnerable post when you are at a checkpoint. You are a soldier, you are static, and it's easy to attack you. The moment a checkpoint commander does not make sure that his checkpoint is organized, and [if] people, they don't stand in a straight line, and people come close to him freely and they go to all areas of the checkpoint freely, there is a good chance that someone will come and blow himself up or shoot at him and take advantage of the chaos. A checkpoint that is routinely chaotic, or the commander of the checkpoint is routinely chaotic, it's only a matter of time until the terrorist, especially in a dangerous area like Nablus, will identify it and attack. And then the question is, what are the tools of the commander to achieve order at the checkpoint. So the tools of the commander to achieve order at the checkpoint can be: A. physical violence, which works, it certainly works. Cruelty works. If you take a person who went crazy, and smash him in the head with the butt of your weapon, it works, it's an effective method. It's a very unethical method and commanders don't normally use it. And because of that, commanders use detainments. It's a less effect method, it frightens them less, but walla, it also works.

**What does it mean?**

It means that a person who caused you trouble at the checkpoint, who disturbed the order at the checkpoint, who spoke in a manner...you have to keep your authority, you have to keep the relationship at the checkpoint so they respect you. What can you do, it sounds terrible and it is terrible. That's the reality of the checkpoint. Everything has already been written and said about the checkpoint, whoever has seen the movie "Checkpoint" understands the issue, I think. But in the end, you have to keep some sort of respect towards yourself, and you have to keep order at the checkpoint. So you take that guy who got out of the line, those few people who made the balagan [mess] for you, you bind them in restraints behind their back and sit them for 10 hours, 5 hours.

**Who decides? The checkpoint commander?**

The checkpoint commander there. And again, I have to say, that as long as checkpoints exist – and it's a different discussion if there should or should not be checkpoints... apparently there have to be, because there isn't much of a choice in certain places, and there are places where the checkpoints can be removed. That is clear to me. And when they will be able to evacuate the settlements in general, it will be possible



to remove many checkpoints. But there is a certain amount of checkpoints which will exist. And as long as checkpoints exist, detainment is the most humane way, among all the other ways which are much less humane, to create order at the checkpoint. And what can you do, you also have to protect the lives of the soldiers.

**As a checkpoint commander, who instructs you that you are allowed to detain, not allowed to detain?**

That's [discussed] during the company commander's briefing. For us they said that it's acceptable to detain. No one gave legitimization to physical violence.

**What other means of punishment or authority are initiated?**

In the more extreme cases, they take people to the company. There was, like, a temporary prison camp in the company, that was improvised, where people could sit for two days. That's for cases where people really made problems. You take them to the jeep, sit them for two days in an improvised prison camp that we put up, with a tin roof, with mattresses.

**Are they prisoners?**

Yes. Their hands bound behind their backs, sitting in the temporary prison camp for like a day. They give them water, they give them food, but they are bound there for a day in the company prison camp, and there is someone who guards them. A kind of tin roof, with a mattress underneath, surrounded by barbed wire.

**What were the criteria to merit a day or two in the temporary prison camp?**

I don't remember. Those were things on the level of someone who did more. You detained him and he continued making problems, started going crazy, started moving, acting violently or someone who you caught regularly ■

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## 18 He mumbled a bit, I hit him in the face with the butt of the weapon

unit: Engineering Corps · location: Ramallah district · year: 2005

►I arrived, and immediately they briefed me on the Qalandiya checkpoint, this was the

In every house  
that we entered,  
we broke the light  
bulbs with the butt  
of our weapon as  
an operational  
pretext that the  
light disturbed us.  
The checkpoint  
became  
extraordinarily  
violent...the  
soldiers sent  
Arabs to bring  
them food from  
inside Ramallah. Of  
course they didn't  
pay them

old Qalandiya checkpoint, before it became a terminal. As a result of the events that happened to us – the checkpoint was turned into a terminal. This checkpoint included 24 soldiers on a shift, 12 at the vehicular checkpoint and 12 at the pedestrian, which are mostly on alert and as an intervention team. The pedestrian checkpoint was already sterile. Not like in the past. When I arrived there, the pedestrian checkpoint was sterile, with only glass passages and the military police crossing unit. There was only an alert force, and the other force took the vehicular checkpoint. I was at that checkpoint, and the first time I was there I expressed active opposition to what we were doing. As a result of this opposition, my platoon commander took me in for a conversation, that he was forced to dismiss me from all duties and remove me from the company within a week, and they would find me a new company, headquarters apparently, because I expressed political opinions against military procedure. My “political opinions” were that with me no one is to raise a hand. It’s a checkpoint that has the women of Machsom Watch there in 24-hour shifts, then they were, and no one [is to] turn to them or talk with them or encounter them in any way, and what they do is legitimate and it is their right. You speak with them through the IDF spokesman, we have to have authority to talk to them. Those are the orders of the military and I represented them faithfully. The soldiers didn’t listen to me, and they raised their hand even at the women of Machsom Watch, they cursed them, broke their bones. The abuse at the checkpoint was severe... It was December-January, it was a difficult winter, not like this winter. It’s cold in Ramallah, and it’s unnecessary to point out that it’s an exhausting checkpoint, you stand there for 12 hours on your feet, a bullet in the chamber, it’s considered a dangerous checkpoint...you have a helmet on your head and a flak jacket and all your equipment is on you, always on your feet, 12 hours or 8-8, but it’s the same thing and you are always working. You are freezing cold and you see them coming in their warm cars. We invented a hobby: the majority of the Palestinian cars were old and the trunk doesn’t open from inside the car, we would tell them to get out and open the trunk, so they would get out into the cold and the rain. It angered me seeing them in their cars until I forgot that they don’t want to see me there. One time a guy by the name of Amjad Jamal Nazer, I remember him well, I asked him to get out and open the trunk and he asked why, he said he could open

it from the inside. There was hail, and I was a bit sick, and I told him to get out and open the trunk. He refused. It went along with the procedures, he said he wasn't getting out, I confiscated his car, I took the car keys, I told him to stop on the side. He mumbled a bit, I hit him in the face with the butt of my weapon, and like that I returned to the circle of violence. My soldiers couldn't believe it, they were so excited. I was a deputy commander at the vehicular checkpoint and this was "a step up for us", this incident. The checkpoint became very violent, because of the weather and the subpar conditions that were there. The food was always late, and for that too the Palestinians were guilty. The soldiers would send Arabs to bring them food from inside Ramallah, when I didn't see, of course they wouldn't pay them. They would collect prayer beads, take it for themselves. At that time I didn't know it was considered a war crime, to take prayer beads or from the watermelons. I was extremely opposed to it. I didn't take part in it, but it happened constantly. Many squad commanders and sergeants took part in it. I have to point out that the officers were opposed to it, and they tried anyone who was involved in these things. There was a strong opposition.

**Those were the things they took?**

Prayer beads, food mostly. They didn't take money. There were other things, I don't remember what exactly.

**Cigarettes?**

Cigarettes. Many times when they stopped a truck with cartons, it was like a bribe, like you see at the Mexican border, they took two cartons and let them cross.

**And if he doesn't want to give it to them?**

Then he doesn't cross, even if he's at the entrance to his house, but he gives it to them. I almost never encountered situations like that. We were always there with a finger on the trigger, literally and figuratively. They explained to us that it's a very, very dangerous place and everything is correct, it's like that today, too. It wasn't like the brainwashing they gave us in Yakir, where it's pastoral and beautiful. It was dangerous there, and we felt it. After a month on that front, a day before I was supposed to go home, a friend of mine at the sharpshooting security post was shot with four bullets which wounded him badly. In addition, another soldier at the post was shot and killed. It totally changed the rules of the game. They stopped the whole checkpoint, the

checkpoint was hermetically sealed for 24 hours, no one came in or out of Ramallah. We went into Ramallah without any security justification. We turned Ramallah upside down with real hatred, we made 80 arrests that night. We went crazy.

**What does that mean?**

In every house that we entered, we broke the light bulbs with the butt of our weapon as an operational pretext that the light disturbed us, with the butt of our weapon, the barrel of the weapon, physical violence on a level that can be described. It was a severe raising of the level [of violence], the checkpoint became extraordinarily violent, from our standpoint they injured our friend. He was a good personal friend of mine and I took it personally. I released any restraint from my soldiers at the checkpoint. The violence became a regularity. We took people out of their car with the hit of the barrel of the gun. The orders of the sharpshooter who was standing above was not to remove the sight from the car being inspected, bullet in the chamber, always with an eye on the person. If something is disrupted – from your standpoint, you shoot. There, we began shooting at the feet of Palestinians who did not heed our instructions. There was an incident or two where we shot at their legs. They didn't listen to our instructions to stop 50 meters before and to lift up their shirt and turn around. That became the procedure. One time we didn't hit him, the guy ran and we caught him. One time we hit his leg, we caused him damage. It's unnecessary to point out that he was an innocent unarmed civilian. With that we finished with Ramallah which was, by the way, the calmer Ramallah. It was the norm in the company for many years, the violence was the pride of the company. A black and crazy company, not like the 4th infantry [company] who are nice Ashkenazim who deal [nicely] with the Palestinians.

**On the level of battalion commanders, brigade commander, all of this violence, what happened in Qalandiya, did they know about it?**

No. The battalion commander of 650 was very opposed to it. I think he knew sometimes, and he discovered it and even punished [people] and was against covering it up. The majority didn't get to him. It stayed on the level of sergeants, platoon commanders. At most, deputy company commanders, company commanders ■

## 19 You want the keys? Clean the checkpoint

unit: Civil Administration · location: Bethlehem district · year: 2002

► A Palestinian came to the DCL, he said, “they took the key to my car at the checkpoint.” “Why did they take them?” “Because...” he started talking. I said to him, “Listen, I want to go out and see it with my own eyes.” It was the Al Hader checkpoint. He gets into my jeep, we drove together to the checkpoint. I said to him, “show me the officer.” He showed me the officer, a first lieutenant in the paratroopers. I went up to him [the officer], I said to him, “did you take his keys?” he said: “Yes.” I said to him: “Why?” He said to me: “Because he stopped here and dropped off people even though it is forbidden for them to drop off people. So I said to him: “And what did you decide?” He said, “to punish him, so he learns a lesson.” I said to him: “What is the lesson?” So he said “That he’ll clean the checkpoint, make order of the people here, and after he does all of that I’ll give him back his keys. Until he does that he won’t get his keys.” It was shocking. Such an idiot. So of course I told him to give back the keys now, I took his details and sent it on, to the brigade headquarters and everything. I don’t know if he was even tried. They did some kind of briefing as a result. That’s it, in regard to the first lieutenant. He just admitted it. He said to me: “Yes I took them, so he would learn a lesson, because otherwise they don’t learn their lesson. This is the only way they understand.” He just said to the Palestinian: “Make order here, organize the people in a line, make sure that that everything here is in order, and clean the checkpoint for me, only after that will I give you the keys.” ■

He just admitted it. He said to me: “Yes I took them, so he would learn a lesson, because otherwise they don’t learn their lesson. This is the only way they understand”

## 20 Every two days they are open for four hours

unit: Civil Administration · location: General · year: 2002

► At the beginning of the Intifada, there was trouble regarding the curfews for example, they would just establish a curfew and that was it. Now, forget when you open,

At first there were  
very extended  
curfews... they  
just closed a ton of  
roads

when whatever. The civil administration for example, established regulations for these issues, that every two days it has to be open for four hours, and they made sure it was open for four hours, and they didn't inform the population, and they didn't announce on the radio or, for example, verify at the beginning of the Intifada...they just closed a ton of roads. Verifying that there was no blocked village, that an ambulance can enter and that every village has an exit, and all kinds of small things like that.

**And how do you know that a village is blocked? How do you understand it?**

Earlier I told you that we make connections with private Palestinians. You just have a man who isn't...he is the contact person, you call him, ask him what's going on in the village, what's this, what's that, what's happening. He tells you. And if he tells you that something is not OK, and he always has your telephone number, right? He calls. And if he tells you something is not OK, then it's your duty to deal with it.

**Curfews, how did that work in the beginning?**

In the beginning, this was also in Hebron, there are tables...you can request it from the Ministry of Defense, they'll even give it to you, we did it at the time and it's in the bureau of the Minister of Defense, it was moved to there. But at the beginning, there was an extended period without opening...I think about once a week. I was still in Bet El, but at first there were very extended curfews, after that they really did open: every 48 hours for four hours...on Friday, to allow for prayer. Also generally on Saturday, they were open, because there is a lesser presence of IDF in the area. Slowly it worked out.

**Who decided about the curfew?**

The brigade commander.

**There is no mechanism, procedure that you have to consult with the administration?**

No. First of all, he always consults with the administration. But the reason for establishing a curfew is a security reason, there is nothing to do. That's why the brigade commander decides, and he has to inform the division commander, but he doesn't...and he has organized rules. There are just rules.

**And how does the administration manifest itself with this issue? If, say, an administration officer says...**

If, for example, after 40 hours...first of all this law has....it's a regulation put out by

the legal advisor in the West Bank. The military legal advisor in the West Bank. This is the regulation he put out, it has exceptions. Meaning, if some incident happened, you can bring it up to the General Commanding Officer, and he can approve longer than 48 hours. But these incidents were unusual, really there had to be a very large terror attack in order to do it. And the administration is meant to remind the brigade commander every 48 hours, or to say, "you have to open for four hours, between the hours of x, y, and z." And that's it. They are also things which are said from the beginning, so the population will be prepared and will go out.

**How do you inform them?**

You call the radio, you tell the broadcasters. Even the Fatah radio broadcasters. Then, there were no Hamas stations. I think there are today.

**And they put it up?**

Yes ■

## 21 Villages without water

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Nablus district · year: 2001

► Bet Furik and Bet Dajan are two villages without water. They bring water in trucks from Nablus.

**What does that mean, "they don't have water"?**

The location is not connected to the water system. You didn't know there were things like that? So that's it, they have trucks, all day they transport those, like, containers, they travel to Nablus and fill them up. According to what the driver explained, there are people with water holes in their house, something like that, and they fill them up.

**Were there incidents when they would prevent the entrance of the water trucks?**

So, during that time when Ghandi [Knesset member Rehavan Ze'evij] was killed...in general there was pretty free travel for the trucks, even when there was curfew for the others, water trucks could still cross. And then when Ghandi was killed they decided

When Ghandi was  
killed they decided  
that was it, that  
no one crosses,  
even water trucks

that was it, no one crosses, even the water trucks. I remember that when I was at the checkpoint I annoyed my company commander, saying it was a situation that could not continue, and actually that same day, in the afternoon or another day, they were without water. I don't remember when exactly, but pretty quickly we got a list of authorized drivers, and it was almost all of the drivers. There were a few who did not have authorization, and only drivers with authorization could cross ■

## 22 A kind of humanitarian environment

unit: Civil Administration · location: General · year: 2001

The transfer of goods was a very problematic issue. From a period when really everything went, everything went out, and suddenly to a period in which, "if you allow something to go out from a security standpoint"

► The civil administration basically was not, I think it didn't wake up until the middle of 2002, it didn't understand the transition from the Oslo Accords to the Intifada. It took about a year – a year plus to understand this transition. That it has to be more aggressive and deal less with issues of communication with the Palestinians. So the atmosphere was at first, it was an atmosphere of how do we manage things, we cut communications with the Palestinians, and what do we do from now on. The administration didn't find itself, but slowly it found itself, it found itself back as a partial ruler.

### **What does that mean, "didn't find itself"?**

The Oslo Accords basically established that basically the District Coordination and Liaison will be in contact with the Palestinians. Of course, when we talk about the DCL and people like that who had to make security connections, things like that, the Intifada broke out and it didn't exist. Who could you meet with? You are forbidden to meet, there is an order from the government that you cannot meet. So what can you do? What's your job? And slowly you create a new job for yourself.

### **So what happened in the field? On the one hand you had a government order, and on the other hand you had your work.**

No, then the civil administration created work for itself, more of what's called protecting the fabric of Palestinian life, access, roads, all kinds of civilian things which are for the most part for the benefit of the Palestinian population, and to basically protect a kind



of humanitarian environment, and not to come to a humanitarian disaster or anything like that. That's basically your objective in the civil administration during that period. And parallel to that, to strengthen ties with Palestinian people, no longer with the Palestinian government. You no longer see the Palestinian government, you see more of Palestinian people. You create ties with unofficial sources, as it were.

**How does that manifest itself?**

At the beginning of the Intifada, for example, so transfer of goods for example was a very problematic issue. From a period when really everything went, everything went out, and suddenly to a period in which, "if you allow something to go out from a security standpoint." So all of the organization of the import and export of goods, for example.

**How is that done?**

In "back-to-back" zones, like there is in Tarkumiya [a checkpoint in the Hebron area], you certainly know it. They set up "back-to-back" zones, for example, until the last one they set up was in Bitunya [a checkpoint in the Ramallah sector], after 2002, or by allowing the transfer of goods, for example, inspecting the transfer of goods, seeing that it's really food going in, it's really cement going in, it's really fuel going in.

**All of the directives were established by the administration?**

Yes, the administration is a body which is pretty small, but it has a lot of power. At the beginning of the Intifada they really degraded it, but it's a body with a ton of power.

**So, let's say they stopped transferring goods at some point, and then...**

No, they just couldn't find a secure way to transfer goods, and therefore the civil administration, with government funding, of course, goes and builds concrete locations. In Tarkumiya it existed, but in other places like Hawara, like Bitunya, like Jalama, it wasn't there. Today there is in Qalqilya, I'm not sure of it, I haven't been there in a long time. That's what it makes sure of, it makes sure there is transfer of goods, for example ■

## 23 One of the workers was crushed to death at the checkpoint

unit: Erez Checkpoint · location: Gaza Strip · year: 2003

I remember that people waited to cross and it was so crowded, and there was a person who was pressed too much against the grates

► Every time they had to get an ambulance across – an ambulance would come from both sides, a Palestinian and an Israeli, and they would transfer from one ambulance to the other.

**In what cases do they transfer, for example? Why do they need to cross into Israel?**

I imagine to hospitals, labor or injuries, for example, I sit in the operations room so I don't know the details exactly. I know there is someone sick, name, ID number, and I check with the District Coordination and Liaison if he's OK, and I allow them to transfer him, but I don't know the person's medical history.

**No, but you hear there is a woman in labor, there is a sick person...**

They tell me, let's say, about special cases with a pace-maker, because they pass everyone through a metal detector and there is medical equipment which does not get along with a metal detector. There is a different inspection they do for them.

**What, everyone goes through a metal detector? Even "back-to-back"? What was the nature of the incidents? -- If a woman is in labor, until they do the back-to-back, a new child is born...**

I imagine that a woman in labor is a woman in the process, and there were all kinds of sick people, kids who need medical attention.

**When do they open the checkpoint?**

In the morning, from 8 to 10. And again in the afternoon. There is a crossing into Israel, and there is a small checkpoint for workers crossing from the strip to the surrounding area. They go, work, and come back.

**So where were you?**

The battalion was responsible for both of them, it's a crossings battalion, responsible for all of the crossings, for everything that crosses. Sometimes there were guidelines to change the hours, but for the most part, in the morning, two-three hours and in the

afternoon again three hours.

**How many people would cross?**

I don't know numbers. I know that a lot. They don't talk with us about everyone who is crossing. They say, "the crossing is open, the crossing is closed."

**You weren't curious to see the things on the outside?**

When I first got there, I was in the battalion for something like three weeks, and then they brought me down to the company. When I was in the battalion, I went once to the checkpoint to see what it was about, and who I'm talking to all the time, and I remember that people waited to cross, and it was so crowded, and there was a person who was pressed too much against the grates, and they brought him through the checkpoint to treat him and he died, he was crushed to death at the checkpoint.

**What does that mean? He wasn't sick or anything?**

As far as I know, he wasn't sick, but the checkpoint is built – here is the iron, there is a revolving door like there is at the University – where you can't exit and enter, and there is a direction to exit. They wait for them to open the crossing, and they push one another from the pressure, and one of them was just crushed by the iron.

**Do you remember the approximate width of the crossing?**

The part with the revolving door was a one-by-one crossing, they stand next to it, there is a pretty wide iron fence, with the whole platform of the crossing it's the size of this room and it's divided into two lanes, there is a door and there is another waiting area. This whole part was full of people.

**What happened there?**

I don't know, I was in the army for a month and a half, and this was the first thing that I saw and it was a shock. He fainted, they tried to treat him, they brought a medic and he was unsuccessful.

**Where do they collect them? Where was he released from the...?**

I don't deal with that, I stood on the side, I arrived in the middle of the chaos. I imagine that if someone faints they let him pass.

**And then what did they do?**

I left after the medic was unable to treat him, I left, it was enough for me. I didn't need to see anymore and I left, presumably they removed the body and brought it to the

appropriate authorities, certainly through the DCL.

**What did they say afterwards in the debriefing?**

I don't know what happened at the debriefing.

**But they spoke about it afterwards?**

It wasn't something they spoke about in the operations room and that I dealt with, I imagine that they spoke about it more in the DCL because it's relevant to their work. I also imagine [they spoke about it] at the checkpoint. Although, if a soldier is standing at the checkpoint before it's opened and everyone is pushing each other, he cannot say: "OK, stop pushing..." They are like kids before going into a concert who keep pushing each other even when you tell them to stand nicely. Certainly there is a difference, but I think in this case, the very most that can be done is that the soldier standing there can try and tell them not to go too far or to move. But no more than that. There isn't something significant that can be done with the fact that many people are trying to cross in a limited time.

**Was the story about the man who was killed publicized?**

As far as I know – no. But I didn't look for it, and I think there isn't anything to do, but in the daily news, what interests the Israeli public more is if there was a terror attack, or almost a terror attack, or the thwarting of a terror attack, more so than an Arab who was killed. For the most part the news tries to show our side and what happened between us and how they attack us ■

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## 24 We shot at fishermen, cut their nets

unit: Navy · location: Gaza Strip · year: 2005-2007

► There is an area which borders Gaza, an area called Area K, which is under the control of the navy. Both before and after the disengagement, nothing changed in regard to the sea sector, everything remained the same. The only thing that changed is that Area K between Israel and Gaza, Area M between Egypt and Gaza, and in the middle there was another partition which prevented boats from crossing from the Rafiah harbor to the Gaza

harbor. This part disappeared during the partition, and it returned to be open to them. The only plus. I remember that near the K areas between Israel and Gaza there were kids who would get up in the morning, kids from the age of four to six. Seventy percent of the population in Gaza lives on fishing. For them it's water and bread and everything. If there are no fish – there is no food. They arrived early in the morning, around four or five every morning to the forbidden areas. They went there because the area is crowded with fishermen. It's a small area, and the fish run away to the closed areas because there are no fishermen. They always try to scout it out and cross, and every morning there was the procedure of shooting in their direction to scare them, to the point of shooting at the feet of the kids standing on the beach, or those traveling in the direction on a surfboard. We had Druze on board who would scream at them in Arabic and curse them. Afterwards you would see in the cameras the faces of the kids crying, poor kids.

**What does that mean, “shooting in their direction”?**

It starts with shooting in the air, it moves to shooting next to them, and in extreme cases it gets to shooting towards their legs. I didn't shoot at the legs, but there were other ships in my company who shot towards their legs.

**What's the distance from which you shoot?**

Far, 500-600 meters. You shoot with a Rafael heavy machine gun, it's all automatic.

**Where do you aim?**

It's an issue of angles. In the camera there is a measure for height and a measure for width, and you mark with the cursor where you want and it prevents the effect of the waves and hits where it's supposed to, it's precise.

**You aim a meter away from the surfboard?**

More, even 5-6 meters. There were cases that I heard about where they hit the surfboard, I didn't see it. That the shrapnel hit them, the ricochet of the bullet hitting the water. There were cases that bothered me, there is the issue of the Palestinian fishing nets. Their nets cost around 4,000 shekel, which is like a million dollars for us. When they would deviate many times they would sink their nets. They leave their nets in the water, the nets stay in the water for something like six hours. The Dabur [navy ship] comes, and cuts their nets.

**Why do they do it?**

Seventy percent of the population in Gaza lives on fishing... if there are no fish - there is no food. They arrived early in the morning to forbidden areas... Every morning there was the procedure of shooting in their direction to scare them

As a punishment.

**For what?**

For the fact that they deviated too many times. If let's say "a boat" deviates to a forbidden area, a Dabur comes, circles, shoots in the air and returns. Then an hour later they come back and the Dabur returns. The third time it starts with shooting at the nets, at the body and then shooting to sink. Shooting to sink never happened to me, but I was at shooting at the body, and the nets.

**But how do they know whose net it is?**

The boat drags it. It's always connected to the boat.

**The forbidden area, it's presumably the area that is close to Israel?**

There is the area close to Israel, and the area on the Israeli-Egyptian border. The sea border is three miles out, something like twenty miles wide, about 30 kilometers.

**When you calculate the twenty miles between Gaza and Egypt and between Israel and Gaza?**

Yes.

**These 20 miles come on the account of Gaza or Israel?**

What do you think? Of course on the account of Gaza. Not just that, the sea border of Israel is twelve miles, and of Gaza it's three. The entirety of these three miles which are in the direction of the Mediterranean sea are for one reason, because they are covetous of the gas, and there is an offshore drilling rig something like three and a half miles opposite the Gaza Strip, which is Palestinian for everything except that it's ours. They work there like crazy and the security is from Shayelet 13, the Navy special forces unit. Even if a bird comes close to the area – they shoot it. There is insane protection of the thing. If one time there were Egyptian fishing nets which crossed the three miles, we also dealt with them, and it was a mess.

**What does that mean?**

They came, these are international waters, we don't have jurisdiction there, but we would go out, and shoot at them.

**At Egyptian fishing nets?**

Yes. And that is a peaceful country ■

## 25 Driving on wheat fields

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: South Mount Hebron · year: 2004

► We drove during APC week, all of a sudden we realize, I don't remember if I realized or someone else realized, that we were driving on wheat fields. I asked what was going on, because it was still basic training, and you can't speak with the commander. He also didn't know. He asked, I think, and they told us offhandedly that the Bedouins took control of the army firing zones, so there is an order, of the battalion commander I think... I didn't understand the concepts so well then, that they train anyway on their fields.

They told us that the Bedouins took control of the army firing zones, so there is an order

### **Are there tin shacks or tents there?**

It was far from their houses, but there were both there, there were all kinds there. It's the area with the most Bedouins in the country.

### **Do you remember where exactly you drove?**

No. It was near the Qariyot brigade training base. Around, within a ten kilometer radius.

### **Wadi Adasha?**

That's where they slept at night. They didn't sleep there at night, they slept in a different location that I don't know, an unrelated location, maybe some abandoned firing range.

### **And where were the wheat fields relative to that abandoned firing range?**

I don't remember. It's really a story that touched me. I was involved with the Bedouins a bit, I'm still very interested in what goes on there. The evacuation and whatever... It's a kind of remote control occupation. It's not the Palestinians, you don't hear about it, they don't talk about it a lot.

### **Did you also expel Bedouins?**

No. Sometimes from the firing range, they collect casings and whatever. In general there is the issue of distancing shepherds from military locations ■

## 26 Training in the middle of the village, in the middle of the night

unit: Paratroopers [Reserves] · location: Tul Karem district · year: 2007

You enter the village in the middle of the night...with stun grenades and explosives at the end. A village in which the people living there didn't present a threat beforehand... and you basically disrupt their night. Children pee in their beds, mothers scream

► In principle the army, since the time of the war, came to the conclusion that it needs to take advantage of every day of reserve duty that a soldier does in order to bring him to complete competence for the next war that will come. And therefore, the regular pre-operation training was converted to the expanded pre-operation training. Much more serious, many more exercises, much more massive. Normally they do the firing range and some kind of dismounting from the Hummer in order to remember how to do it. And that is the preparation for the front. Now it's a large exercise. Now, I started my reserve duty on the 11th of March [2007]. It was my second reserve duty deployed in Ariel. Now, we knew that the reserve duty would begin with three or four days of training. And we would continue to the front. On the Friday before, the 11th was a Sunday, on the Friday before I went to my parents, and on the way I'm listening to the news, and they are talking about an exercise done by the central paratroopers brigade, towards...pre-operations training in the Bet Lid village. Now, that's me. Meaning, it's clear to me that if that's what the battalion before me did, then I'm going to do it on Sunday. So I listened in depth, and apparently, it was in fact decided that an exercise would be done on the terrain of Lebanon, in the area of Samaria, which will simulate movement towards targets, with lookouts and ambushes and all kinds of things like that during the process, and in the end it concluded with the occupation of a village. Now, what was said during the news item was that complaints were raised...again, the local villages are Arab so their complaints aren't heard as strongly, but soldiers in the company, in the battalions complained, first of all, they did not receive commands for opening fire. Now, why don't you get commands for opening fire? Because basically, on the one hand, you are in a training exercise and there are tons of forces, and tons of forces who walked all night and are tired...now, start putting a bullet in the chamber or if the magazine is loaded, you'll end with some friendly fire. On the other hand, it's not an Israeli village, it's not a kibbutz or something like that where you are doing



the operation. There is some kind of threat there. And it's known by intelligence that there are a lot of hunters. They hunt a lot of wild boars in the area. There is a chance you'll see a person with a weapon in the middle of the night. What are you going to do? Nothing. They didn't receive orders. Furthermore, the whole management of the exercise was quite surprising in their eyes. That you go into a village in the middle of the night, there isn't...with blanks and stun grenades and explosives at the end. A village in which the people living there didn't present a threat beforehand, they won't present a threat afterwards...maybe afterwards they will...and you basically disrupt their night. Children pee in their beds, mothers scream, things that happen when you get into...they put on [the radio] an attorney who spoke, they put on my deputy brigade commander, the deputy brigade commander of that same brigade. And the guy is talking – how important it is after Lebanon to train and whatever and everything is OK. And concludes with a sentence that I was in shock when I heard it that...he said: "I was the last to leave the village in the morning and the locals, with smiles and understanding, blessed me to go in peace." Which is, beyond the ignorance and the arrogance with which he allows himself to speak, you know – apologize, say that the military attorney general is checking it, give a military response maybe, but I wish for this deputy brigade commander for an exercise like that to happen in the kibbutz where he lives. That at four in the morning they go in with stun grenades, and I want to see the rice he'll throw in the morning at the soldiers who are leaving. Because it's really chutzpah, unlike any other. Now, I imagined, in my innocence, that for us it would be different. Meaning we would come, and since it already made it to the media, and there is a military attorney general in the world and there are other legal authorities, there is someone who will take care of it. Now, I got to reserve duty on Sunday, I signed off and I had to return to the center of the country for a day, and I came back to reserve duty. When I came back to reserve duty, it was already Tuesday, then I understood that they were at the height of preparations for this exercise. Now, the location and whatever wasn't exactly spoken about.

[...] In short, they were at the height of preparation for the exercise. Now, the story of everything that I heard is still running through my head, and I wanted to see if there would be some kind of difference. Now, since I arrived at the second to last

briefing, not that there were many, but I arrived at the second to last of the deputy company commander, a security briefing, so he opened with, “guys I don’t care. From my standpoint, you can go to the media, tell them whatever you want, but what’s important to me is that you do this, this, and this...” And then I said that if this is the tone, if this is the manner of speaking, then nothing is going to change. And in reality, what happened was exactly what the description of the battalion exercise had said, it also happened with us. We walked all night and made ambushes and invasions here and there and everything, what you do during an exercise like that. And in the early hours of the morning we found ourselves in Al Hayad, in the direction of incursion into the village itself. Again, I don’t remember that I received unequivocal commands to open fire in that regard. It could be he threw something out, but since I don’t remember it now, and it was a month ago, apparently it was vague enough that I didn’t exactly understand the procedure. And even if he did say it, then I don’t think that after a night like that I would be able to differentiate between a soldier and a Palestinian, I don’t know what Palestinian or Israeli Arab who is now going out with his weapon to hunt boars in front of the village, and something unpleasant could develop with this story. That’s from the standpoint of the thing itself. In practice, what we did was the same outline of the exercise. We went inside, we captured houses, but we didn’t go into houses.

**But you go into the courtyard.**

You go in...we went into the area in the wadi. It’s an Arab village and it’s different... the definitions of a courtyard, what is yours and what is mine, are different. But we certainly passed through houses, inside the courtyards of houses, we didn’t only walk on the roads. Now that’s only on my level, I’m not the whole battalion. The rest of the battalion I don’t know what it...I do know, and maybe this is the only change that took place, that which was said to us after we went into the houses, they said to us that from now on we are supposed to take these homes through urban combat, but now we aren’t. I don’t know if that meant that the forces before us in the exercise did do it, and we aren’t going to do it, or in principle that is what you do during a war when you go into the house, I don’t know. And that is something that still has to be checked, if they really went into the houses. Because if they did, there was something learned

in the minimalism of this exercise. OK, so look, we finished the exercise in the middle of the village. We started on the march that is called “logistical” towards the buses waiting at a distance of a few kilometers from there. Look, you see the residents like standing, looking, smiling and whatever. The words of that deputy brigade commander reverberate for me again, yes, but it's not smiles and understanding. It's smiles and understanding of the fifth or fourth time that this exercise is happening in their village without anyone coordinating it with them. I don't know if they informed them the night before, or if they didn't inform them. That's it, in any case, in regards to that exercise. I was in shock from the fact that in reserve units there wasn't, you know, in regular service no one raises their head at all, in reserve units there wasn't some kind of voice of opposition asking...

### **Nothing came out?**

Listen, everyone came out, I don't know of anyone who didn't go out on the exercise. I didn't hear anyone getting up during the briefing saying, listen, this isn't right, this isn't appropriate, this isn't, no. Nothing ■

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## 27 They file the complaints and move on

unit: Civil Administration · location: General · year: 2001

► Confiscating IDs is a forbidden procedure which should not happen. Most of the checkpoints do it in numbers, I think. And just grabbing someone on the road and taking him should not happen at all. It's illegal, on the level of the legal advisor. It's hard to say, there were a lot, I think.

### **What does that mean, a Palestinian without an ID?**

It's like you without an ID, just for them it's 70 times worse. Because you, what do you need your ID for today? To open a bank account, more or less for that. They need their ID for everything. In order to get a permit they need an ID, to move from meter to meter they need an ID. It's like, just taking him. He has nothing to do. Beyond the financial damage.

In the end, the soldier at the checkpoint is the king. He is the king. It doesn't matter how many conversations and briefings [there are]. We briefed the brigade commander and the battalion commander and the company commander and the platoon commander and him. And he is the king

### **What do they do then?**

In a roundabout way they go back home, if they are able to. Meaning, we force them to go through another trek to return home. Most of them at first call the Palestinian Authority, and then the Authority would turn to us – all of it through the DCL – and then either they would come and take back their IDs, or they would just get a new one. And at some point it wasn't through the Authority anymore, they would know to go to the District Coordination Liaison [DCL] to get the ID.

### **But how can you get to the DCL, aren't there checkpoints along the way?**

Correct. That's the roundabout way. We just force them to do very strange things.

### **You force them to bypass the checkpoints because they won't be able to cross at the checkpoints.**

Yes, correct. And if God forbid someone stops them in the middle without an ID, forget about it. He goes straight to the Camp Ofer detention facility or something. Because of that I'm saying that at some point they learned to go with a spare ID because they didn't have much choice. But confiscating IDs was in numbers. Really in numbers.

### **You don't send it above?**

You send it up.

### **And what?**

In the end, the soldier at the checkpoint is the king. He is the king. It doesn't matter how many conversations and briefings [there are]. We briefed the brigade commander and the battalion commander and the company commander and the platoon commander and him. And he is the king. He's in the heat for eight hours with a helmet and flak jacket – he's the king. And if it's border police on the road when there is no one – totally. That's how it is.

### **And among the higher ups?**

The higher ups all say: "No, no, no, it's not OK." And that's it. Active steps are taken, but what can you do in the end of the day when a soldier is standing by himself? Either he's a human being or he isn't a human being. Either it got to his head or it didn't get to his head. I certainly think that everyone knew that it is illegal and not OK. Where is the thing of confiscating keys from? I don't know who invented it. It also doesn't seem too legal to me.

**Did complaints also come to you for that?**

Of course. But again, a complaint comes to us and that's it. Aside from filing it, what can you do with it?

**You don't have any power, any authority?**

No. Meaning, even if I did, even if I were to do a debriefing and a briefing for all of the forces in the sector, OK, but what did it do? You can't educate border police. I think they made most of the problems, but it's a strategic decision to put them specifically in front of the Palestinians. That the government decided knowingly. Because they beat them up the best. And that's it ■

## 28 A situation of a lack of consideration

unit: Military Police · location: Eyal Crossing · year: 2008-2009

► It was a built checkpoint, with lanes – a Jewish lane, a Palestinian lane, and a lane for trucks. The Jews also had to display a sticker, there was also a fight with them: “why should I put a sticker on my car? Why should I go through inspection when I leave my house?” It was tense with the settlers, with the Palestinians, with everyone.

**But Palestinians also needed a permit at this checkpoint?**

Yes.

**So they also stop them, you are saying that the inspection was less effective than in Reihan, but the idea was the same idea that you needed a permit.**

The orders were contradicting and they changed them every second. They would play with you, yes and no.

**What orders would change?**

The amount of meat, something that you cannot inspect – you don't allow to cross. Someone, for example, who is crossing with a sofa, you cannot inspect it, you call and he crosses.

**You checked meat according to weight?**

By sight. You look at the approximate number of bags. If someone tried to hide meat,

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just yelled  
"soldier" near the  
gate, we detained  
them another 20  
minutes

even for a kilogram I would turn him around. The checkpoint was plagued with a lack of effectiveness and a lack of consideration.

**That was the trans-Samaria checkpoint, checkpoint 107?**

I'll tell you: there was checkpoint 709 next to Tul Karem. The one we were speaking about is 109.

**All of the checkpoints with the exception of trans-Samaria are on the fence?**

I don't know about 709 because I wasn't there often, and they took it down for a period, so I can't say. There was the Efraim gate which is a crossing, which was like 107. The Efraim gate was in Tul Karem, and 107 was in Qalqilya. Both of them are pedestrian terminals, where the number of Palestinians at peak times was around 3,000 people. 107 is pedestrian, and 109 is vehicular. Both of them are more or less in the same place. The Efraim gate was near 709, near Tul Karem. The Efraim gate is for vehicles, and 709 is for pedestrians. There was another checkpoint near trans-Samaria for Palestinians, there was an inspection pillbox there which I don't even remember what it was called. There was a twelve-hour post there, where you were with someone else and you would do inspections.

**What was the purpose of that checkpoint?**

Like all checkpoints, to prevent terrorist activity.

**But there are only two soldiers there?**

Yes, two soldiers, twelve hours and the soldiers are outside of the post inspecting vehicles. And we with a metal detector and x-ray are inspecting the pedestrians at the same time. It went on for twelve hours a day.

**Is there also a glass wall there?**

Yes. You are alone in the room, you speak with them through a loud speaker, you hear beeping, people, crazy headaches. We really did nonsense to get past the boredom. We would call from post to post and hang up out of boredom. We would curse each other on the PA system. I cursed my whole day there.

**How do you control that amount of people?**

You don't control. In the middle there are gates that lock, but sometimes in order to cross everyone, there were cases when it beeped and someone was able to cross even though he wasn't checked. We would see that the IDF wouldn't give enough

people for the missions, and there is a disproportion of commanders, in the end people got to the point where they went to sleep in the booth and they left the gates open and started letting people cross without consideration.

**Even in the times of congestion?**

Yes, it's also the hour when you are the most tired, because you just woke up. The opening hours were difficult in a crazy way.

**That was the difference in behavior?**

Yes, you would sometimes curse out the Palestinian crossing...we detained them outside...if they just yelled "soldier" near the gate, we detained them another twenty minutes. A situation of a lack of consideration.

**Regarding checkpoint 107, were there instances where the checkpoint was closed?**

Yes, because there is the entry to Israel. It was closed on the Sabbath and holidays, where also the orders weren't very clear, because sometimes you came across a blockade where someone with this kind of documentation could cross, and another kind could not cross, and after a few seconds they change it. You don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. You wait for the 11th hour to see what happens. Sometimes they close it right at the last second, you don't know what to say to the Palestinians who come to ask you. The whole Eyal company, the checkpoints comprehensively – the directives are not unequivocal, there is no prior information. There is a feeling that they throw you in and you acclimate along the way. It annoyed us, because we didn't know when to prepare to go to sleep – us as soldiers – how to organize a shift, and what to expect. On the Palestinian side, we didn't know how to answer them: if they can bring their brother, or their son. It happened many times that someone would come, and during whatever you say something, and in the middle a soldier comes over and says something different. He got annoyed because he was stuck in the DCL for nonsense. They don't let someone cross with his son to see a doctor because he doesn't have a permit to cross, but if he would talk a bit of nonsense and say that he's going to see his mother in Israel – they would let him cross. The answers there are really not unequivocal, the DCL always changed its mind, it wasn't organized, they didn't know who could cross and who couldn't. The general orders were very clear, but during the

process you don't know what to do. You can't say something to a Palestinian who is yelling at you, you are dependent upon the orders. You call the commander and he says to you: "you deal with him, I don't deal with him, tell him no." You fight with him for an hour. He goes to the DCL and they tell him he can cross, you call the DCL and you see there are many situations where a person gives up and goes home.

**Were you in a situation where there were 3,000 people at the entrance and you tell everyone to go home?**

Yes.

**How many times a month does that happen?**

It's not per month. I can say that I yelled at them to go home when it's closed – I personally did it more than five times during my service. That's not every month, but it happens a few times a year. Afterwards they try to cross through another crossing, and there another mess starts. The West Bank in the area of Qalqilya is really a mess, as opposed to the area of Jenin, where the orders were clear ■

## 29 Anyone who raised his voice – we would "button him up"

unit: Armored Corps · location: Nablus · year: 2003

We would detain  
whoever we felt  
like... It could go up  
to eight or nine  
hours. Until we'd  
get tired of it

► There was this checkpoint inside Nablus itself – this road that connected Beit Furiq with other villages east of Nablus. We'd give them a hell of a time there. It was a checkpoint where we would detain whoever we felt like, chase after runaways. That was what we did at that checkpoint.

**By definition? Someone told you: "this is where you detain people"?**

It was a checkpoint. You had to check anyone going through to make sure there were no wanted persons and such. There were no instructions to detain, I think, not from the upper echelons. By order of the company commander we had to detain whoever tried to run away, anyone whose IDs we needed to clear with the police. We would pass on the details to the police, to our ops room, our war-room would pass them on



to the battalion war-room, from there to the security services or the police. Until they'd get back to us it would take about 20-30 minutes for every number we passed on to them. With all the communications glitches and rain and sun and all, they were held up for quite a while. Whoever got rude in the meantime, or raised his voice, or just got on our nerves for some reason, we'd button him up, meaning we'd shackle him.

**Shackle and blindfold him?**

Shackle him. Blindfolding would only be for cases where they really went overboard. We'd make them kneel, dry them out.

**For how long?**

It could go up to eight or nine hours. Until we'd get tired of it. Then when we changed guards we'd instruct the shift replacing us to leave him there for at least another two hours: "this is really rude." Or, "that guy, let him go soon, he's not guilty." Stuff like that. That's how it worked, essentially ■

## 30 The atmosphere was one where you can slap, you can hit, degrade, and give the run-around

**unit:** Border Police · **location:** Wadi Ara · **year:** 2002

► The kids there with the plastic bags, they would freely steal from their bags. "Come here, dump out the bags." Now, we know 100 percent what these bags are. OK, you could say it's a security procedure, you could smuggle weapons in the bags. "OK, dump out the bags. Hey, I need batteries," and they take, they take whatever they want.

**What else did they take?**

Toys, batteries, whatever was there. All the knickknacks.

**Money? Cigarettes?**

Yes, Cigarettes. Money, I'm sure, but I don't remember anything specific. But again, they definitely didn't pay for things. There was an incident once when Channel 2

"OK, dump out the bags. Hey, I need batteries,"...and they take, they take whatever they want

happened to be around in the area and they filmed some team doing it, and after that the company commander gathered us all in a square, reprimanded us, like reprimanded the whole company. He said to them: "How did you not think about how you would be seen." Not how did you do this, what were you thinking, "how did you not think about how you would be seen."

**And after that everything went back to normal?**

Yes, the patrol that they caught, there was a summary trial and they were punished, but not really punished...

**How?**

One they moved to a better unit, which is a terrible punishment, and one who was in the regular army was suspended for like a month. That was more or less the level of punishment, and it quickly went back to normal. Really, the atmosphere was one where you can slap, you can hit, degrade, and give the run-around ■

## 31 One of the senior soldiers just decided to humiliate him

**unit:** Artillery Corps · **location:** Wadi Ara · **year:** 2001

► One of the activities is capturing illegal aliens, just, this was when I was in the senior company. The seam line between Umm al Fahm and another place there. Seeing illegal aliens and whatever, I remember one of the senior soldiers...like every time there was the thing of running after those running away, I never understood what the big deal was. They would catch them, they would sit next to us, and they would just humiliate them with degrading talk. Like "shut up" to adults, to young people, to people...and they are the nicest in the world, they spoke to them: "Shut your mouth" and whatever, it wavered between really unbelievable situations. It wavered between, like, trying to humiliate him, and then he is nice to him. And suddenly...he brings him popsicles when he comes back and cigarettes and things like that...

**Who, the soldier to the Palestinian?**

No, the Palestinian brings him. And then like all of a sudden it's OK but...

**The soldiers would take bribes, gifts?**

They would detain them for no reason. You check their documents, "nice to meet you and whatever, see you later." Let's say they didn't try to be as humane and professional as possible. I, for example, bought an Arabic conversation book and learned how to say, "you cannot walk here," and I asked my parents, who speak Arabic.

**Wait, they detain people with documentation and everything, and they just detain them?**

Just for no reason: "sit here, stay here." And they don't have to. If he cannot cross, then tell him to go back. And if not, then let him cross. But an argument developed there that got to the stripes of...exactly what I wanted to say...that the senior soldier just decided to humiliate this guy. It was just when we were about to leave the post, and he just said to him to lie on the floor, the most like...guy, a 25 year-old guy, a student, nice, he just decided to humiliate him. He laid him down on his stomach...

**A soldier or a commander?**

A senior soldier, who had more say than the commanders. The guy was dressed nicely, button-down shirt, jeans. He just told him to lie on the floor on his stomach. And he put his foot on his neck, here, and cocked his weapon and yelled at him: "Why are you crossing here, don't cross here anymore..." And this and that...and the guy [the soldier] started telling him to do all kinds of things, telling him to stand, telling him to lie on his stomach, he told him things like that. I yelled at him: "Enough, let go, stop," I was in shock. I was in shock from the situation. I thought he was an animal, not a human being. And he, I think he's a shitty human being. Like I couldn't stand him regardless of this, and after it I couldn't stand him even more. But no, I didn't pass it on or anything. I didn't have an ear that would listen.

**Why didn't you tell anyone?**

Because this guy was chummy with everyone. I think even the officers knew about it. The commander was also there. Apparently the commander didn't see it as something unprofessional.

**An officer?**

A commander, a squad commander. I, like, at that moment decided that I have nothing

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you crossing  
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here anymore..."

to do in this crazy place, and this is how they humiliate people who didn't do anything wrong. And even if they did commit a crime, they can't raise a hand, it's forbidden. It shocked me. I don't know if he was a Palestinian citizen or an Israeli citizen. There is a very good chance he was an Israeli citizen. Because Umm al Fahm is Israeli. Another time there was a situation in the same place, where they came upon the car of someone. They started to yell at him. It was always the group of senior soldiers who would do like this thing. And we would do what we had to do. Check documents. For the action, just to pass the time, so they'll have something to talk about at home. For the feeling of killing time. I don't know, I guess. They started dismantling his car. Yelling at him. This and that, the guy said he was a member of the B'Tselem organization, a citizen from Umm al Fahm. And that's it, and they still continued with it. They don't even know what B'Tselem is. They were stupid people. And then it ended. Aside from that, from these two situations, that's what was ■

## 32 It's just the power that you have in your hands

unit: Civil Administration · location: Jericho District · year: 2001

On the other side  
our soldiers are  
sitting and they  
print the permits...  
a Palestinian can  
sit and dry out in  
that open-sided  
shelter for five  
hours, and even  
more, a few days

► I would go on the patrols in the sectors and see how the soldiers, our soldiers too [the District Coordination Liaison soldiers], how they would treat the Palestinians. It disgusts you as a human being. But you are part of the system, and further, if you aren't part of that base then there isn't much you can do. Disgusting things. Every civil administration soldier knows what the open-sided shelter is. There is the open sided-shelter outside the DCL and the Palestinians sit there. All of the Palestinians who come to request a permit sit there. And there is the window. They approach the window, a bullet-proof window, on the other side our soldiers are sitting and they print the permits, and they give them the permits. A Palestinian can sit and dry out in that open-sided shelter for five hours, and even more, a few days.

### Because?

The "because" is very difficult for me to explain. It's not that the soldier sits and for no

reason lets the Palestinian dry out. No. He has to go through a Shin Bet check, and I don't remember the procedure anymore. But let's say that if it were Israelis it wouldn't be like that. And I saw with my own eyes very disgusting things. In the DCL there was a curtain that you close on the window so the Palestinians couldn't see you. So be it, you close the curtain and they sit there, but when the curtain is open and the soldiers inside are playing soccer, and all kinds of nonsense, and laughing at those outside, saying to him "come," so he comes, and saying to him: "no no, sit." It's just the power that you have in your hands. At some point it fucks you up, if you are a human being ■

## 33 The checkpoint commander called himself "the doctor"

**unit:** Golani Brigade · **location:** Jenin District · **year:** 2002

► I remember that we had a squad commander in the company who called himself "the doctor." He really enjoyed looking at...for example, people came with x-rays. So the truth is I would also open it and see what the name on the x-ray was, because on the x-ray there is a name, to see if it matches the ID. He would like, he would look, investigate as if deciding to do some kind of physical inspection. It was all a joke... Like one said to him he had a headache, so he felt his skull and said to him: "no, no, you are OK." Something like that. It really cracked up the soldiers. I remember everyone talking about how cool that squad commander was ■

He would look,  
investigate as if  
deciding to do  
some kind of  
physical  
inspection. It was  
all a joke

## 34 You are breaking my authority

**unit:** Paratroopers · **location:** Hebron district · **year:** 2001

► I specifically remember the subtleties of the checkpoint, not the extreme events of abuse, rather what caused it. That is where my consciousness of the checkpoints was

That says  
everything in my  
eyes...this feeling  
of "I am above  
them"...and you  
have the power  
to get annoyed  
because you  
have a weapon  
and you can close  
the checkpoint.  
So you control  
them

formed, I would think about it a lot. There was one incident there – which afterwards I used the phrase even as a commander – of some soldier who took a Krembo snack, I think. I grabbed him afterwards, even though he couldn't give back the Krembo, there was no one to give it back to, and I said something to him at the checkpoint – that he shouldn't do it, I don't remember what I said – I commented to him about it. And his response was: "you are breaking my authority." It's a sentence which in my eyes symbolizes as strong as possible the really terrible thing that the checkpoints do to a normal person, not to one who beats up Arabs, which there are many of. To the OK guy who doesn't do anything out of the ordinary, rather that he has no authority, he doesn't need to have any authority toward a 40-50 or 20 year-old who comes to cross the checkpoint. There is no issue of authority here. This feeling of "I am above them," which won't help, you are above them. You say to them when to cross and when not to, they are not disciplined so you get annoyed, and you have the power to get annoyed because you have a weapon and you can close the checkpoint. So you control them. And when you suddenly comment to someone: "don't do this and that," so I'm breaking his authority. They won't listen to me, the subjects. So the sentence "you are breaking my authority" continued with me until my last day of service, and still...it says everything in my eyes, because it's minor, it's not beating up, it's not punching an Arab, or hitting him with the butt of the weapon. It's a basic outlook, everything begins from there. Today, I don't know the percentages and numbers of the youth of our country who get to that point, but let's say it's infantry, armored corps, artillery, anti-aircraft, engineering corps. It's a respectable amount. And many more around, it's not just them. It doesn't matter how much they are not there ideologically, it penetrates you, this supremacy. For me at the checkpoint, the most difficult part for me is the annoyance towards them, it's not just getting annoyed for no reason, it's the annoyance of an educator: "You aren't doing what I'm telling you? I'll show you what it is." Fuck, I'm trying to direct traffic for them like a retard, so what, so listen to what I'm saying now. Of course, the more extreme directions are "I'm standing here with a weapon and do what I tell you. I decide who crosses and who doesn't. I decide when to open the checkpoint again and when not to." It's also a kind of arbitrariness. There, for example, by the way of the high command, I don't know what level it was

at, but I'm convinced, and I have many friends who are very angry that I say it, but I'm convinced that the arbitrariness was an approach. The approach to undermine their confidence, their stability, so they won't know what's going to happen tomorrow. I'm convinced of it. I don't think it's some kind of stupidity of someone from above, I think it was a policy, it was an approach. I'm very convinced of it ■

## 35 You feel that in another second you're going to spray them with bullets

**unit:** Civil Administration · **location:** Jericho area · **year:** 2001

► There is the checkpoint which sits next to the Jericho DCL, checkpoint 327. The battalion that was on the front would take the checkpoint and we would send a soldier or an officer to reinforce them for a few hours with the whole thing of permits and stuff like that. And when I went out there, they were standing there for say plus or minus eight hours on average, with a helmet, flak jacket, in the sweltering heat of the valley which is hard to explain at all, and they just deal with non-stop shit all the time. And if there wasn't a soldier or an officer of ours there, they were clueless about what permit crosses, and what permit doesn't cross. And all of this stress of the Palestinians, which until you see it with your own eyes you don't understand it, it fucks you up. I really understand all of the soldiers who went crazy at this checkpoint. It fucks you up. It's hard to explain. Jericho, because of the bridge, because of the people who want to go out to Jordan, so it's strange because of the fact that there are just many people who flow there. And you don't really understand the orders. Yes, people can enter? People cannot enter? If they have a passport then they can? I don't know. They assemble in front of you, and you have to start looking inside the vegetables, inside the truck, because the day before they found a rocket in the Jenin district. And you have to check in every ambulance...and the woman with the elderly mother is yelling at you in front of your eyes, and you yell at them all the time: "get back, get back," and you go crazy. At first you think you are a Nazi soldier, you feel like

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some kind of Nazi soldier, at some point you abandon that idea, because how long can you feel like you are a Nazi? So you just go with it. And it fucks you up. Really. Any soldier who didn't go crazy from it I think has something wrong with him. Or he closed himself off entirely.

**What does that mean, “at first you think you are a Nazi soldier”?**

Because you yell at them in a kind of Arabic-Hebrew, because soldiers don't know Arabic. We know, so we try to help them. Then you yell at them in a kind of Arabic-Hebrew : “Get back.” And they don't pay attention. So you start to raise your weapon as if you are really going to do something with it, and everyone there are women and children and they start to cry, and they are also yelling, and it's hot and you feel like in another second you're going to spray them with bullets. You just don't understand what you are doing there. I at least [didn't] ■

## 36 What's the thing with closing the parking lot?

unit: Civil Administration · location: Nablus area · year: 2006

There were  
something like 30  
vehicles, they just  
couldn't cross. In  
the parking lot  
there remained 20  
private vehicles  
and 3 buses

► There was a story of them making dirt blockades in the parking lot between Askar and Ein Bidan in Nablus. It's a parking lot specially set aside for Palestinian public transportation and private vehicles. It's something like 3 kilometers from Nablus. Based on a report, the soldiers got to the parking lot, and by shooting in the air they instructed the Palestinians to leave the area. After all of the residents left, the soldiers built mounds with a backhoe and blocked access to the parking lot. The army didn't bother to check that there were no cars at the checkpoint. The backhoes came at 4-5 in the morning, they made dirt blockades. The Palestinian bus drivers came to the lot at 7-8 in the morning and they had no way to get out. There were a lot of cars there, and whoever had a small car did what every Palestinian did, bypassed the blockade. The trucks and the buses, there were something like 30 vehicles, they just couldn't cross. In the parking lot there remained 20 private vehicles and 3 buses. By the way, one of the jeeps was still in the area.



**Army jeeps or the District Coordination and Liaison jeep?**

The army. We even had the license plate.

**How did they know the details?**

Because the Palestinians saw the license plate.

**Did you verify it?**

I couldn't verify it, I did the primary inspection. After the fact it became clear that the backhoe made a double blockade and hermetically sealed the area. The army claimed that all of the vehicles crossed, the Palestinians claimed they didn't cross. In the end it became clear that the locals paid the workers money to take down the blockade. There was still the double blockade, and the trucks and 3 buses couldn't cross. They took down part of the blockade, and the private vehicles that were detained until 15:00 crossed at 18:37. The battalion sent word that it would send a team to open the blockade. 22:39 it still wasn't open, 22:48 it still wasn't open. At 22:48 they asked for permission to bring a private Palestinian backhoe to open the blockade.

**How do you bring it?**

The Palestinians bring it, they asked us for permission. The Palestinians lost a day of work. At 7:00 the next morning they started opening the blockade and at 10:00 they cross. A day-long story, started at 8-9 in the morning.

**What was the thing with closing the parking lot?**

It was a parking lot that had access to the village, or I don't know what ■

## 37 We confiscated keys and vehicles

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Nablus district · year: 2001

► There was confiscation of vehicles there – they confiscated people's keys who pushed in line or came to the wrong place, so they decided to “educate” them.

**They took keys and gave them back, or they put them aside: “bye, bye – go home!”?**

Yes, like that. They confiscated many IDs. People who were forbidden to cross, or

something like that, and they were supposed to come at night and ask for them back before they close the checkpoint, at 8 p.m.

**They would wait all day?**

They could go back to their side, to the Palestinian side, as long as they didn't cross the checkpoint.

**Why do you confiscate an ID?**

As a punishment. People who were forbidden to cross, but tried anyway ■

## 38 Closing roads? It's a political question

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2008

► **Were there curfews when you were in Hebron?**

No.

**By the way, the David road itself, if I'm not mistaken, the Supreme Court ruled during your time that it had to be opened.**

In the period before us they really made the Supreme Court decision, and it was permitted to travel, and afterwards it was closed, I don't know why. During my time it was closed. This whole issue of disrupting lives, opening and closing roads is mainly policy. There is never an unequivocal security designation. Not a legal one, either. To release and allow passage and life and development, and when you want to close - it's a debate between rule and management. I remember that later, in Rantis, there was a high-ranking commander who spoke with us once, who said that he was unequivocally opposed to the renewal of the fabric of life. He prefers to do everything except for blockading, going into the village, and preventing exit from the house. What I started to understand after a long time, that he didn't necessarily represent all of the army or the government. There are conflicting interests on the issue. It depends who gets the request and what he thinks. Regarding Hebron, it was complicated because there actually were their lands...and I remember when they explained to us about them, there was an organization of Hamas. People who were killed in Hebron

during our time were killed by other Palestinians, in clan battles, so opening the roads for that, no doubt it's dangerous, again, it depends on what area and it requires orientation. It's a more political question and less a military one. They tell you the road is blocked, so it's blocked. It has a lot of influence on the life there. There were incidents where people broke in, we had to detain them, and it also was a policy of punishment, but we didn't have the authority to punish, so we would detain people for three hours, and that's what was defined.

### **Were they restrained?**

We preferred not to restrain them. We detained, took details, and you have to have authority to detain a person as...I don't know if every soldier, but the mission commander. They would use it to prove to people that the roads were blocked. I don't think it worked, I also tried to do it politely. I said to the person that he was detained for a security reason, I didn't have to tell him if he was suspected of something specific, rather that he was detained. I would detain for three hours. It sucked, many people complained about it, and I couldn't take the bitterness and hatred of people. I could have chosen differently if I took a different approach with them. There were also overseers who checked that we were detaining for three hours on the clock. After three hours, I released them ■

## 39 There was a kind of unchallengeable hegemony of the Shin Bet

**unit:** Intelligence · **location:** Allenby Bridge · **year:** 2000-2001

► The Allenby bridge is a crossing between Jordan and Israel, but in reality it's not a crossing between Jordan and Israel, rather by virtue of what's called the Oslo Accords it's a crossing between Jordan and Palestine. Israelis don't cross there. Tourists cross there, people with foreign passports, and Palestinians from all of the territories. During good periods of calm, a Gazan could also cross from Jordan to go home. In less calm times it wasn't allowed, meaning a Gazan had to go back to Rafiah.

I know what it is  
when a person  
waits and there is  
no reason in the  
world for him to  
wait...it's no more  
than a real  
border...in the  
end, a person  
stands or falls  
based on the  
mood of the  
inspector or the  
Shin Bet  
coordinator

### **How can he get to Rafiah if he's in Jordan?**

Go around from Jordan to Egypt.

### **Via Eilat? How can he get from Jordan to Egypt via Eilat, or he has to fly?**

You can't get there on land. The Allenby checkpoint is a place that changed a bit with the Oslo Accords. Officially, it became a border crossing between Jordan and Palestine. Officially, because it wasn't like that. It was a crossing that was totally controlled by security authorities. In the head of the Shin Bet [General Security Services]. When I say "totally," it means that the Shin Bet...it was a period in which opposite every Israeli authority there was a Palestinian authority. Opposite the Israeli border inspector there was a Palestinian border inspector. Opposite the Israeli mediator there was a Palestinian mediator, opposite the Israeli security person there was a Palestinian security person, etc., etc. We always worked opposite our parallel. For the most part it was a very long process of humiliation. Humiliation by the one with the power of the one who thinks he has the power. In other words, they are Palestinian puppets there. The border crossing, it must be pointed out, is a civilian border crossing. And the managing director of the Allenby bridge is a person from the Airports Authority. His deputy was Palestinian and that's how it worked. Until it stopped working, with the beginning of the Intifada. It stopped working because it was never a Palestinian border crossing. It's a border crossing where the security forces do whatever they want. They can detain someone for hours, they can send people back to where they came for nonsense. It could be because that's what the Shin Bet man said, because of nonsense connected to the passport, or to the person's place of residence, like I told you earlier. Very few Gazans could cross at the Allenby bridge. Because they didn't have a way to get from the Allenby bridge to cross Israel, it wasn't possible, it was possible for a very short time, there was the "safe passageway." It was the first time I encountered the Palestinian population face to face, from the position of a soldier's power. In the end, the crossing is a merchants' crossing, there are a lot of guys from Jericho there, all they are interested in is bringing their oranges across, their goods. During that time I felt like I was playing a kids' game. I was part of a kids' game. Sometimes it was cat and mouse with the Palestinian police, or sometimes it was seeing how a person spends an entire day in a hallway, waiting for someone to interrogate him.

**Let's take a specific person who wants to cross from here to there, they decide to interrogate him for what and why he's crossing. Describe the development of the day for that Palestinian.**

First of all, it starts with the waiting on the Jordanian side. Let's say that the Jordanian side tries to cross the people quickly, so on the Israeli side it all depends upon the mood of the border inspectors.

**What are they, female soldiers? Policewomen?**

Border policewomen. Border policewomen, like at Ben Gurion airport. They get on a bus, there are these shuttles, at the border inspection point the Palestinians give their passports to a Palestinian inspector, who passes him along to the Israeli border inspector, who sits behind one-way glass, meaning there is a kind of dark booth, where the border inspector sits looking out on the whole world. It's very funny because, like, in the end, a person stands or falls based on the mood of the inspector or the Shin Bet coordinator.

**Give an example, let's say that she's in a bad mood, what happens to him? He comes to that mirror, he sees himself start talking?**

He can't speak. The Palestinian border inspector takes his passport, makes the border crossing stamp and passes it along to the girl. The girl enters him into the computer, and if she is targeting specific ages, or specific locations, then the person can be called for a Shin Bet interrogation. It's not something you can guess from the outset. It depends on the mood of the coordinator. So let's say you are between the ages of 25 and 35 from Hebron, so instead of getting your passport back you'll get a green note which has the letter "shin" on it and that's it, no one can do anything, not the District Coordination and Liaison...no authority can do anything, not the managing director of the bridge, not the assistant managing director, nothing. Someone decided this and this, and it's up to his discretion and mood.

**How do you conclude that it's up to his discretion and mood? Because there were daily changes? How do you derive that?**

How do I derive it? I know them. Again, it could be how it looks. It could be that a Shin Bet man was sitting inside the inspection booth and he can say, I want this and this, and that means that he'll wait. I was witness to people who spend their entire day at

the bridge, and it starts with the Shin Bet interrogation, a physical inspection which could include a rectal exam.

**What, you undress the person?**

Yes, look, if it's women, then a female soldier must be present during the inspection.

**How do they do a body search?**

They bring them into a room, and they do a body search, they undress them. Listen, they don't do it a lot, I didn't see it. I always left, but I was witness to incidents because of nonsense on his ID, which says he lives in Gaza, but in reality he doesn't live in Gaza, he lives in Jericho, two minutes from there, he can't cross for a whole day...they can send him back, issues of mood like that, he can stay with the border inspector, it can continue from the border inspector, to getting stuck with someone else, a Shin Bet man, it can pass from the Shin Bet man and go back to the DCL people...the DCL people do what they can, but you do everything in a very funny way. I'll give an example. The DCL person wants to help, the Liaison wants to help, he succeeds in helping, he can say to the Shin Bet man, "come and see," and whatever...

**What can he say to the Shin Bet man?**

To try...Let's say a Shin Bet man is detaining a person who is a "a DCL notable." A DCL notable is a person who the army liaison knows. It could be a person that the Palestinians that are there on the bridge, they see their friend, a Palestinian soldier, who they are bringing into an investigation. They will try through back channels to get to the Shin Bet and to tell them, "guys, leave this guy alone, he's one of ours." It's like that. It happened often, so let's say you were able to do something like that, a security person from the Palestinian national security, so the parallel liaison comes to us and they say, "what kind of nonsense is this, bring him to an interrogation with this guy. We'll try to release him." There are situations where the Shin Bet man will tell us "no, I want to talk to him" and there are cases where they'll say to us, "OK." That doesn't mean anything, because he'll cross afterwards. And after he takes his baggage, he again encounters a soldier doing her best work, because she does it no other way. And then after he gets to the baggage they'll detain him again for three hours. They can detain people for having posters of the Al-Aqsa mosque. You know how it is.

**What does that mean? They can detain someone over a poster for three hours?**

It can be used as a rationale, everything can be used as a rationale for detainment, interrogation, questioning.

**Are there also delays in crossing into Jordan? It's less possible to justify inspection for explosives at the crossing into Jordan...**

Yes, I don't remember the difference; there is some difference between preventing entry and forbidding exit. Forbidding exit is more problematic from a security standpoint. But preventing entry is not. It's all in what's called the "border control registration system." In the border control registration system, the moment the border inspector types the ID number, or the Palestinian passport number, or in our case it's an ID, then it comes up if there is material on the person – if he needs interrogation, questioning, she doesn't know, they are girls in a low-quality category, pretty stupid, they act like robots. They do they work, it says "questioning," they send him for questioning. It says "Forbidden from exiting," then he is forbidden to exit. People who live in Jerusalem, people who live in Jerusalem can also cross the bridge. Residents of Jerusalem have a blue ID; they don't go through the Palestinian crossing, they cross at the international tourist crossing. What does a Jerusalem resident do when he drives? When he leaves our territory he deposits his ID. If he doesn't come back after five years, he loses his residency. Imagine a situation like that. You didn't return for five years...I witnessed situations where they wouldn't let people come back into the country. They would enter like tourists, they wouldn't let them come back here.

**Again, I didn't understand.**

Look, you haven't been here for a while, you married a Jordanian, you live in Jordan, you haven't been here for five years, you just lose your residency, it's a policy intended to preserve the Jewish character, etc...

**That's a procedure? Someone leaving the country knows this?**

Yes.

**He takes it into consideration that he won't be a resident, that he will lose his Israeli residency.**

Yes, so what?

**I have a question. Let's say someone is stuck with a soldier, they humiliated him, they detained him, what they did in his butt embarrassed him, I don't**

**know. He submits a complaint, he's a civilian, he can submit a complaint. To the Palestinians? To the DCL? Who deals with a complaint like this? Where does it lead?**

The complaint goes through the DCL then the Palestinian liaison brings the complaint to the Israeli liaison, and the Israeli liaison's hands are pretty tied. If it's for a security reason, there is nothing to do. Many times I saw a person detained for questioning waiting three hours, four hours, the coordinator is eating lunch, I don't know...if it doesn't work, the DCL can operate the channel to the Minister of Defense, and he can go through the managing director of the bridge, he can go in civilian directions, but in the end, the word is security. It's pretty frustrating to say it as someone who dreamed the dream of Oslo... it was a total joke, all of these parallels, there were no parallels, there was no balance, there was no equality, bottom line, it was nothing. They can submit a complaint, and I remember situations where it made it to the Prime Minister. All kinds of slip-ups: they don't let an ambulance driver exit; they don't let an ambulance enter, because five years ago the Shin Bet made a mark on him. Things which are totally not normal. Then I saw ambulances which were detained, I didn't see ambulances that couldn't enter or exit. But I saw relatives who weren't allowed to leave with a dead boy.

**Who wanted to bury him in Jordan? In Israel? Or in Jericho?**

Say they wanted to bury him in Jericho, and it's...

**What, a man comes with his dead father in a bag, and they don't let him bury him?**

In general it's not policy, but it could happen: if the person has an indication, it could happen.

**Again, I want to go back to the policy, to the complaints, what's the policy if they detain him for four hours, "the soldier didn't speak nicely to me," certainly there are complaints like that, is there a review body? Is there a policy to deal with complaints?**

The things are clear: a Palestinian citizen came to our DCL, he complains to the DCL to our Palestinian parallels, they'll try to explain to us that this guy is OK – "don't detain him" – so OK...we can do something allegedly, but it doesn't work that way. We can go to the Shin Bet, but it's always stopped at the Shin Bet.



**And if it's a case of humiliation, not security?**

They will go to B'Tselem. They don't have anything to do.

**What does it look like there? Lines? Chaos?**

Lines. It's the most active border crossing in the country. It's almost like Ben Gurion airport. It's a border crossing they invested a lot in. It was a nice border crossing, there are periods, periods where people would go out on the Omra Hajj. That's going to pray in Mecca, so you are talking about hundreds of buses. So tens of buses with hundreds of people. I also saw people crapping in the entrance hall, all kinds of pilgrims. They would crap in the entrance hall because they didn't know where the bathroom was. I really like that border crossing.

**Why?**

Because of its location, a really beautiful place. It's on the border of the Jordan River, a very beautiful crossing, they put a lot of money into it. On the Israeli side it's divided between the Palestinian entrance and exit and the tourist entrance and exit. The tourist entrance is much nicer, it's not much bigger, but it's much nicer, much cleaner.

**Can the tourists see what's with the Palestinians?**

No, it's not hidden, but it's one terminal.

**Are there tourists who can see what's happening with the Palestinians?**

No.

**There weren't questions that came from the tourists, why is it like this?**

No, but they could come. Let's say if a couple comes, where he is Palestinian and she is Jordanian, then...

**So if a family comes, the father crosses here, and the mother there, and where are the kids?**

Good question. One of the problems, a lot of things fell down there on bureaucracy. For example, a child who was born in Jordan doesn't have an ID, and doesn't have all that nonsense. He's not registered in the mother's green or orange ID. In a situation like that the border inspector doesn't know what to do. So it becomes contaminated and complicated. But there can arise a situation where the father is Jordanian and the mother is Palestinian, then the father crosses here, and the mother – it takes her four hours to cross, and it takes the father half an hour to cross. I like my service

there because I really like working with the Palestinians, I was a supporter of Oslo, I didn't see in Oslo an incorrect process. I believed it was possible, even though there was no equilibrium, there was an aspiration for equilibrium, for some kind of equal situation...It was a place that functioned, and then a breaking point came, and it stopped functioning. At the start of the riots in September 2000, there were many, the Palestinians couldn't do anything, if it got to a point where they were detaining people, suddenly a situation was created where 30 people were detained by the Shin Bet. The Palestinian security commander had nothing to do, he'll pass along complaints, he'll pass along...nothing, he quits. There were many games of cat and mouse. In the end, they removed the Palestinians from there, there are no Palestinians there now. I was still there following the disturbances in all of the territories, they didn't allow Palestinian police to go down there. There was also an attempted stabbing.

**Of Israeli soldiers?**

There weren't male soldiers there, there were female soldiers. There were soldiers from the DCL, like me. And people from the Port Authority, human resources. In the end it was as if it was double-sided, but it was one-sided. It broke out in full force with the start of the Intifada. We threw the Palestinians out of there and it was under full Israeli control, as it always was. Here I lie to myself when I say that I liked the bridge and working together with the Palestinians. On a personal level I really enjoyed it. But it wasn't something that was grounded in reality.

**How do you feel about it today?**

How do I feel about it today? I'm very happy with my service there. I was able to talk a ton with the population. I talked with everyone, with farmers, with merchants, during that time I learned Arabic, I learned how to speak it, which until then I didn't know how to speak it at all. How do I feel about it today? I feel a great sadness. I hear all kinds of infamous stories, there is a ton of international activism, all kind of people from Barcelona who heard so much about how the security forces detain people, they make their lives hell, they beat them, ask stupid questions. What can I say, I did it. I know what it is when a person waits and there is no reason in the world for him to wait. You know a person is waiting, his father died in the middle of nowhere, and he wants to get there. So it's hard for me. I would never want to go back to do it.

**Is there something else that you want to share?**

The State of Israel will never give up, this crossing has a very, very great importance from an intelligence standpoint, in reality it's a funnel, it's an important crossing for the State of Israel, for the intelligence and security authorities – it's a funnel which collects Arabs from all different places in the world, starting with Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, etc., which is one of the interesting points I experienced in my service, meeting those Palestinians who lived their whole lives in Lebanon, and with the Oslo Accords, and the entry of the broadcast authorities were able to get here, it's a problem, it's policy...the State of Israel is not a terrible place – in a place where they want to protect the unique character, they also want to keep the proper demographics, so it's also related, there are people, so it could be that because of that they create so many difficulties so that so many Arabs won't enter here...So if as a result of the Accords they can bring in 400 Palestinian policemen, and sometimes people of Fatah who are going back to the territory and it's also the Palestinians, a broadcaster from Jordan comes for the first time after his hardship, after 30 years in the desert, first thing the Shin Bet takes him, makes him crazy, gets to know what he's been doing for 30 years. As a result of the Accords, things that the Palestinians approved. There was a kind of unchallengeable hegemony of the Shin Bet. It's not a real border crossing.

**These are things you understood while there?**

Yes ■

## 40 The commanders would happily take

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Jordan Valley · year: 2003

► In all of the realities of the checkpoint, we encountered all kinds of irritating incidents by the staff, which didn't come from our unit. It could be that was what was customary for them at the checkpoints. All kinds of scenarios of violence at the checkpoints. Somewhere in the middle of 2003, for example, we encountered a very embarrassing situation. Our commander, a squad commander in the battalion, who always made

The one responsible for the work on behalf of the settlement took a small bribe, a few small bottles of gas, and gave it to the commanders... it was very annoying... there was a soldier who said he wasn't prepared to stand with a certain commander at a checkpoint. The soldier was tried and put in confinement

remarks against Palestinians, decided to do something, and just started a skirmish in the checkpoint, not caring about the outcome. The guy detained a vehicle with Palestinians inside. The Palestinian actually behaved very nicely and didn't make trouble. He said hello, showed his permits and everything, but this commander said to him: "Stop speaking nicely. I don't like you. I can't stand you, stop acting like this..." The Palestinian said: "I don't want to fight, and start violence, I just want to go home, you have a weapon and you are a soldier." At that moment, the commander took off his flak jacket, took off his uniform, gave his weapon to his friend at the checkpoint and said to the Palestinian: "Now I'm not a soldier, I don't have a weapon, let's fight." The Palestinian got into his car. Someone from our company reported it to the commanders. In the end the issue was covered up legally, but in any case the commander wasn't sent to the sergeant course that he was promised. It was close to getting to the media, we were hot-tempered about it...there were cases where the commanders took advantage of the fact that the Palestinians didn't know Hebrew, they would start cursing them in Hebrew or English, or they would get them to say all kinds of funny words...there was an incident where the commander took a bottle of soda from a truck going into the territories. I don't know if he gave the driver an ultimatum of, if you give it to me you can enter, and if not, then you can't enter, but in any case, he took it. At some point it's part of the routine [and happens] all the time. I personally was offered a bribe a few times. Palestinians said to me: "Take some perfume..." I personally didn't take. I have a standard that I wouldn't cross. But this reality exists. It's not some kind of initiative that an officer needs to think of, these things are accessible all the time: "take, come, get...pass it along...what do you care, I'll bring you, I'll do for you..." There was a story with gas canisters, where they took gas canisters from a vehicle that came out and had a lot of gas. The one responsible for the work on behalf of the settlement, \*\*\*, who regulated the entry of the workers every morning, took a small bribe, a few small bottles of gas, and gave it to the commanders. The commanders happily took it – as if it were routine. It was very annoying. We would talk to them about it. We had long conversations with them about it. At some point we got to a situation where members of the company refused orders. There was a soldier who said he wasn't prepared to stand with a certain

commander at a checkpoint. The soldier was tried and put in confinement. Or he just wasn't at the checkpoint, and so the burden fell on anyone who agreed to stand at the checkpoint ■

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## 41 You give Muhammad money, and he brings

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Ramallah district · year: 2001-2002

► There was some guy, Muhammad I think, if I'm not mistaken, they called him, who became a friend of ours.

### **What does that mean?**

He understood the game. He understood that the one who decides in the end isn't... there is no reason to get permits and whatever, the way to do things is with the soldiers in the field. So that's how he got close to us: "Soldiers, you need cigarettes?" He would distribute gas in the area, so he would always come and go, and if you needed something, then walla, you can give money to Muhammad, and he'll bring... or he wouldn't take money.

### **Food? Drink?**

Drink, cigarettes, small things like that, yes. And in return, he would cross more easily than other people ■

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## 42 Some of the detainees weren't medically fit

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Jenin · year: 2005-2007

► Salem is a prison for security prisoners who were caught doing security violations, and they did their sentences there. Their conditions were worse than Megiddo, which is a gigantic prison. In Salem there is no doctor, there is a doctor once or twice a week, and whoever comes to Salem allegedly goes through a doctor's exam, which

What was hard  
for other soldiers  
was seeing the  
condition, the  
living conditions...  
because there  
were clearly  
life-threatening  
cases...  
afterwards I  
understood that a  
doctor doesn't  
always examine

determines that he is fit for detention in a facility without a doctor. Whoever is unfit, goes to Megiddo, as it were.

#### **Why "as it were"?**

There were all kinds of cases that I know...? Of people who, had a doctor seen them, they wouldn't have gone into Salem. For example, someone with heart problems before cardiac catheterization, or someone with diabetes.

#### **That happened? They went to Megiddo [prison]?**

Yes. But they were in Salem, that's exactly the point. There were there cases that I remember: there was a boy with testicular pain. They would yell from inside, from the cells. Oh, there is a sewage pipe under Salem and it really smells in the summer, it really, really stinks, like nothing else. So we yelled for the sergeant on duty to come, after 20 minutes of screaming, they took out a 14-15 year-old boy from the prisoner cell, and there is a translator there, someone who knows how to speak Arabic and he translates, communicates between the jailers and the inmates. He saw that the boy's balls were hurting...there was a medical protocol for the inmates. The protocol for a person whose balls hurt – it's to go to the hospital, to go to a doctor. I pressed and tried to speak to the battalion doctor to come. He said that he would come in two days, and I should give him Tylenol.

#### **How did you respond to that?**

That Tylenol doesn't help with testicular pain, that he needs to go to the hospital. He said that he couldn't, and that he'll try to come tomorrow. Another incident, there was a really fat guy...

#### **What happened to that boy?**

He's OK, a doctor came and transferred him.

#### **You told him to sit in the cell, and you gave him Tylenol?**

There wasn't much to do, I brought him Tylenol to help with the pain and psychologically it calmed him. I told him that if it continues to hurt he should call me.

#### **Did it continue?**

He didn't call me.

#### **Did you see him afterwards?**

I don't know, I don't remember, I think I did.

**He was OK?**

Again, I remember he didn't call me at night. I was there on a shift also as a medic. I understood he was supposed to have a hernia operation before his arrest, I know because it was signed that a doctor saw him before he went into detention, or the examination wasn't comprehensive, but this boy couldn't be in prison. Afterwards, I realized that a doctor doesn't always do an examination.

**How did you realize it?**

When they asked me to see if he was fit, they told me that a medic can also do it.

**Are you officially the medic of the prison?**

We were a few medics in the prison. I was until a certain point, until I couldn't go there. I had a lot of confrontations with the staff, and my company medic, and with the battalion doctor over this issue, so they told me don't go there. There was another older man who had a heart attack in the prison. Again, someone with heart problems who was to have a cardiac catheterization, he couldn't go into the prison without a doctor. It took the army's medical ambulance 40 minutes to arrive. We needed the battalion ambulance. It was after I threatened that I was going to a civilian [ambulance], and I don't care what the repercussions are. He was OK, after a week I saw his son at the gate of Salem, and he told me that his father had a heart attack and he's OK. He was also diabetic, and the veins in his legs were swollen.

**How many days did it take for him to get treatment?**

I don't remember, it was three years ago. When I arrived there also wasn't a medicine cabinet.

**Where was the medicine?**

With the company medic.

**It would come in a travel case?**

Generally, there wasn't medicine or a checkpoint there. I had my company medic's things if I needed them.

**You took the case with you?**

I took what I had to, normally.

**On your own accord?**

I think so, I don't remember exactly. Blood pressure, thermometer, Tylenol, Stop-It,

all kinds of nonsense like that. But it's ungainly and restricted. It's a detention center where people live in bad and unhealthy conditions.

**A diabetic, does he have his own medicine?**

Listen, they speak Arabic and I don't understand. The translator had to explain to me, but there were words he didn't know how to say in Hebrew. What's really terrible here, what was hard for other soldiers, was seeing the conditions, the living conditions, because there were clear life-threatening cases, the one with the heart attack was the last incident I was at, afterwards I didn't agree to go down. I think that someone else thought it was an attempt to get attention, there are also people who don't care...it wasn't someone who threw rocks, rather it was someone who was "security light."

**It doesn't sound security-related that they caught someone with diabetes.**

They are security light, they didn't carry out terror attacks. Brothers of terrorists, relatives, people who threw stones, members of organizations who they found had material that was...

**How do you know all of these things?**

I looked in their files...Anyone who comes to the detention center, you have to see his medical history, which is written in his file.

**How is the file made up?**

Name, details.

**Two pages? Criminal details and medical?**

There is a picture, official details, the crime, how long – entry document to the prison.

**Who fills it out?**

In principle, the doctor or the medic.

**You filled them out?**

Yes, I filled out: pulse, blood pressure, questions about health, medicine, family history.

**Who signs the document?**

I sign it.

**What does it say below? Signature of...**

Doctor I think, I'm not sure, they said that a medic can sign it.



**Who said it?**

The doctor, I think.

**The doctor gave you permission?**

Yes, they requested us to send a medic to examine incoming detainees.

**Who requested?**

I don't know.

**They gave you an order?**

Someone told me, go and examine ■



Law Enforcement

## Dual Regime – "Law Enforcement"

The testimonies in this chapter describe the enforcement of law and order in the Territories. Palestinians are subject to military rule: control by the use of threats backed by punitive actions and attacks that demonstrate the power of the ruling army. Thousands of orders, regulations, and ordinances are given by different bodies – the Ministry of Defense, the Civil Administration, the Head of Central Command – as well as by commanders and soldiers. Instructions change frequently and often are contradictory. New regulations appear constantly, while others expire without warning. A soldier at a checkpoint has the authority to "exercise discretion as a commander on the ground": detain, arrest, or use force against anyone whom he perceives, for whatever reason, as a threat. Thus the Palestinian population, which is perceived by security forces as a threat, is itself subject to an endless succession of threats based on the total military authority of the State of Israel.

Alongside the millions of Palestinians who live under the rule of military orders, hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens live in the Territories primarily under the jurisdiction of Israeli law. The settlers – who in 1967 had already begun to establish Jewish settlements with the assistance of the Israeli government – are tried in Israeli courts, and laws enforced on them are those of their own state. The settlers, however, are not merely Israeli citizens entitled to protection by the Israeli army and rule of law: in practice, they are also partners in the military rule of Palestinians.

There is a close connection between the IDF and settlers: many military units are positioned adjacent to settlements, or even inside them; settlers often

treat the soldiers to food and coffee, give soldiers historical, geographical, and political overviews of the region, and even host them for Sabbath and holiday meals (e.g. testimony 17). More importantly, testimonies in this chapter bring to light the fact that settlers participate in significant military activity: they command soldiers and guide them, and even participate in the operational decision-making process (e.g. testimonies 3, 4). Additional testimonies in this chapter demonstrate how in many instances soldiers in the Territories receive and carry out the instructions of settlers and security coordinators of settlements, especially with regard to the expulsion of Palestinians from agricultural land adjacent to their settlements (e.g. testimonies 2, 3). Such is the method through which settlers succeed in dispossessing Palestinians of their land and expanding the territory of their settlement (e.g. testimonies 1, 6, 12).

The testimonies in this chapter demonstrate the dual status of settlers in the Territories, and show what happens when settler activity deviates from the law or from policy written by heads of the security forces, generally as part of efforts to push Palestinians from their land. Activities that under normal circumstances would constitute undeniable violations of the law transform, in the context of the Territories, into differences of opinion between settlers and law enforcement authorities, and ultimately conclude in compromise, which usually comes at the expense of Palestinians and their rights (e.g. testimonies 13,16). These moments of crisis and compromise reveal the depth of the partnership between the two parties (testimony 17). The failure of Israeli law enforcement on settlers is not the incompetence of law enforcement authorities; rather it is evidence of the double status

given to settlers: Israeli security forces consider the settlers as allies with whom they share a common enemy, and view them as full partners in the military control of the Palestinians, yet they also give the settlers the same right to protection as Israeli citizens (e.g. testimony 18). In this way, settlers are able to act in the Territories as representatives of Israel – as if they were an arm of the security forces.

The Israeli Occupation is based on this dual regime: the civil rights of the settlers are protected and anchored in Israeli law, while the Palestinians are controlled by the use of threats and military force. Soldiers' testimonies describe how the IDF serves, trains and advances the political ambitions of settlers in the Territories at the expense of the Palestinian population. The testimonies also describe the way in which the settlers aid Israeli security forces in exerting control over the Palestinians. The double standard to which settlers in the Territories are privy constitutes a systematic phenomenon: settlers play an essential role in a system which controls the lives of Palestinians, and ensures Israel's hold on the Territories.

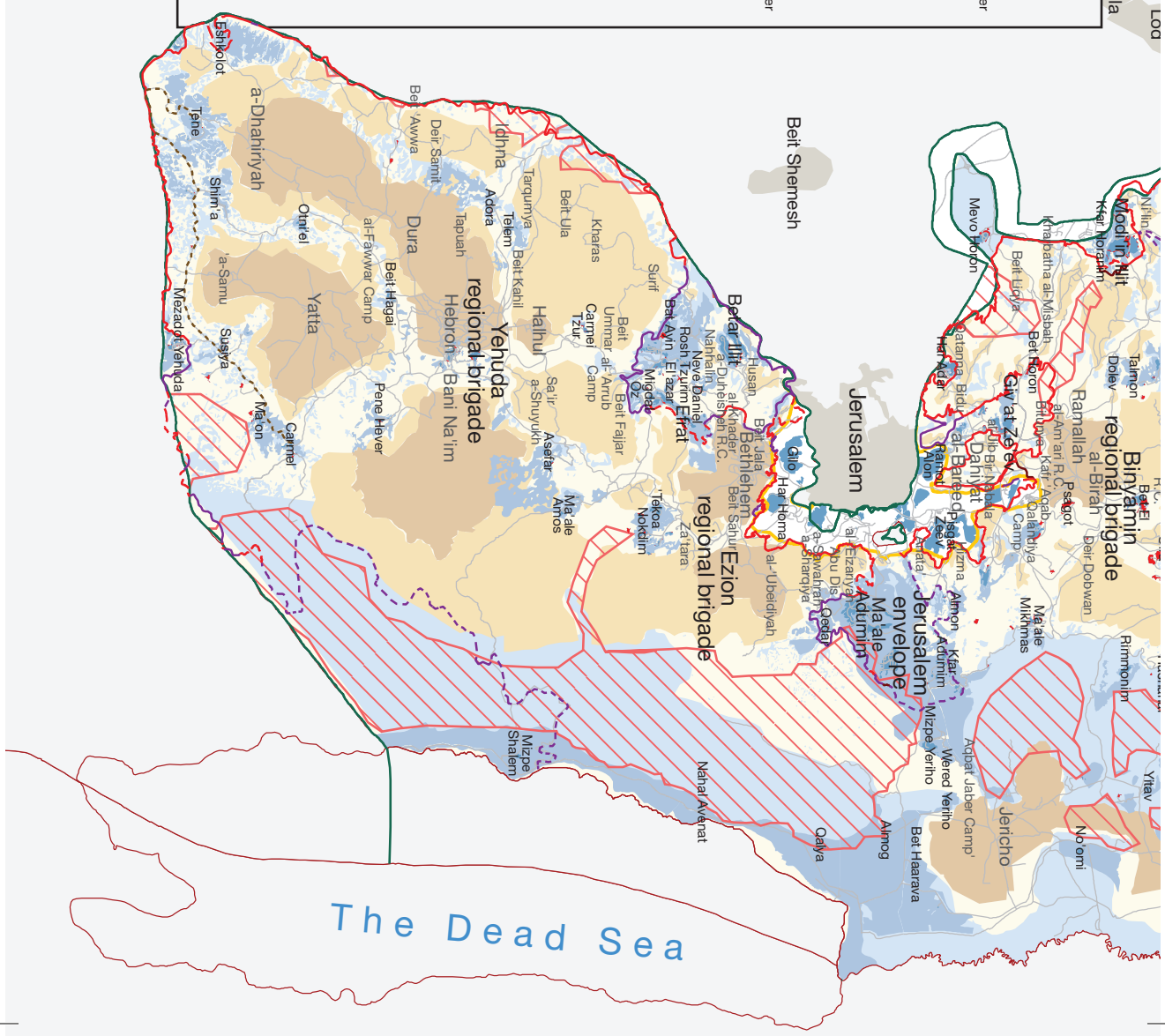


LOD  
Ramla

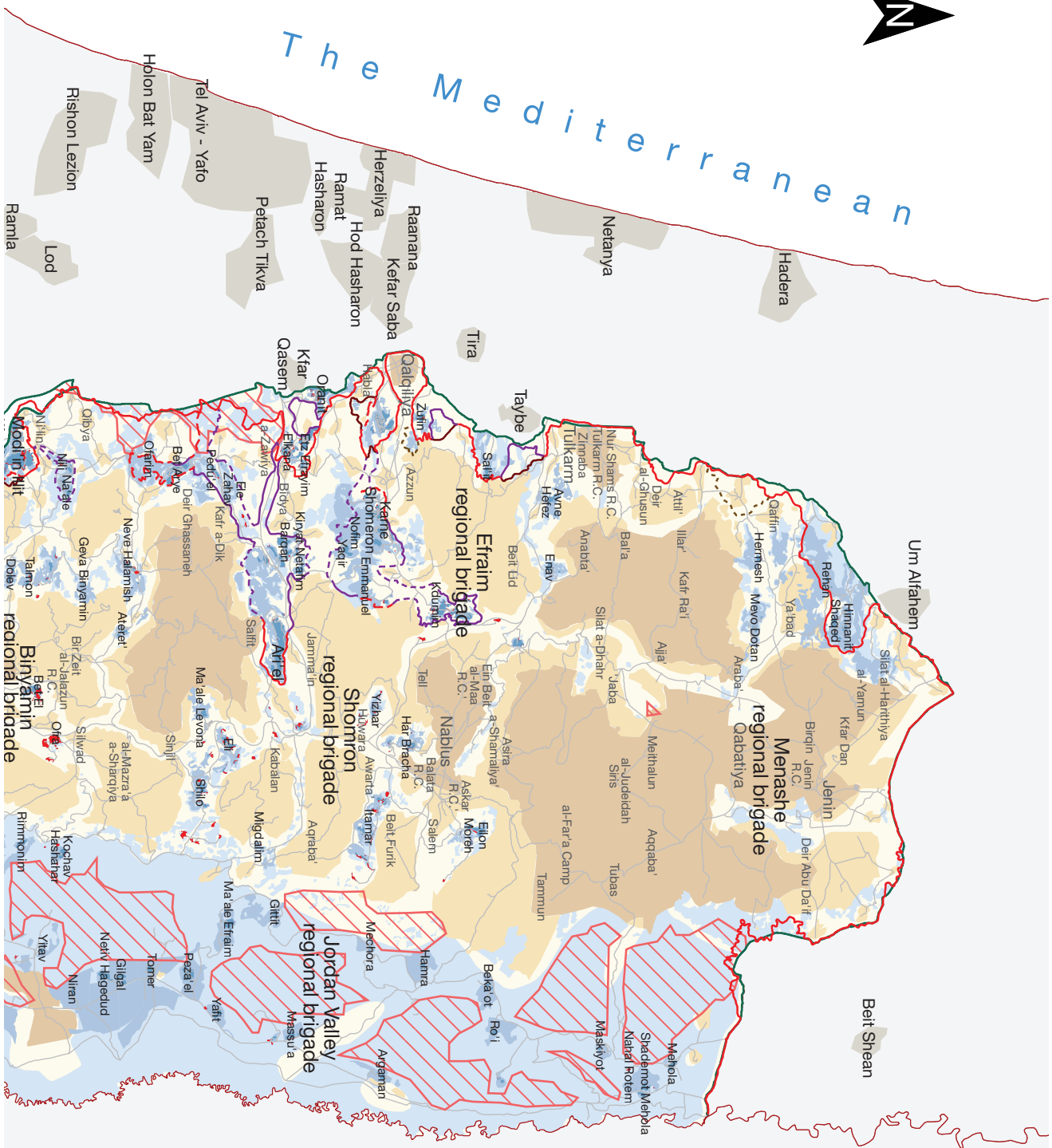
# Legend

- Constructed Separation Barrier
- Canceled Constructed Separation Barrier
- Barrier Under Construction
- Canceled Barrier Route
- Barrier Protecting Road
- Authorized Barrier Route
- Planned Barrier Route - subject to further inter-ministerial examination
- The Green Line
- Jerusalem Municipal Border
- Built-up area outside of municipal area (settlement)
- Built-up area (settlement)
- Municipal area (settlement)
- Jurisdictional area of regional council (settlement)
- Area A
- Area B
- Area C
- No-Man's Land
- IDF Training Area (According to "The Price of Security", Oren, 2005)

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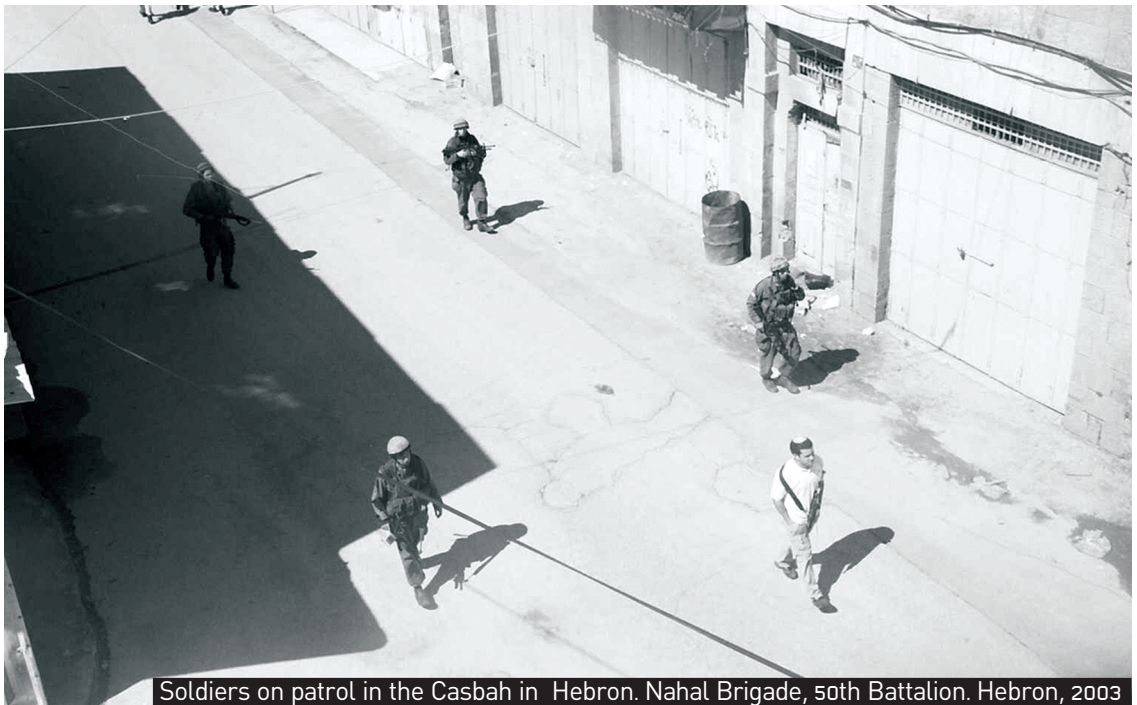








Soldier with a Hebron settler. Nahal Brigade, 50th Battalion. Hebron, 2003



Soldiers on patrol in the Casbah in Hebron. Nahal Brigade, 50th Battalion. Hebron, 2003



צבא הגנה לישראל

צו בדבר הוראות בטחון (יהודה ושומרון) (מס' 378), התש"ל - 1970

צו סגירת מקום

בתוקף סמכותי כמפקד צבאי באזור יהודה ושומרון, ובהתאם לסעיף 91 לצו בדבר הוראות בטחון (יהודה ושומרון) (מס' 378), התש"ל - 1970, ויתר סמכויותי על פי כל דין ותחיקת בטחון, והואיל והנני סבור כי הדבר דרוש לשם קיום הממשל התקין, הסדר הציבורי ולשם בטחון כוחות צה"ל, הנני מצווה כי המקום המתואר להלן ייסגר לאלתר, ויוחזק סגור במשך התקופה שמיום 16/10/2003 ועד ליום 15/04/2004 :

**בית עסק המצוי בצומת הנקיים באזור המסומן באדום במפה המצורפת.**

כל אדם המחזיק במקום המתואר לעיל יסגור את המקום לאלתר, יחדל מלנהל ויחזיקו סגור במשך התקופה האמורה לעיל.

גדי אייזנקוט, תא"ל  
מפקד כוחות צה"ל  
באזור יהודה ושומרון

התשס"ד  
2003

# 1 The mission: to provide security for the rampages of the settlers

unit: Armored Corps · location: Nablus district · year: 2000

The settlers decided to attack the residents of the village, and we – we are supposed to protect them... to make sure that nothing will happen to them while they are throwing stones

► What was etched [in my memory] mostly was when we were on an operation in Huwwara. It's an Arab village...not particularly quiet, but not Jenin.

## What happened there?

In short, what happened, the Jews decided to go on a rampage, in the area of Tapuach. In the area of Tapuach there are settlements and all kinds of outposts.

## You weren't in the village then...

We weren't in the village. Huwwara was our sector. They deployed us to secure the mess in Huwwara. That's what it was at the beginning, we didn't know what the mess was. We arrived. The settlers decided to attack the residents of the village, and we – we are supposed to protect them so nothing will happen to them.

## The settlers were inside Huwwara?

They came to protest, and they started throwing stones into the village, into Huwwara, on the main road and disturbing [the peace]. There was a group from outside Israel who were demonstrating in favor of the Jewish settlement...and they were goading on the settlers. I remember that I was on the cusp of hitting one of the...group of fanatical Jews from France who came and were taking pictures of what was going on there...

## And the Arabs, what were they doing?

Nothing. They were scared.

## Did the settlers bring weapons?

They brought weapons, they threw stones...children hurling at adults.

## Were there women there?

There were also women there, but not too many. But there were settler women there. Now we're standing there, the group from outside Israel was bothering us, was bothering the IDF.

**What did you try to do there? To stop the stone throwing, or just protect the settlers?**

To protect the settlers and make sure that nothing happens to them while they are throwing stones, while they are on a rampage...

**Was that the official order?**

What can you do? Mostly security. Security. Protecting the settlers. You get there, they are united, they are throwing stones. You back them up, you provide cover. Now, on the one hand there was a gathering of the people of the village at all kinds of points above the houses. You are scared to death because you are exposed to the Palestinians, and on the other hand you don't know what to do there, because you are protecting the settlers who decided to make a war. It got to the point where we just wanted to stop it. We didn't want to give the settlers access.

**That wasn't the first thing you wanted to do?**

No, we waited for the police.

**Meaning you didn't move them in the meantime?**

No, but at some point I don't remember who, I think it was one of the officers, tried to stop them from throwing the rocks so they would leave there, so they would get out of there. It came to the point where he was also afraid. We tried to bother them bothering the Palestinians, and also protect them, and with that, protect ourselves...it was an absurd and crazy scene. And they, they didn't care. Not about the soldiers and not about the Palestinians.

**And when you come and try...**

Hitting.

**You hit the settlers?**

Yes. And then the guys from outside Israel came, the French people, and they were photographing you, and then you start hitting. They lie down under your jeep, and you want to hit them also. They come with video cameras, and you grab an eighteen year-old boy and put him into the car, and some idiot woman with a video camera comes and videotapes you. And in the meantime the settlers continue on their rampage. You want to slap them and throw them out, the settlers too – one by one, they just come and throw stones! They come and throw stones and maybe...they start shooting, they would shoot! Throwing stones – at the houses and the people....

**Was someone injured?**

Ummm...not too bad. Not that we didn't go and treat them, it was three hours...

**Who was injured? The settlers or the Arabs?**

No, no, no...the Arabs.

**Did someone get a rock in the head?**

One?! There were some, I think more than ten got hit with rocks.

**Bleeding?**

They bleed and disappear. Someone in the window of his house...by the way, those same settlers – there was some day where they shot the water tanks. They just succeeded in hitting the water tanks in Huwwara.

**How did it end?**

It ended with us throwing them out.

**You did it?**

Yes, yes.

**You took them physically?**

No, in a car. They came in cars, got out of the cars, and threw stones. Because of the danger to soldiers in something like that, it was a problem to stop it. At first, for the first hour you protect them, you let them throw rocks freely...

**You let them throw rocks for an hour and no one says that it's...?**

You don't understand what happened, we came on a vehicular patrol, we arrived. We didn't know what was happening. Afterwards, we realized that we needed to prevent there from being too many disturbances.

**And they still continued throwing stones?**

Yes. And there were a lot of them, and they were doing what they wanted. They have the back up of...there were...eight, nine vehicles, something like that, and they stopped the traffic there. And you are fighting with them, and then the French group came also...

**They don't try to injure the soldiers? The local population?**

What the hell! They peeked, they peeked and were injured and went back to their houses. Think about the fact that they are in shock. People are living there, on their street. When they stick their heads out their window, they get hit with a stone. They come with their goods, and they get hit with stones. Their whole routine of daily life at that moment was – their life was in danger.

### And the one who got up and said: “let’s stop the settlers...”

No, our battalion commander, I don’t remember his rank...a major...decided it was enough. That it was too dangerous if they would respond and a terrorist group would suddenly come. And it turned over pretty fast. We put them into vehicles and we started throwing out those Frenchmen and dispersing the mess. It wasn’t out of humanitarian concern. We didn’t start throwing out the settlers because the IDF was humane all of a sudden, it was just so that there wouldn’t be a mess, so that there would be order of some group or something, we were thinking of the soldiers, not the people ■

## 2 We shot in the air in order to chase away the farmers

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: South Hebron Hills · year: 2004

### ► What does that mean?

There is a burden on all of the residents to do the nightly patrol with the commander of the settlement security detail there. And there was one guy who people paid to do this patrol for them. So normally it was one or two, three people who did it. And there it was the same story. The settlement security coordinator came, defined the precise borders. There was a place at the end of the settlement, he said to me: “here, you see this place, this line, this is the territory of the settlement, and in the area there” – there were also these farming areas, open, there was no fence around the settlement – “they are forbidden to enter there.” It’s an open area, a field below, and they said, “they cannot go in there, they cannot enter. They sometimes come with tractors to work the land, but they are forbidden, it’s not their land.” OK, everything is fine. One day he comes, alerts me, “come, come they’re coming to work the land.” Now, I’m just a young squad commander, I arrive, he goes, “here, come and shoot a few shots in the air to scare them.” The settlement security coordinator has a weapon, but he like doesn’t use it because I’m a soldier, and he is forbidden from using it. OK, I shot

The settlement security coordinator defined the borders for me... one day he comes, alerts me, “come, come they’re coming to work the land... shoot a few shots in the air in order to scare them”



a few shots in the air. They looked, it was, like, delayed, but bottom line they didn't stop, they were right at the entrance to the land of the settlement. And there was also a patrol of reservists going by there. And then the reservists arrived, they are guys who are already more seasoned, without fear, "they will give you trouble." OK, he comes, takes the weapon, shot next to them.

**Who?**

The reservist aimed at them, moved a few meters to the side and fired, to like show them: we are serious. He shot there, he said, "come here." And then they started going down to them, the reservists went down to them, the Palestinians also came. They came, grabbed the Palestinians, brought them to where the settlement security coordinator and I were standing, they brought them there. I go: "You can't be here, you can't whatever." The reservist also slapped him, kicked him. I was in shock, I didn't know what to do, what to say. I had a feeling that something, you know, that it wasn't right. The reservist goes: "This is the only way they learn, this is the only way they won't enter next time." And you say to yourself, maybe this is the way he'll learn. That's it, then he released him, he said: "Don't come back here." They went back, got on their tractor and drove away. That's what happened in Bet Haggai.

**You didn't think to yourself: maybe it's his land?**

I didn't think that, truthfully. The fact that he told me it was his land, I didn't doubt.

**Where was the reservist from?**

I don't know, it was a reservist company that was there.

**In Bet Haggai?**

No, they were in the sector, they were on a patrol. They came in a jeep.

**Did the settlement security coordinator call them?**

I don't know how the reservists came, that I don't know. It could be that they were just passing by chance, or the settlement security coordinator talked with them. The reservists arrived, the settlement security coordinator said to them, he told them the story, and then the reservists took charge and did what they did.

**An officer?**

No.

**What were the commands to open fire in Bet Haggai?**



Normal. Stop-stop [in Arabic] if someone comes close and whatever.

**Did the Palestinians come close?**

Those two in the tractor? No, that was another story.

**But you did open fire.**

I shot in the air.

**But that wasn't the order.**

What can I do? Listen, I went back to the company afterwards and told everyone "listen, something crazy happened to me." It was like logical, it's the army.

**It does have an influence, no doubt.**

I know that I wouldn't have beaten anyone.

**The settlement security coordinator didn't shoot?**

No, no.

**He gave you the briefing at the post?**

He did the briefing once, only when we arrived, he briefed me and the soldiers. First me, and then the soldiers.

**And the platoon commander?**

He didn't visit at all, he was in a different settlement.

**For him the authority was the settlement security coordinator?**

No, I was the commander in the area.

**But who was commanding you?**

No one, I was the commander in the area, when you go out on a patrol, for example, there is a commander in the field. Who was my commander? \*\*\*\* was responsible, but he wasn't with me on that settlement.

**But he is responsible for all the settlements.**

Yes, he is responsible for all the settlements.

**He didn't visit?**

No, he was on another settlement. Or maybe he did, I don't know.

**So who gave you the order, the settlement security coordinator?**

Bottom line he doesn't get involved so much in the guard duty and whatever. He doesn't come every day and say to me, "today you'll do this and that, go clean your weapon." He's only there when there is an emergency or something like that. It's not

like he's supervising me. If he says something to me and I don't do it, it's not refusing an order.

**But you do things.**

I do things, because he's there and he knows the place, I'm just a squad commander, I came for a week on settlement security detail, I don't know what's going on around me, what's this and that. So he's an authority, and I listen to him.

**It's logical that he created that division.**

It could be. It could be that he created it, I have no way of checking.

**Did the Palestinians present a threat?**

No, they didn't present a threat. I didn't feel like they presented a threat. You know, that's the area, they shouldn't enter. In the territories every Palestinian is a potential terrorist. There is some border that begins from the settlement – I don't know if it's legal or not, defined or not – but there is some kind of border, a distance, that if they were to walk around freely near the settlement, then it would be much more difficult to protect ■

### 3 The settlement security coordinator [Ravshatz] said what is permitted and what is prohibited

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: South Hebron Hills · year: 2002

"We stretch the law, the law will bend according to what we do. We stretch it."

► I did settlement security detail during basic training at Avigayil Farm. Bottom line, it's really nice. All of a sudden you don't have commanders on your head, you live with six guys, it's really like a training farm there, a commune. What a view, it's very pretty. I got into arguments with them, I would always talk with them.

**About what?**

About the settlements and everything, with what right...I said to them, "bottom line you are criminals, you are breaking the law, it's illegal here." "We stretch the law, the law will bend according to what we do. We stretch it."

**Who said that?**

One of the guys there at Avigayil farm. The settlement security coordinator there.

**What does that mean, “we stretch the law”?**

How did he explain it to me? There is that place of the regional council. They are a group of idealists, they came to the head of the council – there is that council, I don’t remember what it’s called, Mount Hebron I think, South Hebron Hills – and they said, “we came to put up some kind of settlement, give us a place.” They came, they looked, with the Ministry of Defence. Excuse me, they said there is a place, but they haven’t received permits from the Ministry of Defence at all. They already started building, the permits will come at some point. That’s it, they start building, and they are there. Now maybe they do, then it wasn’t approved by the Ministry of Defence, the location. To him it was stretching the law: “We establish the facts on the ground, and they’ll make do with what we do.” Of course there is a lot of tacit agreement, a lot of corruption, the whole Ministry of Settlements and Defence.

**When you were there, what was there?**

There was a water tower, two caravans, some house they built, and like an abandoned bus, where a girl lived.

**A girl?**

Yes, a woman and some five boys. And aside from that they were really nice guys, you know, great, cute. They didn’t seem like the type who uproot olive trees and beat up Palestinians or chase after them. They just wanted to establish a settlement, they didn’t care what they cause along the way, indirectly. They are not directly aggressive. There let’s say, I only remember the security coordinator coming and saying to me: “Here, this is our territory, here they can work.” According to his briefing to the soldiers, it was like, “here, we have trees and sometimes on Fridays all kinds of organizations come, all kinds of organizations with Palestinians, to harvest the olives, to show that it’s theirs. But it’s not theirs, so you have to run them out of there.” If I’m not mistaken, that Friday people came, we ran them out, “leave, leave.”

**Did you know whose olive trees they were?**

I didn’t know, I relied on the security coordinator.

**Did you have an officer?**

Yes, there was an officer.

**What did he say?**

I got there, I got my briefing from the security coordinators. I was the commander in the area, the Ravshatz was the authority on what was permitted and what was forbidden.

**He gave you orders?**

He, you know, it's not exactly giving orders. He defined, he said, "this is our territory." Bottom line, I didn't see any place where it was written. To me, what he said was how it was.

**And what was the briefing you gave to the soldiers? As the commander?**

The briefing: We are here in case of infiltration. We guard in the case of infiltration. We are like the Defence.

**Was there something in the orders about the olive harvest?**

No, just to expel them in general.

**How did they react?**

After we expelled them? I don't remember exactly, but there wasn't too much friction around it. Really, none.

**How many people came?**

Not too many. On one hand, on two hands. Ten, maybe less. Not many.

**You just said to them, "you can't be here, leave"?**

Yes. I don't remember that there was an argument about it.

**What was the distance of the field from the settlement?**

Not far. A hundred meters, really not far. It wasn't a big field, it was a small field. Bottom line, we were there to prevent infiltration. We also did all kinds of, we walked around the mountains to demonstrate presence, we put all kinds of targets up in the forest, just nonsense of privates. I don't even remember what it's called, when intelligence... ■

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## 4 He is basically a civilian, and he's telling the army what the laws are

**unit:** Maglan Special Forces · **location:** South Hebron Hills · **year:** 2002

► I did settlement security detail with soldiers in Eshkolot, and in another settlement nearby. It wasn't in Eshkolot, I don't remember what settlement it was. But when we were there, there is the settlement, and some [Palestinian] village that's a kilometer or two away. And [the Palestinians] work their land in the area there, 500 meters away in the valley below. The settlement sits on the hilltop, and below in the valley there is some...they work the land. What I remember, it's a little hazy, that one time they were there working the land. They come, all of a sudden [the settlers] go out – this is already past the fence of the settlement, although it was exactly where the expansion was... so we ran to where the expansion was, where it was under construction...They just yelled at them... they didn't shoot or anything, but they ran them out of there. I don't know if they left.

### Who expelled them?

The [settlement's civilian] security coordinator came, called us, deployed us, me and the soldier..."this and that, they are crossing the border, they are scouting, they are..." Like I know? In short, he yells at them, I don't know if they left. But I remember he came, and started yelling at them: "get out of here, get out of here." Later I go on patrol with him in the vehicle, so he sees a little girl playing at the entrance to the settlement, on the access road into the settlement but still below it, still outside the fence – it was totally not part of that settlement – but from below, in the valley. He sees a girl, I hear him yell something at her in Arabic, from the megaphone, something like "Rasak." I didn't understand. I go to him: what did you yell at the girl? So he goes: "If you come around here again I'll break your head." Something like that. The situation there is basically your commander is that civilian from the settlement who tells you what's allowed and what's prohibited, where they [the Palestinians] can be, where they can't be – he gives you authorization to shoot in the air, although in principle I am the senior army commander – as senior as that is, right? – in the field he can tell

Your commander is the security officer of the settlement, he basically tells you what's allowed and what's prohibited, where they can be, where they can't be...he gives you permission to shoot in the air

them to shoot, and also, with discretion. But in principle, he delineates policy. It's not some military authority, some company commander, an officer in the area, it's the settlement security coordinator who decides what is allowed and what is prohibited. It's a pretty funny situation when you think about it, where a civilian tells the army what its limitations are and what the laws are ■

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## 5 A settler transport service

unit: Lavi Battalion · location: Negohot · year: 2003-2004

### ► You said something about the Adorayyim-Negohot road. Something about “infamous” or something.

Yes, I at least had...it's infamous from a security perspective. What happened there is that it's the only road that basically connects between the western part of Shekef and Negohot towards Otniel and Hebron and the more eastern side. On a daily basis there was an escort of two vehicles from Negohot, we escorted them up...meaning people who went out to work, they used the...there was an arrangement with the army that the army would escort them while traveling on that road. Every trip had to be approved from above. And all the issues of proper administration felt terrible...on the one hand, you are providing security, but again, I don't know if it's under the framework of providing security or the framework of...the settlers there determined for the army what to do, more or less. The only situations where they would close it was when there really was an incident and a suspicion that something would happen. The result was that a large part of our time in the area was at least twice a day acting as a kind of transport service for the people there. Now it was also bringing the kids to school in the morning so it wasn't for no reason, but there were times where you just brought someone back from work, you felt like a kind of transport service ■

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## 6 The settlers are on a tour in the Casbah, we move the Palestinians

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2008

### ► You say that you talked among yourselves, what was the talk?

Because of our background, we aren't guys who came to cover up, and from an ethical and political perspective it was hard for many to be there. It was hard for us with the settlers. We were in the center, on the one hand the center of the Casbah, and the center of the settlement, and a lot of the difficulties were with the settlers, most of the violence we experienced wasn't against the Palestinians, because they didn't have a chance, they don't have a lot they can do when soldiers are in front of them, rather it was against the settlers who were violent. During my whole service I would go with a notebook in my pocket and each time the settlers would curse or would act violently, I wrote it down, and I also interviewed other soldiers and wrote about it.

The battalion commander said: "Even if they spit at you or attack you, try to ignore it"... I don't know what more we could have done

### How many of those did you record?

A lot, I had 23 notebooks. It was important for me to document things that I saw myself or that close friends told me. I didn't want things that I didn't...it was important for me to document violence of all kinds, whether it's a curse up to a real attack.

### What is a real attack?

One of the objectives in Hebron is to prevent friction, they divided roads between Jews and Arabs. And our "favorite" thing was the Friday afternoon tour of the Casbah [the center of the city]. Spitting in someone's face...

### The settlers would go into the Casbah on Fridays?

Yes, there was a standing tour of one of the tour guides on the settlement, and they would go on a tour, we had to guard, beyond the fact that they needed double the people to guard them, it was the most degrading thing. Less so us, more what they did...there were curses, we tried to prevent encounters. We had to move an entire street so that this group could pass through.

### What is the procedure in regards to the Palestinian population when there is a tour of the Casbah?

There was one force on the roofs guarding there, and another force below with the company commander or the deputy company commander, in order to surround the settlers, to move all the residents from the street.

**They didn't make a curfew?**

No, they moved them aside. We tried to make it "clean, sterile," to disturb as little as possible, although it was impossible not to disturb. I don't know how long it was going on.

**Did you encounter real violence by the settlers, beyond cursing?**

No, I think that even if they would give a slap, by the fact that it's them, it's such a violent act, as I see the world. What difference does it make if he pushed, cursed, or slapped, it's the prevalent [attitude] that's the difficulty.

**Did you get to show the notebook to one of the officers?**

No, at a certain point there was a decisive conversation with the battalion commander. He was a straight and honest man and he said that we had to come forward if you saw things or he did something, he wanted to investigate it and uncover things. He said that the things that he knew about, he clarified. We told him about the story with the settlers, dealing with them. There was always a feeling that it wasn't clear what the army wants from you, where the line is. You aren't a blue-clothed soldier, you don't have the privileges of policemen, and the settlers don't see you as an authority. When it's convenient for them, they are with you, and when it's not...so he says: "Even if they spit at you or attack you, try to ignore it." He was aware of the fact that it was a problem, but he was pretty limited because it's political.

**What did they say to you about your authority over the settlers?**

They said we had the ability to arrest if something develops, in practice that's very difficult. The general feeling was that it's not clear what had to be done. The police have very limited resources, and I want to believe that they wanted to, but I know that it was difficult for them with the amount of incidents that there were.

**So normally, the only thing you do when you see something like that is you stand against it?**

No, we went in, but we were limited, it's difficult for a 19-20 year-old to stand against something like that. I also don't know how much was in our power to do so.

**So what did you do?**



We would separate them, the physical friction points were relatively small between people. When things would happen we would try to separate, and we called the police. There were kids who would go up on the roofs in Avraham Avinu and throw stuff or curse, soldiers would throw them from the post. It's a very dry law, that's my feeling, where it's not clear what they want from me ■

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## 7 Three – four soldiers guarding a shack

unit: Paratroopers · location: Elon Moreh · year: 2002-2003

► In Nablus there are the settlers of Elon Moreh and the whole issue of the territories. There it's totally different, because you aren't inside the city, you are around it. It's more difficult to control, although you have Mounts Gerizim and Eval. In Nablus there were many problems with controlling the area because there were the isolated farms of the settlers, and the State decided that the IDF would protect them: 3-4 soldiers guarding a shack or the hilltop, which is totally exposed.

**It's not dangerous? Normally those on settlement security detail do it.**

No, it's something more random, the moment there is an order from the regional brigade and above, it goes down to the brigade, to the battalion, to the company to you.

**Do you know if these hilltops were legal? Because there is the issue of the illegal outposts.**

You suppose that if the regional brigade gave the order, as one who is out in the field you don't know where it stands in the Supreme Court. There were many problems where they didn't want us to go up and guard, because the moment you start guarding them you authorize them. The objective of the settlers is to grab borders, to grab land and establish a settlement, not for someone to guard them. Everyone has a weapon. That's also a problem, because you identify a man with a weapon in the dark, it's a very delicate situation. There was the issue of harassment of the Palestinians ■

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## 8 Things that don't even make it to the media

unit: Paratroopers · location: Hebron · year: 2002

They lynched an old man...in a second he was on the floor, in seconds they are opening up his head with a rock. In Hebron this is a small and isolated world...it exists here in the State of Israel and no one knows about it and no one wants to know

► The worst thing that I saw in Hebron was a day after the events at the funeral of Elazar Leibowitz. I was guarding the Gross post, it's the lookout over the central square of Hebron, on the roof of a building. I was guarding, and I see in the middle of my shift, around the afternoon, an old man with a cane coming down, an Arab from Abu Sneina, the old man looked 60 plus, with a cane, he gets to the Abu Sneina intersection, to Gross square, and all of a sudden three 16-17 year-old kids jump on him, they take him down to the floor within a second. They take a stone, open up his head. They start kicking him on the floor, opening up his head. A 60 year-old man with a stream of blood from his head. Blood spraying out of his head. Everything in seconds, really in seconds. In a second he's on the floor, in two seconds they have a rock and they broke his scalp and he has a stream of blood from his head. They kick him, and before the guys who were beneath me at the post, under the building, were able to run to them, they already ran away. An officer came on patrol, he didn't know what they did, so he didn't catch them. They just ran. And immediately the company medic came and started bandaging the old Palestinian, and we took him out in an ambulance.

### **Do you know what happened to the old man?**

No. I believe he was OK because they stopped the stream of blood from his head and they sent him to the hospital. It was just a shocking incident. It shocked me. Afterwards I went to the officer really with my eyes tearing. A soldier for 7 months in the army, I didn't understand what was going on here. I said to him that it can't be like this, that we can't protect them, I didn't understand how it could be. I was very shocked by that incident, it destroyed everything for me, like that was the thing, my comparison was, I immediately thought about the lynch in Ramallah. Those pictures are in my head until today. When I think about them it's difficult, and it really reminds me of the lynch in Ramallah. How they behaved.

**And then you turned to Carmela [Menashe, Israel Radio's military correspondent]?**

And I went with the story to Carmela Menashe. I didn't tell any of the soldiers in my company, because it wasn't appropriate for the environment, but I went quietly to Carmela Menashe, I had a connection with her.

**Were there other soldiers like you?**

There was one more in each company who I think had a problem with it. The majority didn't have the emotional intelligence or the openness to talk about it. And we didn't talk about it with each other, because the soldiers don't talk with each other about these things, there is no serious discussion in a company of combat soldiers. The male atmosphere, everything is jokes, and they treat everything with a lack of seriousness and all in all they try to get through the shit together. Because again, I told you, on the scale of unfortunate ones, you are pretty unfortunate as a soldier in Hebron. You are a sacrifice yourself.

**What happened with Carmela when you turned to her?**

I told her the story on the telephone. It wasn't published. I didn't hear about it anywhere. And it was another shock, because I understood that basically everything that goes on there, kids, 14 years old, 8 years old [the interviewee is referring to a different violent incident involving settlers, during which a Palestinian girl was shot dead and a Palestinian boy was stabbed in the back], who die for no reason, innocent, where settlers go into their homes and shoot at them, and settlers go crazy in the streets and break store windows and beat up soldiers and throw eggs at soldiers and lynch the elderly, all of these things don't even make it to the media. There is a small and isolated world in Hebron, the Avraham Avinu neighborhood sits alone in Hebron, more soldiers protect it than people live there. The people who live in that neighborhood do whatever they want, the soldiers are forced to protect them. They are the biggest Judeo-Nazis that I have met in my life. And it exists here in the State of Israel, and no one knows about it, and no one wants to know, and no one reports about it. People prefer not to know and not to understand that something terrible is happening not far from us, and really no one cares. And the soldiers there are unfortunate and the Palestinians are super-unfortunate. And no one helps them ■

## 9 She was an adult woman, the young men beat her up

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2002

### ► What were your meetings with the settlers in Hebron like?

When I was in the assisting company there were more. When I was in the assisting company we were in Jabal Juar. It was a school that was once for Arabs, now it has been turned into – it's been a few good years – it's an IDF post. There was an incident there where some settlers jumped on some woman, an adult [Palestinian] woman. She had some sickness. They injured her in her stomach, a very grave injury in her stomach. Later we understood that she had some kind of sickness. But unrelated, she was a very old woman, and they jumped on her, a few settlers in the Erez alley.

### Kids? Adults?

Guys, young men. They injured her and beat her up a bit. They injured her seriously in her stomach.

### What did they beat her up with?

We heard there were stones and they hit her. But I don't know what exactly. We came afterwards and she was lying there. We arrived first before the ambulance, we sent for the ambulance. The young men ran, I don't know, I think to Qiryat Arba. Some ran to Avraham Avinu, some to Qiryat Arba. We found her lying there. The Erez alley is a place where both Israelis and Palestinians can go. It was like routine there, that she was lying there and settlers were walking past, asking them what happened, they don't know, they keep walking. We were there in an unpleasant situation, we didn't know what to do. We called an ambulance.

### What were the orders regarding disturbances by the settlers when they injured Palestinians?

There were, there really weren't orders, but there was...

### What did you feel your duty was in an incident like that, when the settlers attack Palestinians?

What did I feel like my duty was? It's to separate ■

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## 10 The cute kid took a brick, opened up her head

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2003

► My main difficulty in Hebron was the settlers, the Jewish community there. The feeling was that we were protecting the Arabs from the Jews. And neither side liked us, but it felt as though the Jews really did whatever they pleased, and no one would care. We were stuck in the middle. I'll give you an example of something that happened right next to me: I was standing guard duty, and one of the outposts summoned a medic on radio. Someone replaced me at the guard post and I ran down, and I see a 6 year-old Palestinian girl, her whole head was an open wound.

### **At Post 44?**

Yes. The extremely cute child who would regularly visit our position decided that he didn't like Palestinians walking right under his home, so he took a brick and threw it at her head. Kids do whatever they please there. No one does anything about it. No one cares. Afterwards, his parents only praised him. The parents there encourage their children to behave this way. I had many such cases. 11-12 year-old Jewish children beat up Palestinians and their parents come to help them along, set their dogs on them, a thousand and one stories ■

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## 11 The homes of settlers are inside the post

unit: Kfir Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2006

► I remember the "boom" that I got when I had settlers' homes inside the post. There is that house, there is the caravan, there is the caravan and a half where they sit inside the post. Do you know what I'm talking about?

The settlers' kids  
run freely in  
the post...they go  
around there  
freely. No one has  
a problem entering  
the post...on  
Saturday it was  
forbidden to close  
the gate

### **Bet Romano?**

No, Bet Romano is the yeshiva, with stairs that go up from the yeshiva to the post.

### **Metal stairs?**

Yes. So when you finish the stairs there are two houses in front of you, two families. They call it the caravan neighborhood, or it has a name, I don't know.

### **They walk around in the post?**

Yes, freely, they also leave by the front gate. On Saturday it's forbidden to close the gate because they have to cross. It's unbelievable, you can't close the gate because it's like, you know, it's Shabbat, you can't open and close. Even though there is a soldier above, it has to stay open like that so that they can walk.

### **Did it bother you as soldiers?**

It drove me crazy. It really made me crazy. I also remember, at a later point, that one of our commanders had some argument with a soldier who went like that, it doesn't matter, a legitimate argument, and this commander screamed at that soldier. The soldier was a problematic soldier, in short, the commander was yelling something at him. All of a sudden comes out, that window of the house opens, some redhead settler, you know, who was known, yells at the commander: "who do you think you are yelling at him like that?" Screaming. You know... "come here, you think, tell me, you aren't embarrassed? What's it your business at all? You are this, he is that..." Like he went out to protect the soldier. And everyone, you know, everyone starts arguing with him and whatever, one of the sergeants comes, yells at the settler: "Shut up, go home, who are you?" Totally correctly. Who is he that he opens his mouth? He could have stuck his head out, say "stop yelling, you are making too much noise." That I could accept, but what's he getting involved for? So then one of the officers went in to talk to him. You know how it is. In short, nothing happened in the end.

### **Did you eat Friday night dinner with them?**

I never agreed to go. They invited me tons of times, I would never agree to go. They would always invite. What do I mean always. They would invite you sometimes: "come, sit with us, come for a Shabbat meal." I would never go.

### **What is your interaction with them? The last time I was there, there was a gate.**

They go by. If they go to Bet Hadassah, they walk from there.

**Where do they park their cars?**

I don't know, I think they park them below in Bet Romano, at post 38. I don't know where they park. You have interaction, you see them.

**And their kids?**

They run around in the post with bikes, totally freely. I also remember, this was the most unbelievable, I remember that we would do training below at the post, and I like see them – no, forget them, they were – 10-15 religious men were there, I don't know, they came to Hebron to the Cave of the Patriarchs, they are standing and watching. Inside a post, an IDF military post, standing and watching. You know, training if someone attacked from the side, and they are all whatever, it's cool and whatever – standing and watching. Suddenly, you know, you say to yourself: "come on, this is ridiculous, totally unbelievable. What are you doing here?" You know, and it doesn't seem strange to anyone. There are always Chabad guys walking around the post, "Did you don tefillin? Did you don tefillin?" I remember one night that I woke up from the voice of girls – girls you immediately wake up – some religious American, also walking around, asking for this, she points to my Aleph pin. "I want this pin." The pin of my battalion, Aleph-battalion, she wanted the pin. Walking around freely, you know.

**The people from Bet Romano also?**

Everyone, freely. It's not, you get it? It's like they walk around freely. No one had a problem entering the post.

**The company commander didn't say anything about it?**

It's forbidden, there is a prohibition against closing the gate on Saturday. You cannot, you can't close it. And on the day to day you have to open it for them.

**Were there skirmishes at the gate sometimes?**

With them at the gate? It could be, I don't remember. There was something, I think. But it's unbelievable, totally crazy that they walk around between your legs. I really didn't like them. And they were there a lot, I remember the Coke machine. Like hey, it was after guard duty, the one thing that kept me going was the can of Coke after guard duty. You go down from your duty on Friday, Saturday afternoon, it's hot, it stinks, you went up at 6 a.m., you came down at 12 and you are exhausted, you come

to the machine and it's turned off with a sign: "the machine does not operate on the Sabbath." Son of a.

**Did you have skirmishes over the evacuation of outposts, or disturbances by the Jews?**

So that's it, look, during my time, for example, there was the evacuation there of the wholesale market, which we didn't do, that was done by the border police, but following that there was really unrest. Listen, the settlers there are unbelievable. They don't respect you, they don't value you – the opposite, they curse you in the street. You know, after the disengagement, it's unbelievable. I remember arguments ■

## 12 They legitimize throwing rocks

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2004-2006

I think that they  
aren't OK, that the  
Jews aren't  
right...but I had to  
make a switch in  
my brain in order  
to keep hating  
Arabs and  
justifying the Jews

► Also, seeing those kids in Hebron and being proud that they are afraid. It's like kids, it's really like. I remember, also, who were they afraid of? Of the Jewish kids. They didn't do anything, but they throw rocks at them, and rocks when they pass by, the Jewish kids. The parents don't say anything. The parents stand, you can see a young kid standing, throwing some small stones and yelling something at them, it was already part of the routine. You come to Tel Rumeida and you see it everyday. It's already OK. And the parents, they walk around there, I don't know if it's the parents, but adults walk around there and don't comment to the kids.

**It doesn't seem strange to you that a kid throws a stone at another kid?**

Because he was a Jew and the other a Palestinian, it's as if it were OK.

**Did you also see the opposite?**

I remember that I would say out loud it was kind of OK, but I would think to myself, come on, what is he, fucked up? That guy didn't do anything to him. I would think: this, this is what causes all of the mess, these small fights, these things that the Jews start. It was a kid who I know his parents educate – it's things that you hear and see on TV – his parents educate him to hate them, and they legitimize throwing rocks and



cursing him. So it's like clear there will be a mess afterwards. And you also, you don't understand which side you are on. I remember that in Hebron it's the strangest, that you don't know which side you are on. I am a female Jewish Israeli soldier, and I'm supposed to be against the Arabs because they are my enemy, but I'm here, next to a house in the post, and I think that they are not OK, that the Jews aren't right. So wait, so no, I have to turn a switch in my brain to keep hating Arabs and justifying Jews. But no, wait, they still are not OK, they are starting it, because of them we are here, and because of them this is all happening, because they bother them and they are afraid. Like, it's terrible, all of this...

**So why flip the switch?**

Because it's loyalty to your side.

**What age are the kids you are talking about?**

Young, like five-six. The ones who run around outside.

**Were there incidents of violence by adults?**

I remember there was, we were traveling on a bus, it was during the disengagement, I don't remember what the story was, but someone who they said was crazy, and her husband or boyfriend was killed by terrorist, I don't know what, so she was screaming at the soldiers, at one of the soldiers who wouldn't give her a place to sit on the bus. I remember that he controlled himself, controlled himself, and she also hit him, I think. He controlled himself, controlled himself, and then at a certain point he yelled at her, "Shut up, it's because of you I'm here at all." They hated being there.

**The soldiers?**

Yes. I also think they were mad at the settlers, the residents of Hebron. They were mad.

**They don't bring you pizzas to the post and all kinds of stuff like that?**

They bring, but every so often I would hear, "because of these shits we are here at all, they should get out of here, they should leave." On the one hand there is that, again, you are mad at your nation that they are here, at the Jews that they are here. On the other hand, you also hate the Arabs, because they kill your friends and make trouble for you.

**So you hate everyone?**

Yes. And then I think that you don't think, you say what pops into your head at that

moment: now I hate this, so I'll curse him, and after that I hate this, so I'll curse him, and now I hate him, so I'll spit on him.

**You spit on Jews?**

No, why? They didn't do anything to me.

**And Arabs?**

But they are like Arabs...I don't know, it's true, that specific guy that I spit on didn't do anything to me. I think he didn't do anything at all. But again, it was cool, and it was the one thing that I could do to, you know, I can't go and make arrests and be proud that I caught a terrorist, and I can't eliminate a terrorist, and I can't go on some operation and find some weapon under some tile in their house. But I can spit on them and degrade them and ridicule them ■

## 13 We confiscated cars, the settlers vandalized them

unit: Paratroopers · location: Nablus area · year: 2003

► **What was the issue with the confiscation of cars?**

There were many roads, and they are nothing compared to all of the dirt roads that there are, there was an order at some point, when you found someone trying to bypass from a bypass road, or trying to go around you and you succeeded in catching him, you confiscate his car.

**What was done with the car?**

You bring it to a lot next to the post, they made a lot.

**Who made the lot?**

I don't know, it was there before us I think, we used it for that. The problem was that there was no guard duty of the cars, so people would go down from Elon Moreh and destroy the cars that you just confiscated to return the next day to its owners, it's a threat from the State so that you don't do it again.

**Did you also look inside the cars?**

Yes. First you take the person for a short interrogation, he goes into detention.

**Where do you take him for the interrogation?**

You bring him to the checkpoint, that's where they interrogate him.

**Soldiers from the company?**

Either from the company, or if need be, you bring him to the central brigade, to the interrogators. Not us. Many times we release him after half an hour, he would go on his way, and they would tell him to come and get the car after a day or two. Our problem was that the settlers would go down on foot from Elon Moreh and they would destroy the cars. We guarded the cars so that they wouldn't smash the windows and they wouldn't destroy them. The taxis are one of their main sources of income. The guy comes in the morning with the ticket that was given to him. You take the guy; you want to give him back his car.

**It was really organized?**

Yes, he had a ticket and we had a ticket, he signs and you sign, and then he comes to ask for his car after a day.

**What was written on the form?**

License number. After an investigation he would get a note with the license number. The ambition was to only confiscate the car for a day. He would drive it to the car lot and we would escort him.

**It was playing cat and mouse with the settlers...**

Correct. You stand there helpless in front of the guy the next day, you go to show him the car, and you see that it's broken: cut tires, smashed windowpane. You catch a 13-14 year-old settler and it's a problem. You turn to the settlement in Elon Moreh and they don't know anything, and a situation is created where the company has to allocate another post just to guard the cars. It was cumbersome. We always fought with these fucked up settlers, trying to protect them, and they put a stick in the wheels. You catch the car so that terrorists won't hurt them, you are just dealing with them all the time. Young and brazen kids who they didn't educate when they were young.

**You know the routine, you see them coming.**

The absurd thing was we would make ambushes in order to catch the kids coming to

Our problem was that the settlers would go down on foot from Elon Moreh and they would destroy the cars... we would make ambushes to catch the kids that were coming to destroy the cars. You can't arrest them because they are minors

destroy the cars. You take them, you can't arrest them because they are minors, the police have nothing to do against them.

### **They are all minors?**

Yes, the settlers aren't idiots, they send the kids, they won't endanger themselves, if you catch them you have to open a file. And then the higher ups would speak with the heads of the settlement, and we were helpless. Who will fix the car now? Sometimes the cars were in a state that it wasn't worth it to fix them. It's a shitty feeling that you protect them [the settlers] and they... ■

## 14 The settlers went into the Casbah, killed a little girl

unit: Paratroopers · location: Hebron · year: 2002

They just went into the Casbah and started spraying bullets in the air. On automatic...our treatment of them was too forgiving. We didn't stop them

► The Jews are the most problematic and unbelievable factor in Hebron. That's what you really discover, after all of this craziness, that you live there in such an insane way just to protect them. Because bottom line, you are standing in their neighborhood, on their street, they walk past you, you are wearing a flak jacket and a helmet and they go about as normal. And then suddenly something happens, like what happened then, the murder of Elazar Leibovitz, who was killed in the Carmel area [a soldier and resident of Hebron who was killed in a shooting attack in the South Hebron Hills in July 2002], not far from there, and he lived in the Jewish area in Hebron, and then all hell broke loose, really, really, really, craziness in the streets. At his funeral, Jews just went into the Casbah [center of the city] and started shooting in the air, they killed some girl, an eight year-old girl with a knife in the back, like shocking things.

### **What was your part in this story?**

Trying to stop them.

### **What were your orders?**

Trying to stop them with physical force of any kind. Physical force. But they didn't give us the authorization. There wasn't, you can't give the authorization. The problem is,

the problematic situation is that even if the soldier doesn't want to, he finds himself protecting the settlers as they are doing terrible things to the Palestinian residents. Because when a Palestinian resident comes and throws a stone, immediately you can start shooting in the air, and throwing a stun grenade at him, doing a thousand and one things and no one will say anything. But to a Jew you can't do anything. A Jew, you can only try to catch him and try to remove him with force. And normally, the Jews there are – the soldiers are relieved there every four to eight months, but they live there, so they know the soldiers' tactics. And when they go to destroy a house inside the Casbah, after that story – they destroyed a house there that until today there is a mess in it, with the house that they broke into, the Sharhabati house – they just came, destroyed a wall, entered the Casbah. Among all the hundreds of children, you are a soldier, standing there unfortunately, feeling like a game of cops and robbers. A soldier stands at the entrance to the Casbah trying to put out his hands to both sides, and the seven year-old kids go past under his hands, they run in all directions. He grabs one, four pass. There is nothing to do, they just come, run into the Casbah, you try and stop them in order to protect them, because it's the Casbah, in any case, but they run straight into the Casbah, they go into the house, they run, they break all the windows in the house, whatever they can break, they destroy everything, and then they declare the house is theirs. That they added another house in Hebron. This conduct is amazing. All of a sudden police arrive, they throw eggs at them, you find yourself, I found myself in a situation where I was walking right next to a woman, trying to protect the baby she is holding in her hands among the masses, a settler woman. We are inside an Arab house, in the Casbah. There is no Arab there of course, there are around a hundred Jewish kids who broke everything in the house, they broke the wall, they broke through to make a path from this house to their neighborhood, because only a wall divided between that house and their neighborhood, and I find myself in a situation where the police are trying to take them outside, I'm between the police and some woman holding a baby. Trying to protect her, her baby, and I get hit with an egg just then, from settlers even, which was meant for the police. And the police are taking hits, and the special female patrol force is getting hit by the girls, and at the funeral we're fighting with all of the settlers,

and the next day they bring us food to the post.

**What happened at the funeral?**

At the funeral everything went really, really, really crazy. I was at a position inside the post, and at a certain point they just shot at the post. Not Palestinians, Jews, by accident. Because they just went into the Casbah and started spraying gunfire in the air. On automatic, without discretion. And because of it a little girl was killed, and apparently because of it another boy got a knife in the back. Just destruction without discretion.

**Where was the police during this whole story?**

It couldn't control them because it's impossible. They are everywhere, they go in, when a hundred kids are running in the Casbah there is nothing to do. Two soldiers stand trying to block the entrance, but they are playing a game with 7 year-old kids. There is nothing to do with 7 year-old kids.

**If they were a hundred Palestinian children?**

Oh, that's the difference, that's exactly what I was saying. Palestinian kids – first of all, they would never do it. If a hundred Palestinian kids would come, then they would also succeed in principle. But they wouldn't come, because the moment Palestinian kids would try to infiltrate the Jewish neighborhood, most likely there would be shooting in the air, afterward there would be rubber bullets, and there is a good chance that someone would die and then the hundred others would run. But a Jewish kid, no one will shoot at him.

**You don't have permission to use anything against the settlers?**

Just physical contact.

**You can't arrest them?**

We could arrest them. We arrest them occasionally, but it was rare. Rare. Our treatment of them was too forgiving. We didn't arrest them usually.

**What happened with all the people who went crazy during the protest? Was there some kind of proceeding? Did they know who the people were?**

Not always. Normally it's all kinds of "hilltop kids" who came from Itamar and Elon Moreh, and no one knows them there. And they came, 16-17 year-old kids, made their mess, and left. Just no one knew how to catch them, and they didn't know

how to locate them, and the soldiers didn't have enough desire, most of them. You don't want to be a policeman, it's not your job, it doesn't interest you, you try and protect the...maybe if you got to a situation where you see kids coming and throwing stones at a Palestinian shop, and you try and distance them and stop them, because, it seems like an unreasonable situation, but you don't invest too much effort into starting to chase after them now, to bind them and arrest them. It's just not like that. And there was a lot of hostility. During the whole funeral proceedings there was a lot of chaos in the streets, and officers of all ranks really got into physical fights with the settlers. The settlers came, spit on the battalion commander, like the worst thing there could be. Again, I said, and it's important to say, that the soldiers there are the biggest victims. No, the Palestinians are the biggest victims, but the soldiers are after them on that level. They are in a situation where against their will they support the settlers that can do what they want, and abuse Palestinians as much as they want. They try to stop them and they don't have the full power to do it ■

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## 15 Baruch Goldstein? "A just man, clean of heart and hand..."

**unit:** Nahal Brigade · **location:** Hebron · **year:** 2002-2003

► As an education NCO in Hebron, one of my duties was to prepare soldiers with background information, including study tours of the Cave of the Patriarchs. On those tours we also talked about the Baruch Goldstein massacre that had taken place there. More than once I had to against my will confront Jewish settlers who would not agree with things I said. If I was explaining the massacre to the soldiers, the settlers would start yelling at me that this was not a massacre, but killing in self-defense, and that the Shin Bet was to blame. You know, the kind of guys who won't let you speak. They would demand my ID number in order to lodge a complaint against me, and claim that only settlers should guide tours around there, and not the army; that we brainwash the soldiers, that there was no massacre. There was another thing that

was forbidden: when guiding a tour of VIPs, senior officers and such, I would always take them to Baruch Goldstein's grave site, located right above the pizza place in Kiryat Arba settlement, in a garden. It's a nice garden, and over the grave, the epitaph reads: "A just man, clean of heart and hand, who died unjustly," or something of that nature. The reactions I'd get from settlers there would be very harsh, they would swear and curse me, that I and my hometown and my family should burn in hell, and such things, for having even raised the subject with the soldiers ■

## 16 The settlers put a hole in his wall

unit: Nahal Brigade · location: Hebron · year: 2006

I don't know what  
this joke of calling  
the settlement  
security  
coordinator is,  
because he's not  
going to do  
anything to  
people from his  
settlement

► Another terrible incident that happened: I was on patrol 30, and then one of the Palestinians approaches post 38, which is the passage between the Casbah and the Jewish settlement. He came, he goes to us: "They are bombarding my house, they are bombarding my house." With stones and the like. I go to him: "What?" And he...he lives on the Zahav road. Zahav road is basically, Zahav road sits beneath Bet Hadassah, and then there is Big Shalala road and Small Shalala road. Zahav road is totally closed with the exception of the very end, where there is a building which sits right next to Bet Hadassah. All of its windows are of course welded...the army welded its windows in the direction of Bet Hadassah, so it does not see what's going on in Bet Hadassah, but Bet Hadassah sees its wall. He asks for permission to go into their territory from Sirena road. He arrives, accompanied by us and he just sees his house, he has two rooms and then a bedroom, his whole family is outside shaking, and you see in the corner of the metal, you see a hole which they made from the other side with a five kilo hammer, the Jews.

### When was this?

It was just three months ago. And every stone thrown on those metal plates sounds like a serious boom. And it's on their bedroom. That was an incident that really made me angry. I called my company commander in anger, really angry, because I wasn't



able to get him on the radio, so I got him on the phone. He goes to me: “Just remember one thing, when you speak to the settlement security coordinator, remember that he is on our side.” Because he understood my anger. He was also very annoyed in that situation, because you come and you see the hole they made in the side of the plate with the five kilo hammer.

**I want to understand, they made a hole in the wall?**

They made a hole in the wall and stoned their windows. It was an incident that really angered me.

**Do you remember the name of the family?**

No, but I think they were the last family that remained in that house. The only family who lives with it.

**Do you know what the situation is there today?**

No. I’m afraid to know if they even live there.

**Was there an investigation afterwards?**

I am very, very doubtful.

**What did you do in that situation, did you call the police?**

I called Yoni, they also called Yoni [the civilian settlement security coordinator]. We arrive there, and then I come for the house in Bet Hadassah, I meet the Hadassah patrol who is in the area, tell them what happened. In the meantime I see a group of young kids on the side: “Yeah, we blew up the house.” All of them happy and pleased. At that moment I wanted to do I don’t know what to those kids, because they were so happy that they blew up the house, like they did the best thing that ever happened, that was one of the incidents that bothered me the most. A family that is so...

**Why did you call Yoni, is that the procedure?**

That was the procedure, calling the settlement security coordinator. And of course, calling the police, but until the police arrive it’s about a decade, for obvious reasons.

**The settlement security coordinator was the first to arrive?**

He was the first to arrive.

**What did he say when he arrived?**

He looked, he goes: ““OK, I know.” That’s it.

**Did he talk to the kids?**

It could be. I don't know.

**What is the authority of the Ravshatz?**

I have no idea what his authority is there, I have no idea. He's a good man, nice, supports the army and everything, but on the other hand he's from inside that settlement.

**Where does he live? In Bet Hadassah?**

He lives in one of those, yes. And he just, and I have no idea what this joke of calling him is, because he's not going to do anything to people from his settlement.

**But he has the authority, the responsibility?**

He's subject to the Ministry of Defence. That's his authority.

**He's the first person you turn to in an incident?**

No, in an incident, it depends what time.

**Something like this?**

To him and the police. To him because he's from the settlement, he can talk to the kids and whatever. Because at the end of the day, go do something with a kid younger than 14. You have nothing to do. So there were maybe 15-16 year-olds there.

**If someone's older than 14?**

Then, so what?

**You don't do anything to them. And how do you feel about it?**

What can I do to them? I'm not, I'm upset...my company commander, that same day, that day when they told him he was staying to protect the Sharhabati house, he was very annoyed. He would have conversations with the battalion commander, the deputy battalion commander, the deputy brigade commander about how this is not why he is here. He's not here in order to protect the construction. He's here to protect the Jewish settlement, and not to protect the Palestinians from the Jewish settlement. He presented it as very annoyed. And due to the fact that they understood that there is no escape, they just put a special patrol unit there when the workers were there ■

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# 17 Stopping the settlers? The army can't do anything

unit: Lavi Battalion · location: South Hebron Hills · year: 2003

## ► What about the Palestinian farmers?

What does that mean?

### I know about arguments over land in South Hebron Hills.

A., it's not in our sector, so I am less involved, the whole thing with poisoning the sheep. Those are the guys from Maon, the Jewish guys. Just: "This is my land!" and they throw out by force anyone who isn't Jewish, OK? The army doesn't do anything.

### The army doesn't do anything announced?

I guess. I don't have the forces, I just imagine that the whole senior command staff in the sector knows it's a problem. But how can you deal with the problem? If there is a plan to deal with the problem? No, I think. What, it's like, I was in Hebron, it's like the settlers in Hebron. They throw stones and just stop the Casbah, and embitter the lives of the Palestinians living there, right? Does the army do something?

**No.**

Correct. It's the same thing, it [the army] doesn't want too much confrontation. It's the same thing, by the way, that's happening now in Gaza. Forget the hotel, the hotel is somehow legal, they allowed the whole hotel, what is that, absorption from Gaza, like I know. OK, let's say it's legal. But they took control of a house, a private house that was populated, by the Muasi. A Palestinian house, private Israelis just took control of the house. It wasn't an abandoned house, right? They just threw the people out of the house. And what did the army do? Nothing. They were already there for two days. What about the Palestinian family? Why didn't the army just throw them out? What, we don't have units that can go in there? They are holed up in the house, they have weapons. OK, fine. How would they deal with Palestinians who were holed up in a house with weapons? They would take down the house on top of them with a bulldozer. It's the same thing with all of the settlers in the area. A settler does

A settler who does something not OK and you have no means of enforcement...you call the police, if it's someone who is Jewish - they won't come. Even if it's with Israeli Arabs, I got an answer from the police of, "We won't come, release them."

something not right, there are no means of enforcement. And they know it: “what, you are a soldier, you can’t do anything. Go get the police.”

### **They say that to you?**

Yes. They say: “go get the police.” And also, you know the police there, you call the police, if it’s someone who is Jewish – they won’t come. Even if it’s with Israeli Arabs, I got an answer from the police of, “we won’t come, release them.” ■

## 18 The brigade commander didn't want to become embroiled with the settlers

unit: Civil Administration · location: Hebron · year: 2001-2004

You don't want to  
get into a  
confrontation  
with the Jewish  
settlement. They  
are the people  
that are closest to  
you, they are like  
your operations  
branch officer

► I was among those who went in and saw the kids [settlers of Hebron] there, inside the Sharhabati house. A complaint came all of a sudden from many places, it wasn’t something specific, it came from the city of Hebron, from the Palestinian liaison, from the Waqf. It was evening, I think, they sent me there at night. The complaint came and I remember I went to see. I caught the kids there, 11-13 year-olds, playing inside the Sharhabati house upstairs. I really don’t remember what it was, I remember some of them were smoking. It was a hash den. I always thought they were doing drugs there, but that’s not important. It’s also certainly true. And the truth is, I reported it back, but there wasn’t much for me to do.

### **To the army, the police?**

The army, police, everyone.

### **And what happened afterwards?**

The Sharhabati house is a complicated thing, it went to the brigade commander. It was a very long proceeding before the brigade commander. The brigade commander, let’s say, he didn’t freeze it, but he didn’t deal with it for a long time. Because he didn’t want to get into a confrontation with the Jewish settlement, and it was a sensitive year after everything.

### **Who was the brigade commander then?**

The brigade commander was \*\*\*. He delayed it. You don't want to get into a confrontation with the Jewish settlement. They are the people that are closest to you, they are like your operations branch officer, that's how it works. At first he really delayed the issue and didn't really deal with it, after that there was already pressure, the pressure went beyond the legal advisor, the legal advisor went to clarify, and it didn't go to the captain legal advisor, rather to \*\*\* who was a colonel, and \*\*\* wanted results. So really things started to move, they blocked, they put up the fence, today I saw there were concrete blocks there. I don't remember anymore, but they fenced the whatever and there was a period where they guarded it. It was breached each time anew, it was breached once a month.

**Were there other "Sharhabati Houses"?**

No, there was a burning of a Palestinian house by the settlers, I remember, on a Saturday. Right across from the cemetery. I remember 12 year-old kids at the most, burned the house, totally. I don't know what it's like today. I photographed the inside. I went to Harat A-Sheikh to escort the fire truck, a Palestinian fire truck which put it out, because Qiryat Arba would not agree to send their fire truck. It was Shabbat, the fire truck doesn't travel for things which aren't an emergency on Shabbat.

**And the fire was raging at that time?**

Yes. It was a residential home across from the Muslim cemetery.

**An empty house?**

No, it wasn't an empty house. When they burned it, it was empty, and what remained from it, afterwards I coordinated for them to come and take [things], and I escorted them and helped with the moving.

**Who took?**

The Palestinians. It was their house.

**You are saying there was food in the fridge.**

A woman was living there. She wasn't home, and they broke in and burned it. She was with her family in Abu Sneina. Her son, don't take me by my word, someone from her family.

**She was living there on a daily basis?**

No. She lived there, but not on a daily basis. The house was in order, clean even, but

to tell you if she was there all week or every two days? I don't know. Afterwards she wasn't there anymore.

**Did you come into contact with the wholesale market in that period?**

The wholesale market, I did legal work...in general, after that fire, sometime in 2003, I did a lot of work with the Jewish settlement, not with them, rather with the legal advisor, how to advance the issue of the Jewish settlement, and to advance the prevention of violence with the cooperation of the police. I was a member of the committee. The military board, the civil administration, the legal advisor, to see how to curb the violence which increased sometime in 2003, there was suddenly a hysterical jump.

**What events caused the jump?**

What caused the jump, after that house there was a weekend overflowing with violence, I don't know why. It could be there was a terrorist attack, I don't know, there was certainly something. So I became angry and I called \*\*\* and I said to him, and I spoke with the brigade commander that Saturday, and I spoke with the operations coordinator of the government in the territories, and they decided to, somehow they would make a mechanism to deal with it, but it did not succeed because it was a powerless mechanism.

**The power was the police inside Hebron?**

No, the whole decision that you want to regulate violence in the Jewish population is a decision from above, there is nothing to do. You just have to decide. The police commissioner has to say "Stop." And no one will...

**But a representative from the police is sitting on the committee! Did they raise complaints about a lack of manpower? We're incapable? Reinforce us? Did he say things like that at the committee?**

No, he didn't say anything like that at the committee, they always had complaints about manpower, always...but...what were the complaints of the committee? There was a lack of manpower, they spoke about what days to place an added presence, no added presence, how to reinforce the station, how not to reinforce the station, all of these things are administrative. I was in a ghost position, I really didn't have any say ■

# 19 They close off Palestinian locations even without an injunction

unit: Civil Administration · location: Hebron · year: 2001-2004

► The civil administration has a very bad relationship with the settlers.

## Why?

We are treated as a Palestinian authority.

## And the army?

I told you, the settlement security coordinator is like the operations branch officer. He goes into the office whenever he wants, however he wants, into the brigade commander's office. They speak frequently. There is nothing to do. They sit at all of the situation assessments, and they sit in on all the discussions, and they know a lot of things from the start.

## How much power and influence do they have over the decisions that they are sitting in on the situation assessment meetings?

They are a security force, they are treated as a security force. An alert force treated as a security group. They bring up a lot of requests at the situation assessments, a ton of requests.

## Did you get to sit at the situation assessments?

Many times.

## Do you remember specific requests made by people?

I wasn't with \*\*\*, just with \*\*\*. But specific requests? I think, after Worshippers' road [the terrorist attack on the worshippers' road that connects Qiryat Arba and Hebron in November 2002], there was the issue of weapons, no weapons, how many weapons, how to use the weapons, that was a point that was discussed.

## That they would have?

Training of alert forces that were there. Technical military things.

## Did they raise requests concerning the closing of stores, roads?

No, first of all, there are internal letters of the Jewish settlement. In front of the brigade commander, they personally give it to the brigade commander and at the situation

So they took out  
injunctions after  
the fact...at the  
end of the day  
places without  
injunctions  
remained closed...  
the military treat  
the settlers as a  
security force

assessment they get angry. The letter goes to the brigade commander personally, you don't see it, you know it exists, but yes, they got angry more than once about the opening of Palestinian stores in the area of the Shalala roads, and there was a period where we tried to open the Shalala roads and it wasn't a pleasant period, and the settlers weren't nice to me during that period. They requested a mapping of the Casbah [city center] at the situation assessment, the settlement brought up that they needed to map the Casbah and see which families are living there. And they [the army] really did it.

**The requests are granted?**

Yes, yes.

**The mapping [a military mission which includes randomly entering Palestinian homes and gathering information on the residents and the houses]...**

It started from there. Yes.

**When was this?**

In 2003 it started. I don't remember which period it was, and there was a justification. No one said the justification, it was during a time when the committee for improving the old city and the Palestinian Authority decided to gentrify the area there. At the end of 2002, they just received money from the Swedish government, and they decided they would gentrify. If you look, then in the end of 2002, beginning of 2003, you can see all kinds of families from the refugee camps, Al Fuar, like I know, which appear to live there. There was just money there.

**What's the relationship between the settlers and the police?**

The police in the city itself, it's not friendly, but if you go up, you'll see there is a friendly relationship in the end. Go to the station commander in Etzion, there is a relationship. The relationship is not on the lower end. At least from what I saw. They weren't friends of the Druze there. But the upper [ranks], yes.

**How does it manifest itself?**

I don't know, I never sat in Etzion and spoke with him on the telephone, but I knew and saw letters from the settlements that were also written to him, meaning he knew, meaning he was in contact. But I don't know how it manifested itself.

**Restricting movement in Hebron, how was that managed? Who made the**



**decision? How are you involved?**

That was before my time. When I came, Shuhada street was dead, the only thing that changed in the area of Shuhada in my time was that the tiles from Fedesco fell. That was everything. With the exception of that, nothing changed in my time.

**A danger to the community's security...**

Yes, it's not clear who threw them out, but we collected them.

**Meaning, when you got there Shuhada was closed to pedestrian movement of Palestinians. It's...**

That's the current situation.

**When you got there, who explained it to you?**

It's not something that was explained to me, you see it with your eyes. No one said and showed it to you. I think just when they went and did a reorganization of some stores they closed with or without an injunction, after Moshe "Boogie" Yaalon [the chief of staff in that period] came to the brigade, when he came in 2003 and put in on \*\*\*, only then you saw where there was an injunction, and where there wasn't an injunction. Before that it was pretty naïve to think there was an injunction.

**What do you mean?**

Boogie came in 2003, I don't remember, there was some political change. There was something that happened, I don't remember, what happened in 2003? It could be that it was the Hudna [ceasefire], there was a political change that took place, and he went around between the brigades, I did the presentation of the civil administration and I was there.

**A presentation on what?**

I don't remember, a lot of things, the functions of the civil administration. It was everything, basically. Some of the things that he asked for were how is it possible to ease things in Hebron, and I took it in the direction of closings. And after he came...

**What's closing?**

Closing stores, streets with injunctions, to make things official. Only then was there an awareness of this issue.

**Of the issue that stores and streets were closed without injunctions?**

Yes.

**And what did you discover in the investigation? What had injunctions?**

Nothing.

**Nothing, including stores, including roads?**

Yes.

**So they took out injunctions?**

It depends, some yes, some no. So you pass it to the opinion of the legal advisor, and he says where it is possible to close stores and where it isn't possible to close stores, where there is an immediate security need and where there is a security need...he really ranked the security needs, like rings around the Jewish settlement. And that's how they issued injunctions in the end.

**What did they take out injunctions for?**

I don't remember, it was selective. All of the areas that were close to the settlements, I really don't remember anymore.

**Do you remember if they took out an injunction on Shuhada street?**

I don't remember an injunction for Shuhada street.

**It continues to be closed without an injunction.**

Is there an injunction today? I don't know if there is one today. During my time I was unaware of an injunction.

**The question is like this, you do an investigation whose purpose is to say...**

The primary objective of the investigation was to ease things for the Palestinian population in Hebron in light of the Hudna or the other political event that took place, don't take my word for what it was. I was responsible for it, I did a mapping of H2 [the area in Hebron that is under complete Israeli control], where there is, where there isn't. I brought it, the chief of staff at that meeting said that it cannot be, Boogie Yaalon said to the brigade commander to check it, and he also saw there were no injunctions. He has two weeks to check that there are no injunctions, and then it got to the situation assessment in front of the General of the Central Command, I don't know what happened there, I'm not close to the plate. And then slowly they start issuing injunctions. Whatever the brigade commander could issue automatically, he issued for 90 days. Which was in very limited areas, and afterwards they do administrative work which lasts a very long time and I don't know if it is finished until today. In the end,

even places that don't have injunctions, it stays the same. No, with the exception of the Shalala streets.

**The Shalala streets were the one thing that changed.**

The Shalalas – I personally thought it was a great achievement that they were opened, I'll never forget the day, a Friday, we got permission to open the Shalalas starting on Sunday.

**Permission from whom?**

The General of the Central Command. He informed everyone on the radio that they should inform the merchants to go to the left of the square, next to the police square, some six thousand, eight thousand people, and I'm yelling at them from the jeep megaphone, by myself, without a military escort, without nothing, like a crazy man by myself, telling them to open, I think it was on a Sunday, or something like that, or a Monday. It was actually a nice picture.

**Aside from the Shalala streets, did the other places that didn't have injunctions, and they weren't given new injunctions during this reorganization, remain closed?**

At least in my time, we didn't finish the reorganization during my time, I don't know what the situation is today, yes, they remained closed, without injunctions. That is known.

**Closing houses, or preventing residents from returning to their houses adjacent to Avraham Avinu, for example...**

What, welding? Oh...there was welding without an injunction, afterwards there was welding with an injunction. After we saw that there was welding without an injunction, they issued injunctions, if I'm not mistaken, which were brigade commander injunctions. But when they welded them, they were already welded, they just went over it, it was homes that they weren't living in ■

## 20 Each time they went to evacuate, an order came from the Minister of Defence

unit: Civil Administration · location: Hebron · year: 2002-2003

I don't remember  
how many times  
they told me to  
evacuate the  
outpost, there is a  
ruling of the  
court...but when  
you get  
legitimization  
from a Knesset  
member

► **Hazon David [an illegal outpost in Hebron which has destruction and evacuation injunctions against it], what do you remember from there?**

Aside from my nights in Hazon David, I'm already broken...

**Bottom line, it started in your time...**

I remember I evacuated them a few times. Each time, we tried to trick them a different way, do you remember that nonsense? To show them they were being evacuated? All kinds of deceptions, it never worked.

**Tell a story.**

There isn't much of a story, it's still there.

**How did it start? When? Why wasn't it evacuated in the end, how did it play out?**

First of all, Hazon David, I don't remember how many times they told me to evacuate the outpost, there is a ruling of the court, I think a few times.

**When was the first time it was erected?**

I don't remember. During my time, end of 2002, beginning of 2003, I don't know. It was clear why they put it up. They always had a dream to connect between the Western gate [of Qiryat Arba] and the Jewish settlement [inside Hebron]. They also said it to your face. It was clear why they were doing it. Hazon David is a bullshit story, every time they went to evacuate it, an order was given by the Minister of Defence not to evacuate. When they evacuated it, it came back, and there was a story. I don't know what the dirt there was. I don't know what happened there.

**Were there times when you came and the Minister of Defence sent down an order not to evacuate them?**

The night we were supposed to evacuate – once they canceled, the second time they canceled it, and the third time we evacuated it, and the outpost was put back up the next day. I don't remember what happened there anymore. I wasted so many nights

on that Hazon David.

**Did you know from the beginning that it was private Palestinian land? Private property?**

It doesn't matter. I don't remember, I can't tell you. I don't know whose land it was, I don't remember. But it doesn't matter.

**Why is it not evacuated even today, do you have any idea?**

Because...listen, what happened, during the visit of the Knesset members to the Jewish settlement in Hebron, after Hazon David was erected, in the middle of 2003 there was a visit of the Knesset members, check the newspaper. I escorted the tour. Tzachi Hanegbi was there, Ruby Rivlin and all kinds like that. Hazon David was standing. Listen, when you get oral legitimization from a Knesset member...

**They visited the settlers?**

They visited the whole Jewish settlement, they went on the tour, the Western gate, they really did the tour.

**They came to Hazon David and said...**

I remember Tzachi Hanegbi said that one of the goals is to connect the Western gate and the Jewish settlement. He said it to the leaders of the settlements. Open a newspaper, *Ha'aretz*, from that period, you'll see. Sometime in 2003 ■

## 21 I was hit with spit and curses of "A Jew doesn't expel another Jew"

unit: Field Intelligence · location: Elon Moreh · year: 2006

**► After the period of those few months where you did those missions, you continued with the squad commander course and on to Nablus. What was the nature of the operations?**

That was also given to the post in Elon Moreh – there the nature of the operations was to protect the settlement itself, defense against terrorist activity.

**How do you do it?**

Just a military  
force guarding  
the settlements...  
on Saturday  
morning they  
decided to go out  
on a hike in the  
valley between  
two villages and  
we had to provide  
security... a  
company was  
appended to  
them to provide  
security for their  
hike

You look out on the slopes that lead up to Elon Moreh, and everyone who comes close to the settlements from below, he is suspect.

**And what do you do?**

I can tell you stories from the sector, but in the time I was there, no one came up to Elon Moreh.

**But what were the orders?**

If you identify a suspect, it's shoot to kill. If he's armed – it's shoot to kill. If it's just someone – you deploy the forces, the settlement security coordinator [a civilian], whomever you need.

**You deploy a civilian force?**

He's like an employee of the IDF. In any case, the security coordinator is connected to the military, and any report that goes over the radio gets to him.

**If in theory you see a person going up the slope without anything, you inform the security coordinator?**

No, you inform the brigade operations room. But the coordinator is the first responder, that's his assignment in the settlement. I can tell you that we once identified armed men going up the slope, and they were guys from the settlement who decided to train their kids there, a kind of camp where they taught them to sneak into places. Without of course coordinating with the army, and it created a mess.

**Who was armed there?**

The teens and the camp counselor.

**How old were the teens?**

15-17 something like that.

**And what happened?**

We reported it to the operations room, and then you send out a team there and in the end it ended well, I don't remember exactly what happened, but they were identified as Israelis and it ended with nothing. It was pretty stupid on their end to do something like that, because another force would have shot them.

**What other missions did you have aside from that?**

From the post itself you also look out over the eastern neighborhoods of Nablus, it's mostly accompanying arrests. The distance is relatively large so you basically, from

the location that you identify, you provide security on the roofs, the windows, and accompany arrests. And of course, roving security.

**What does that mean?**

A fixed mission, it doesn't come from anything special, rather it's just a military force protecting the settlements, mostly security of the surrounding settlement, if it's Gidonim, Yitzhar, Bracha, Elon Moreh itself. Mostly roving security. That's mostly the nature of the operations we had there.

**And did you encounter activities of settlers around the settlement there?**

One time, for example, we were supposed to provide security for them. On Saturday morning they decided to go out on a hike in the valley between two villages and we had to provide security. A company was appended to them which provided security for their hike. Really, families on a picnic. Because it went through a Palestinian area, it was escorted by a military force and we were part of their security.

**They really set up a lookout force and an escort company?**

Yes.

**You sat specifically in Elon Moreh?**

Part of the force sat in Elon Moreh, and part in the central brigade itself.

**Were there missions where you sat in Yitzhar for example?**

Yes. The force that sits in Elon Moreh sits in Elon Moreh. It doesn't move from there. The force that sat in the central brigade goes to Yitzhar, Har Bracha, Gidonim, all kinds of points in the sector itself.

**And inside these settlements did you encounter real terrorist activity? From incursion attempts to burning their land?**

No, I was there for a short time. There were stories like that, I imagine, but not in my time.

**And the opposite? The settlers against the Palestinians.**

No. Not in that time. But there were stories there, it was a relatively sensitive period with respect to the relationship between the IDF and the settlers, because it was after the disengagement and I remember that I heard, I wasn't there when this happened, that the deputy regional brigade commander of Shomron came to the Passover Seder with a black eye, which he got from a settler. There were all kinds of confrontations, which

is something that exists, I personally didn't see it, even damaging military property, cutting tires, and there was even a terrible story in Yitzhar itself, where someone caused the army to remove its security arrangement from the settlement itself because masked men from the settlement came to the gate, there was a private who they put on settlement security detail, they came to him in masks and beat him up and took his radio. If I remember correctly it was a few months before I came. Personally, in Elon Moreh I was on my way to run in the settlement itself, I was hit with spit and calls of "a Jew doesn't expel a Jew" and the like. It's really two-faced, because on the one hand they bring you cake, and on the other hand you feel the tension and you absorb what you absorb. If I wanted to hitch a ride, which is forbidden but everyone does it, from Tapuach intersection, so a resident of one of the settlements stops for you, and the first question he asks is where were you during the disengagement as a ticket to get into the car. Either you justify yourself, or you hide the information, or you do what I did – I closed the door and told him to keep driving.

**Did you talk about it with your commanders? That they were spitting on you.**

You tell them, but the deputy brigade commander got punched by the settlers in Yitzhar, it's known that the situation is charged. Specifically there it's one of the hardest centers there are, around Nablus, Elon Moreh, Gidonim and Itamar and Yitzhar, really a difficult center. Ariel isn't one of these places. You know the character of the population. So you try to cause as little friction as possible. They used to visit the posts, and they put out an order that it is forbidden for them to be near the posts anymore, any civilian, there in Elon Moreh. There are a few posts around there, and I believe the orders were for all of the posts there ■

## 22 They trample mitzvot and morals

unit: IDF Spokesperson's unit · location: Yitzhar · year: 2005

► **Were there out of the ordinary incidents which occurred during your service which really left an impression on you?**



Yes. The first incident was the evacuation of the Shalhevet Yitzhar outpost on the 3rd of January, 2005. And it was the first time it was really intense photographing. I've never photographed anything really journalistic, where the events were so intense and so detailed. Do you want me to describe what happened?

**Yes, why did you choose that specifically?**

Both because it's, the incident affected me personally, because I was personally involved in it, I wasn't just a spectator. And also because it was really the first time I was in such an intense event, and it was the incident which caused me to be interested in the whole political situation in the country. Why are we like this, how did we come to this, who are these settlers, how did they grow, who are these people, what's going on here.

**And you didn't know about it before that?**

It interested me, but it wasn't in my consciousness, I didn't go and read a book about it. Now let's say I'm at the point where every – it's just, it doesn't really convey the point, but now every settler I see in the street I turn around, I turn my head around to see if he has an orange ribbon, just because. So what happened there? I got there in the morning with the photography crew, which is a videographer, a soundman, and a stills photographer. I was the stills photographer, and we went up with a caravan of soldiers from the settlement, from the front gate of the settlement, up to the outpost, which was a bit further down. Now, at a certain point we were distanced from the caravan. In short, there is a descent that leads to the outpost, where they evacuated it and where there was all the mess. And we got there, there was really a mess, hitting, really a rampage.

**Between the IDF and the settlers?**

Between the IDF and the settlers.

**Was the police there?**

The police was there, and they brought all kinds of heavy machinery to evacuate the...it was just a caravan. And then, at a certain point on the descent we were separated. Like somehow it happened that the soldiers got away from us, and we were going down, the photography crew stood, the videographer and the soundman were standing right at the start of the incline, they were filming something that didn't

I was alone and I had a camera and a uniform and they saw I was a female soldier... 5-6 of them surrounding me and started yelling at me...one of the settlers grabbed my camera which was on my shoulder and pulled

interest me, and I started going down, I was alone and I had a camera and a uniform and they saw I was a female soldier. And then at a certain point when I was going down, five or six settlers came and surrounded me and started yelling at me and all kinds of stuff. In short, the photography crew didn't see me, and they surrounded me and yelled at me, and I couldn't say anything, I just stood there in my place and I didn't move and I didn't say anything. Until at a certain point, one of the settlers, I had two cameras, one on my shoulder and one on my neck. So one of the settlers grabbed my camera which was on my shoulder and pulled, I pulled, he pulled. It went on like that for like ten seconds, only he was stronger. He went, ran, and that was it. And then I started screaming, I think. I was more in shock.

**Did they touch you?**

No, but it was a very scary situation. They surrounded me and I just wasn't able to talk, I couldn't move. But I remember I was more in shock from, I remember I said, there was a soldier close to me and I started saying to him, "help me, they stole my camera," and he kind of, I imagine he was afraid, he like wasn't interested, he kind of turned around.

**Turned around?**

Turned around, yes. And then I started yelling to my friends from the unit, "come and see," and they started to run.

**How did you continue to work after that?**

I had another camera.

**I imagine you didn't attack the masses.**

Actually that caused me to, I wanted to photograph much more afterwards because it angered me. After I...I didn't get out of the shock, but it angered me, they annoyed me, what is this? All of these morals, just like that they annul them. All the mitzvot and morals that they do all this in the name of, here, they trample them. You get it? ■

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## 23 The domain of "infrastructure" in the administration? They are all settlers who do what they want

unit: Civil Administration · location: General · year: 2000-2002

### ► Regarding outposts and land, did you have interaction with those things?

No. I personally didn't, but that was all the administration. Let's say, 90 percent of the work is done on the level of headquarters, a branch called infrastructure, now the head of the infrastructure, a lieutenant colonel, was arrested. A settler himself. He was arrested because he did some practice of land sale to Jews, of absentee property. Everything there is corrupt to its core, because they are settlers who do what they want.

### The people who sit there?

Yes. It's shocking. Really. And I think it's known to everyone. I don't know how he was only arrested now ■

## 24 Evacuating an outpost? It's a process that takes years

unit: Civil Administration · location: General · year: 2007

► [...] You get phone calls from the settlement council heads – "why this, why that..."

### What does that mean?

Why don't they approve this construction plan, and why don't they approve that construction plan, and why is it delayed.

### The DCL [District Coordination Liaison] approves construction plans?

The administration is the planning authority, it is responsible for planning and construction in the territories, as its name describes: civil administration. And also from the other side – why don't you evacuate this, and why don't you evacuate that.

There are  
outposts that  
have a  
correspondence  
of seven, eight,  
nine, ten binders.  
The Beruchim  
outpost has a  
correspondence  
of...in my office  
there were ten  
binders and the  
legal advisor had  
even more

### **From which...**

From left-wing organizations, yes. Why doesn't the administration evacuate this house, and why doesn't the administration evacuate that house. There you really see all of the complexity of the issue, because you deal with all of the things that happen there, and you get reports on all of the things that happen. And seeing the bureaucracy there, and the way of management is so firmly established. We've been there for forty years, for heaven's sake, either annex or leave. You can't continue like this, and there is so much...you know that the law in the territories isn't the Israeli law. It's the Jordanian law.

### **The Jordanian law? I thought that it's the hybridization of the Israeli law...**

No, it's like this: the rule of law is the Jordanian law.

### **For which cases?**

All of the cases. It doesn't matter what.

### **Criminal, too?**

Criminal, too. But there is...what overrides the Jordanian law are security ordinances signed by the major-general, injunctions of the major-general. The major-general is basically the ruler in the area. Now, with issues of planning and construction for example – the law is the Jordanian law for every case and issue. Meaning, the whole process of building permits – not all of them, there are also ordinances which came afterwards – but the basis is the Jordanian law.

### **You really study the Jordanian law?**

I don't. But there are authorities in the administration who do. The planning department knows it to the fullest extent. And you understand that basically...it's like a purgatory that's been going on for forty years. Every time you need never ending legal opinions for every subject, and nothing gets done. It's such a cauldron that in the end you get annoyed, even though you are in the system. "Come on, for heaven's sake, decide already." They don't decide anything.

### **What does that mean?**

They don't decide anything, and they have discussion upon discussion upon discussion and you can't reach a decision.

### **With what issue?**

Every issue: construction and planning, electricity, water.

**But in regard to illegal outposts, from what I see in the field, it's pretty fast.**

It's complicated. It's very complicated.

**What? For roads, electricity...**

Just evacuating an outpost is so complicated...it's very complicated. You have to submit injunctions, and then they can submit an appeal against the injunction, and then go to the military appeal committee, and it gets stuck there for months sometimes. And until you get approval to evacuate, then they go to the Supreme Court. And then you have to wait for the Supreme Court to finish. It's so complicated that you say to yourself, "I'll take the bulldozer and destroy it, just to end the story." There are outposts that have a correspondence of seven, eight, nine, ten binders. The Beruchim outpost has a correspondence of...in my office there were ten binders and the legal advisor had even more.

**The process is so complicated?**

Yes. They are complicated legal proceedings, and you have to prove many things until they let you evacuate at all.

**But you have maps that show it's not your land...isn't it simple?**

Really not. There is a lot that I can't even explain to you.

**Did you deal with the South Hebron Hills, for example?**

Less so. I dealt more with Beruchim...in principle there are a few types of lands. There is State land, which for the most part is abandoned and managed by the Israel Lands Authority. And there are private lands – Palestinian and Jewish.

**The first type is equal in all legal ways to land, say, in the area of Hadera and Modi'in, Netanyah and Rishon Letzion?**

State land? From the standpoint of planning and construction?

**Yes.**

No. There are a few other things. You can't build a house in the territories like you can in Hadera.

**What's the difference?**

You need approval of the Minister of Defence and all kinds of things like that. But the more problematic outposts are those on private Palestinian land. There it should be

simpler, as it were, but it's much more complicated. Let's say I build a house on State land, so the State comes and sues me because I built illegally, but it doesn't really care. It's less problematic. The urgent issue is evacuating outposts that are on private Palestinian land. And going through all of these proceedings quickly is impossible.

**Why?**

It's impossible. Because it's protected by the law. I present you with an injunction to evacuate the house, and you come and say: "I have proof that the house and the land are mine." Come and prove it. You submit the proof and I postpone.

**But the proof...what proof?**

The proofs are not decisive, because don't forget that the maps from 1948 are not exact. Meaning, the maps of the land demarcation are not exact.

**But you have maps...**

They aren't exact.

**The DCL doesn't have...**

There is no precise mapping.

**So how can you work there?**

There are old maps, there is what's called "the blue line team." The blue line team is a unit of ours which redefines the borders, with corrections, of all of the land in the territories. It is supposed to in the end...not for those which have no argument, but in the majority of the problem areas – to redefine the borders. There are, for example, settlements which were built on the basis of a military injunction. That's something different entirely.

**Settlements on the basis of a military injunction?**

Maale Efraim – a military seizure injunction.

**What does that mean?**

A seizure injunction. The military seizes the possession of the land.

**But there is a base there.**

No, they built a settlement there.

**With the support of the army?**

On the basis of an injunction signed by the major-general. The major-general signed the seizure injunction on certain land, and they built a settlement on it.

**Is that a process that happens more quickly?**

Yes. Much quicker. The moment the injunction is signed, you just have to submit building plans, and on the basis of the injunction it's approved. Because it's a seizure injunction. If you are in civilian proceedings, it's much more complicated.

**But the injunction has authority over what land?**

Only State land.

**Is there more State land than private land?**

Yes, much more.

**I come to you with a group of people and we want to put up a settlement. If I go without an injunction?**

Without an injunction?

**No. Isn't it a long process? Would you suggest I do it with an injunction?**

But they don't give injunctions. It doesn't exist anymore, it's only for bases. It's a legal problem to approve an injunction to build a settlement. Now it's only a legal proceeding.

**It's equal for everyone?**

Yes. But the chance that you'll be approved for a construction plan in the territories is so low, because there are always private lands in the middle. You, let's say this is the land of my settlement. I built a plan on all the land, and here there is private land – they won't approve the plan. And finding land that doesn't have private land in it, good luck with that.

**But they put up settlements.**

They don't put up legal settlements anymore.

**The neighborhoods of Efrat, for example.**

I don't remember exactly what Efrat's status is.

**It's settlement by settlement.**

Yes, but the construction plan exists, so there is no problem to add to it. If you have an approved construction plan, then there is no problem building another neighborhood, if the neighborhood is approved. You also need a building permit, but they'll give it to you – because I approved the plan before. New settlements aren't put up. There is the expansion of old settlements. There aren't really new settlements.

**Giva'at Sal'it in the North.**

Giva'at Sal'it I think is an outpost.

**It's thought of as a distant neighborhood.**

But it's an outpost. Giva'at Sal'it is an outpost.

**It's been there for years, it really takes years to evacuate? Is there an evacuation order on Giva'at Sal'it?**

I'm not sure about Giva'at Sal'it. But Migron, near Ramallah, is an outpost which has an evacuation order on it for three-four years, and it's still in the Supreme Court.

**Were there Supreme Court rulings in your time? Did they evacuate settlements?**

A few caravans and things like that. I closed a few.

**Which did you close, do you remember? I, for example, was at the evacuation of Gilad Farm.**

No. But what was Gilad Farm? It was a caravan, it's not a permanent structure.

**But every outpost is pretty much caravans.**

What are you talking about?

**How do they get up on the hilltop?**

Ofra is one big outpost.

**Ofra is an outpost?**

The majority of Ofra is an outpost. You think you can evacuate Ofra?

**No.**

Not on your life.

**But from an administrative perspective, I don't know what an outpost is. If you were to tell me that Ariel is an outpost I would believe you.**

Ariel is 99 percent legal, there are a few isolated houses...in the industrial area there, it's not that it's illegal, but there is some kind of problem there, but Ariel is legal.

**But now that you told me that Ofra is an outpost – it's huge.**

The whole settlement was built on an outpost.

**When?**

20 years ago.

**20 years ago? There are Supreme Court cases for 20 years?**



There is no file there. No one is going to evacuate it. Where do you live? Everyone knows it's illegal, but no one is going to evacuate it. You can't. You can't evacuate things like that ■

## 25 It wasn't clear where the settlement started

unit: Caracal Battalion · location: South Hebron Hills · year: 2008

### ► What's your personal experience of the Territories?

I was there while doing post-officers'-course training.

#### When was that?

Last Shavuot. I remember because it was holiday time.

#### Shavuot 2008 [May-June]. As a cadet in officers' course?

Yes.

#### Officers' course, specialization training.

Yes.

#### And you were deployed there for what purpose?

We were brought there to guard the settlement of Susiya. In our group were also non-combat women cadets, who had been squad commanders of basic training, who had gone through officers' course. It was a bit weird to do guard duty with them.

#### Why is that?

Because they don't usually do guard duty. They don't really know the job, getting briefed and receiving instructions on the ground and stuff like that. It's not part of their life.

#### But guard duty at Susiya was a kind of routine security procedure, wasn't it?

Yes. Inside the settlement. We didn't come out of the settlement. And that's the point, it's a strange kind of settlement even considering where it's located. It raises many questions, like if there weren't all these things around there, it could even be a really pastoral kind of place. It gets you thinking. Every few hours you go on guard duty and you think, and then, say in the first round of getting acquainted with the guard

The local security official tried to define for us a red line...where it is okay for the shepherds to graze their flock in the village on the opposite hill. You didn't know when he was telling you the truth, and when he was drawing his own conclusions of things

posts, the local security coordinator tried to define for us a red line, a green line and so forth.

**What do you mean?**

Where it is okay for the shepherds to graze their flock in the village on the opposite hill, where to stop them. Where the settlement begins, and where it ends.

**The boundaries of the settlement?**

Yes. It has no fence, it's a settlement without a fence. Both because it costs money, and also it's a statement of sorts.

**Did the settlement security coordinator explain to you why they don't have a fence?**

Yes. First of all, because a fence does not keep anyone out, it only delays entry, whoever really wants to get in can always find his way in. Second, because they want to feel that they do not need a fence. It is a kind of denial of the danger that is present. And the way he defined it, the lines that may be crossed, it was really not clear what was a part of the settlement and what was not. Even if he had said: "here in the wadi, this settlement ends, but even if you see a person on the hill across the wadi, you have to keep him away." Like, on the one hand it's obvious why they're doing this, why it's like that. It's being extra cautious so no one will dare come into their settlement, and they don't want to have to wait until the person is actually at the perimeter. On the other hand, what gives me or him the right to tell a person: "get off that hill"?

**The hill is where the rock cairn shows?**

Yes, where that water hole is.

**So you sit there, or was the rock cairn the boundary?**

The other way around...there was one post where the boundary was really unclear. The terrain there is lower, and actually the post only guards one family, one of whose members had been murdered.

**Jews?**

Yes. They're from the settlement. It's right next to their home. Because it had happened to them, the guard post was placed right there, to give them a sense of security. It's on the lower end of the ridge. So the definition of where not to let [Palestinian] people be is: everywhere you see.

**That's what the settlement security coordinator said?**

Yes. All the way there.

**Within the boundaries of the village, is there anything that belongs to someone else? A water hole, a tree, a grove?**

I don't think so.

**Houses?**

I don't think so. There was nothing there.

**Not a water hole in the area you observed which was out of bounds?**

I don't think so.

**Are you familiar with the term "Special Security Zone"?**

What does it mean?

**The settlement security coordinator did not discuss this with you? How long were you doing guard duty there?**

A week. It was very vague. It was terribly vague whose it is, if it was part of the settlement or not, because without a fence...I personally did not really trust him. He was kind of slick, you didn't know when he was telling you the truth, and when he was drawing his own conclusions of things. I don't know.

**Was there a map you could look at?**

No.

**A briefing room?**

No.

**Who was the commander at that settlement?**

Our commander from the officers' course.

**And she showed you a map? What did she tell you at the briefing?**

We didn't have briefings. She was from the Border Patrol, they don't do post briefings. They don't have those at all ■

## 26 It was his settlement, and bottom line, we were under him

unit: Givati Brigade · location: Gush Etzion · year: 2007

The settlement  
security  
coordinator  
explained: "I see  
people from afar,  
if they want to  
enter, I shoot  
them"

► They built large houses for themselves, but no one moved so they wouldn't have to pay income tax, so they continued living next to the buildings they built for them for free. A gray place, no color, religious people walking with their heads down. A strange and depressing place, with a settlement security coordinator who was scarred from the Vietnam War. We were four people, and there was a platoon commander who left after a day and came back on the weekend. Myself and another person commanded the force. The settlement security coordinator – it was his settlement, and bottom line, we were under him.

### He briefed you in the beginning?

Yes.

### What did he say?

It's a story from the movies. I don't remember his name, he said [in an American accent] "I was a soldier in Vietnam, I was in the marines and I see that you are infantrymen, that's good, because I have two boys who are in Golani." He told us that if we see someone who wants to enter the settlement, you have to check his ID, and if it says there he is Arab – he can't enter. He starts saying, "I see people from afar, if they want to enter, I shoot them." He said, "Even if people come in a taxi, you have to check if the driver is a Jewish-Israeli, because one time someone from the settlement came, caught a taxi in Jerusalem, didn't know who the driver was, the driver entered, and I catch him in the kindergarten looking for a bathroom. I went up to him, he's looking for knives, I sent him to hell, I don't let anyone with an Arab name into the..." The guy is crazy.

### What did you do there?

Guard duty. We waited for people to enter, and no one entered.

### It was quiet there.

Yes. There was one time we saw with binoculars three kilometers from there, a boy

bringing his flock from the area of Hebron to Bakaa, the settlement security coordinator came, put in a magazine and emptied it in the direction, as if it would even get there.

**He shot in the direction of the shepherd?**

Yes. "He's gathering information, the Arab, he wants to enter the settlement." You can barely see him. A fog had just gone up, so we saw him with binoculars.

**He just fired an entire magazine in the direction, a distance of three kilometers?**

Yes, a crazy man.

**Did you see the boy afterwards?**

He wasn't even aware they were shooting at him. It's in the area of Hebron, they empty magazines there all day. He stayed there with his sheep. The funniest part is that the Haruv battalion relieved us, and they have Arab names, and whoever speaks Arabic ■

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## 27 The settlement security coordinator got angry, kicked him and stepped on his face

**unit:** Nahal Brigade · **location:** Aley Zahav · **year:** 2008-2009

► At around 12:00 we received a call on the radio to come to Aley Zahav. We went up on the Hummer and we got there, I see a soldier doing settlement security and the settlement security coordinator both of them with weapons. He tells me that a woman heard voices, that he went in with a bullet in the chamber, both of them were tied, hands on the ground, with restraints.

**Who is there?**

Two Arabs, young, around our age. The coordinator, asked them questions, the woman said they stole eight hundred dollars from her, some astronomical number. He asked where the money was. One said "Here, there..." The other said: "Drink water, drink water, drink water." It seemed like he wanted to annoy us, like to tell us "relax." And then the coordinator got angry, he kicked him and stepped on his face. I don't know if the platoon commander saw it, but he turned around, because he didn't

While the security coordinator beat him up, he put the barrel of his gun in his mouth or over his head, and he said to me, "Take him out and shoot him." He only meant it to scare him... the platoon commander turned around because he didn't want to see it

want to see it. I said to myself, "either I stop the coordinator, or I'm going to do the work, looking for more Arabs." While the coordinator beat him up, he put the barrel of his gun in his mouth or over his head, and he said to me, "Take him out and shoot him." He only meant it to scare him. In the end the Arab really did have a gold chain in his pocket. We checked their documents in the wallet and saw an ID. The Arab said, "My friend needs water," after he was beaten, he stopped talking and we were afraid that maybe something happened, but he asked him again, and he beat him again. He beat him up two or three times. One of the times, my platoon commander saw the beating, at least once.

#### **It was in the woman's living room?**

Yes.

#### **Who was in the room at that time?**

Two Arabs intruders, the woman was walking around the house, the coordinator, myself, another soldier, and the platoon commander. Afterwards, other police came, and the neighbors also came. We brought the Arab water and he was dazed, the coordinator said he was pretending. The Arab's friend said that he was bitten by a dog and needed to go to the hospital. We checked the documents, and then we saw they were soldiers of Abu Mazen, they were soldiers in uniform. When they asked them why they did it, they said they don't have money for anything.

#### **Did they speak Hebrew?**

Just one of them. I think that was the interrogation tactic of the coordinator's. Other forces came, they gave some slaps, at that point one of the Arab's phones rang, so they put a gun to his stomach, one of the scouts, so that he would talk and they could gather information. I gave him water, and there was a really terrible smell coming from him. It was constant, and I cleaned the foam from his mouth. I think that he didn't have control of his gas, his eyes were open and foam came out of his mouth. It could be he had something, and it could be he didn't. I called the ambulance and two of them came, they gave him a few slaps, I think it was the medic, and he answered some questions. It could be that he was pulling a fast one on us, and it could be that he wasn't. He was in shock. They hit him, not death blows, but he kicked him, stepped on his head – mostly degrading things. The settlement security coordinator also said he didn't beat him badly.

**Only the security coordinator beat him up?**

Yes. What happened, until the company medic came, the medic came, a young guy, in a bit of shock. We didn't have medics in our company, they always brought us new medics, and I said to him before he started treating, I told him about the Arab's status. The platoon commander said, "He wasn't hit." I said to him: "He was hit." We argued. The platoon commander got annoyed with me and told me to go to the Hummer. I refused. I wanted to be there because the son of the woman showed up annoyed, and I was afraid he would try and beat up the Arab. The police didn't care, the policeman just wanted them to give back his handcuffs.

**Why did you put handcuffs on him?**

I put on a nylon restraint, not handcuffs. When the policeman arrived, we changed to the policeman's handcuffs. I didn't want to leave the Arab after I saw he was beat up and maybe sick. I stayed in the house, but I didn't want to say a word in front of everyone. I said to him, "Let's talk." We went out toward the Hummer. I said to him: "I'm not going to sit in the Hummer." He threatened me that I would get three days confined to base taken from my leave. I went back home and we never spoke again ■

## 28 They would think of themselves as our commanders, not the company commander

unit: Kfir Battalion · location: Susiya · year: 2004-2005

► **Do you remember other stories from the reality of Susiya? How was the relationship with the settlers there? The residents of Susiya, the residents of the settlements and other outposts in the area?**

Ups and downs. For the most part, during that time they did respect us, sometimes they also spoiled us, meaning they hosted us in all kinds of places. There were also people that for them the work we were doing wasn't tough enough, all kinds of catchphrases like, "We want security, not protection." One thing, sometimes the one responsible for the security of the settlement, how do you say this, they think of

themselves as our commanders, not the company commander. They would try and give us orders about what to do, where and when.

**And they didn't have a say?**

They had influence, they didn't have a say. Meaning, if they would say: "Your guys didn't send away the shepherds when they were too close," or perhaps they would say to us: "next time you are in the same situation, be sure to do it right and be more aggressive." It wasn't a situation where they would tell the company commander what to do, but they definitely had influence. I didn't participate in those meetings, but both in the battalion commander meetings and certainly in the meetings with the company commander. The security coordinators would meet with the company commander at least once a week, both for a situation assessment and routine, but also to say what they thought about what we were doing, and what they thought that we needed to do. I don't know how much they cared in the higher ranks. In the lower ranks, there were instances where the company commander didn't listen to them at all. There were cases where he did exactly what they said. I don't know what was a consideration of appeasing the security officer, and what was a security consideration, there were certainly things that were influenced by the settlement security coordinator ■

## 29 A checkpoint not for the security of the State of Israel

**unit:** Nahal Brigade · **location:** Gitit Checkpoint, Jordan Valley · **year:** 2006

► We had a very tough time with this, morally speaking. This whole checkpoint was about Palestinians coming to work for Israelis in the Jordan Valley. It's just loaded with Israeli exploitation of Palestinians. Loaded.

**How do you see this at the checkpoint?**

There's the date harvest? The Palestinians are paid something like 50 shekels.

**Do you see this at the checkpoint?**

Of course. I know how much they're paid. They come every day at four in the morning or



five o'clock, and go back at seven in the evening, exhausted. You see a guy exhausted from having worked hard all day, physically, and they receive 50 shekels a day. Great, I mean for date picking that's what they get. That's what the workers get. Now, I see this. Not only do they get 50 shekels for a day's work, but on top of that I stand on them, they have to wait at my checkpoint and undergo that humiliating procedure of inspection. I mean, this whole checkpoint is in fact an economic checkpoint. You feel you're on checkpoint duty not for the sake of Israeli security, but for Israel's bank account.

**How is that related to the checkpoint?**

Who goes through that checkpoint? Only Palestinians working in the Jordan Valley. They have nothing to look for there, just their livelihood. Nothing else. I mean, because of this livelihood there are families in between the areas, but originally the people from Akraba and the hill villages have nothing to look for in the Jordan Valley. These are two separate populations. Nowadays it's already very connected, because when you work somewhere you get connected, and families come into being and stuff. But I am standing at that checkpoint so that Palestinians without work permits will not come through. Why should I mind their not having work permits? Officially, from a security point of view, because they were not cleared. But what does that mean, not cleared? Do you know what prevents a person from getting a work permit? Listen carefully – if a relative of the fourth degree, meaning your uncle's grandfather, had once thrown a stone back in 1948, I'm not kidding you now, then you don't get a work permit.

**How do you know that?**

I know that because we once asked a Shin Bet agent about the criteria. We were told there is a very clear definition. If any family relation – fourth degree down – has ever been charged with an act of violence against Israel, no work permit will be issued. That's one of the criteria. Now show me a person, I mean what's the percentage of the population? Nothing. We're at war with them for over fifty years now, clearly someone somewhere back on the family tree had thrown something sometime, you see? Now everything's documented. So you get a 16 year-old boy, all smiles, and the grandfather of the father of his brother is the guy who threw a Molotov cocktail in 1962. Now, why would this guy bypass the checkpoint – to go on a terrorist attack? No. To get a day's work done. So I'm his checkpoint for economic interests. Cool. Great. It's shit. Beyond

The workers get  
paid 50 shekels  
for a day of work...  
it's an economic  
checkpoint. You  
feel like you are  
guarding Israel's  
bank account

capitalism, socialism, never mind. Why do I as a soldier have to watch out for the bank accounts of the Jordan Valley settlers? No reason in the world. That's a corrupting occupation at its worst. Pure economic interests ■

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## 30 A hilltop where it's forbidden to enter

unit: Armored Corps · location: Ramallah district · year: 2003

► One platoon would get into some eight army patrol jeeps, inside armored jeeps, go out on patrols, mainly doing lookouts and checkpoints. The checkpoints would be more interesting. There were some very hostile villages there, and several illegal settlements that were also very hostile, and we were not supposed to enter them unescorted.

### **What do you mean?**

There was this one hill there, and orders were not to enter because those settlers don't like soldiers. They're crazy out there.

### **If soldiers would enter, what would happen?**

I don't know, we never tried. I guess they'd riot. I don't know. We don't go in.

### **A settlement?**

Yes ■

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## 31 The political ranks were very close to the settlements

unit: Civil Administration · location: General · year: 2001-2004

► **When you change duties to an assistant for issues of the building of settlements, you basically flip the coin: instead of dealing with the Palestinian population, you deal with the settler population.**

Yes.

### **What does that entail?**

What does it entail? First of all, the decisions regarding the building of settlements are not decisions at the level of the civil administration. They aren't made there, and for the most part they are directives from the aide to the Minister of Defence for issues of settlement. Although after the fact it seems there was corruption there, it seems, and it was after I was released from the army, you can look on the Internet just like I looked. \*\*\* made a mess there, and it seems that he passed things along, built things, transferred land, all kinds of things like that. \*\*\* was the head of the infrastructure division. I'm not sure that he was even tried. In short, they are pretty technical things, moving mobile homes from place to place, caravans. Expanding the territory of a specific settlement, dealing with the fence of Efrat and its security means, or the security means of Qiryat Arba for example, also around the fence.

There are a lot of oral agreements... it could be that they find seven caravans and it'll go up to the Minister of Defence's aide, and he'll say..."I approved it orally"

### **What does that mean, "to deal with"? To budget?**

If only the civil administration had money for things like that. It's money that was brought from the Ministry of Defence.

### **Organizing the requests?**

Organizing the requests, sitting with them, seeing what measures are reasonable to take, what measures are not reasonable to take, all kinds of defense measures and the like and with whatever, you deal with all kinds of Israeli incursions, Israeli breaches, all kinds of disturbances. Overseeing that the injunction that was given to a place by the oversight branch – that it's really being enforced. It's a duty of supervision, it wasn't...

### **After organizing the requests, were there decisions?**

There is the recommendation of the branch commander, but we were inconsequential. Really, we were inconsequential...

### **Does the recommendation play a role?**

The recommendation plays a role, because there is nothing to do, less than the head of the administration. The head of the administration says if he thinks yes or no, but the security recommendation of the branch plays a role. What can you do. He also has to approve the placing of the fence.

### **And every action like this needs approval from the Minister of Defence.**

The aide to the Minister of Defence for issues of settlement, it ends with the aide, and he is supposed to inform him, as it were. As it were – because I don't know if it happens.

**Do you also deal with issues of defining the final borders of settlements?**

Yes. That's totally the civil administration. You thought it was only the Jewish settlements, it's not. The Palestinians also create disturbances: destroying homes, infiltrating territory that has to be evacuated, uprooting groves. Of course, we do that.

**Meaning the supervision of lands and infrastructure...settlement...**

Settlements of Area C, and some B, although we don't really touch it, but we do.

**OK, so let's start with the caravans, moving the caravans: what does that mean, what does that entail? Permits, who would do it?**

That's again...the Minister of Defence's aide for issues of settlement, only he approves each caravan. Each caravan has the potential to expand a settlement. Think about it, there is nothing to do. So each transport merits an injunction publicized by the aide to the Minister of Defence, is brought to the civil administration, and it is verified that it was actually implemented the way it...that they put the caravan in the right place and it didn't run off or trickle into a different settlement, it happens. It happens that caravans show up without your knowing why.

**How does that happen?**

Because a soldier at a checkpoint doesn't always know that a caravan needs a permit, and the settlement sometimes moves a caravan without notification. Either a caravan of theirs or a caravan they transport from settlement to settlement. There are a lot of settlements in the territories that have a junkyard, mostly in the area of Nablus, where they take out things from there and build a settlement from the caravans that are thrown there. It happens.

**And when you discover it?**

You take out an injunction, the oversight unit. First an injunction to investigate, they come to the committee and they clarify why and if there really is no permit. If there is no permit, then there are two paths, either they get a permit, a completely plausible option.

**It happens a lot?**

It happens.

**Who sits on the committee?**

A representative of the civil administration, from the infrastructure division. There is a representative from the Ministry of Defence, there is a representative of the oversight unit, and it is subject to the head of the civil administration. Each decision is subject to the head of the civil administration, he knows the decisions beforehand.

**But the players, the representatives are normally...**

Very veteran people. Clerks.

**Are there people from the settlements?**

In the oversight unit, I don't know who sits there today, but there are a lot of people who live in Judea and Samaria, and there are people from the Army.

**But there are more than a few people on the staff who are from the...**

Yes, from the settlements, knit kippot, yes, you can find them. If you look – you'll find them. But that's in any body.

**The question is, if here it influences the decision making process, because you say, for example, many caravans located in places that didn't have permits, received permits after the fact.**

Who did they get permits from? Not the committee.

**OK. From whom?**

The committee hears it and passes it on. The committee, what it does, it says: the caravan isn't whatever, clarify, it calls for a clarification, informs the aide to the Minister of Defence.

**Who is called for the clarification?**

Whoever...there is no such thing as signing off on a caravan, it's not the army. Who? Normally, if it's on a settlement, then the head of the settlement council, but...

**The settlement where they put it.**

The settlement they put it in...a caravan doesn't remain alone, it generally multiplies. They don't decide, with these issues they just say there is a caravan in...we'll take out a destruction or evacuation injunction, it doesn't matter, it's normally a demolition order, because a caravan is depressing, it just shows up somewhere else and then they send it to the aide to the Minister of Defence, and he can say that it's OK and keep the caravan there. That's within his authority, it happens.

**In your experience there, does it happen more or less than destruction or evacuation orders?**

Listen, this whole issue of settlement of Judea and Samaria, it's not something that's put in writing. Many things are decided orally. Not on our level. Because it was agreed upon orally, it could be that they find seven caravans, and it'll go up to the aide to Minister of Defence, and he'll say, "OK, the oversight unit found it, but I approved it orally," and because of that he approves it. There is nothing to do, that's the process.

**Meaning, many times you get things that were accepted orally, without...?**

There are a lot of oral agreements, yes. By virtue of the fact that the political ranks are very close to the settlements, there is nothing to do.

**You never saw a document that was signed by someone? A document approving a caravan?**

No. I also think that if you were to find it, during my time it was Fuad [MK Binyamin ben Eliezer (Labor)], the agreements are normally compromised with the settlement, it's not put in writing, and you won't find it in writing, if you were to try to find it you wouldn't succeed.

**There is no official document, even...**

I imagine that there are internal documents in the Ministry of Defence. It doesn't come down. There is an order from the Minister of Defence, in light of the agreement, evacuate, X, Y, Z. But the document itself? Maybe the lawyers of the Ministry of Defence have it.

**But you don't have it.**

It's a political body, it tries to be very apolitical, it...

**What are the parameters of the jurisdiction? How is the jurisdiction of the settlement determined? Who establishes them? For what are they established?**

What does that mean? The jurisdiction of the settlement is surrounded, by virtue of the fact that it is surrounded it has a specific jurisdiction, we are talking about existing settlements. During my time, maybe Migron, which I think until today doesn't have a jurisdiction. But jurisdiction, what I dealt with, we never created a jurisdiction, rather it was settlement expansion. The moment there is expansion of the settlement on the

basis of families who want to enter or not enter, then the jurisdiction of the settlement is defined in turn.

**Do you also work in conjunction with the security officers [civilians, settlement security coordinators]?**

No. The brigade commander works opposite the security officer. The brigade commander is the security officer's best friend. The civil administration doesn't deal with security officers.

**I want to go back to the fences. The fence in Efrat, what's the story there? What period are we talking about?**

The fence in Efrat – is somewhere in 2002 – the fence in Efrat is that it's a very established settlement, there were all kinds of incursions by shepherds, and there was a concern of a threat to the settlement, so because of that they requested to put special means there, and I think that until today it's the most advanced system in the territories from the standpoint of enclosure, observation, cameras, sensors, it has a very advanced system, at least in Gaza this advanced system was used to approve security means, that's it. And they approved it.

**In agricultural areas that were harmed by the fence? In Efrat, a good example: agricultural areas of Palestinian farmers, if they were enclosed by the fence...**

You need ownership, and the question is who is the owner of the land.

**If you did an investigation, and now the settlement...**

It's not that difficult, there are all of the custodian maps, it's not that difficult, you don't have to do an investigation. From the Ottoman period, the British, whatever you want, there are crumpled maps in the whatever, you see whose land it is. It's not such a big deal. If it's very important for security routes, it happens, it won't happen on the land, a few dunams...it will be something limited. If they decide they need the land, then you can expropriate it. Yes, for security reasons.

**Who could seize it, you?**

Yes, it's for the public need as it were, it's a bit different.

**Yes, whether it's for this need or that need, do you issue injunctions?**

The legal advisor issues the injunctions, it's signed by the civil administration. But the

source that will approve it from a legal perspective is the one that is entangled here, the rest aren't. But the one who has to be sure that he'll receive compensation for this land, and will know how to give an answer to the court when it gets to the court, is the legal advisor to the territories. He is subject to the government legal advisor, through the Military Advocate General, but yes.

**And what happens if there are lands like this that are enclosed by the fence. How do they deal with it? Is there access? Is there no access?**

No, there is no access. you'll bring it into the settlement. But again, I don't believe and I didn't see active farm land, that was fertile and which was annexed into the settlement. Normally it's farm land which has not been grown on for a certain amount of time, and they see it according to the weeds. According to the weeds, you know how long they haven't grown there. It's not such a big deal. There are people from the oversight unit who know very well when they look at it to determine if it hasn't been worked for two, eight, or ten...

**How was the handling, the policy towards infiltrations, breaching roads, access of Israelis to the settlements?**

Israelis? What was the policy? First of all, the oversight coordinator had to see it. The oversight unit, coordinators, all kinds of people walking around the area. The policy is to give an order which points to the fact that the breach is not...people who know the area in a phenomenal way. They sit there...the youngest of them has been in the same place for twelve years sometimes. To give an injunction to breach, to see if there is someone to summon for the breach, if it's a breach into the territory, then there is someone to summon. If it's just any breach – then there are just breaches which are an opening to something else, you see the breach widen and the road slowly...then if there is someone to call – then you call. If there is no one to call – then you set up surveillance and look for the tractor that did it. You really pay attention to when there is a tractor there and when there isn't a tractor there, and then you catch the tractor and you see, you investigate what's happening, who sent him, who did it, and you bring it to an investigation.

**And if along the way you identify the process of the erection of a new outpost? A new point?**



It depends at what time. During \*\*\*\*'s time, even if they were to put it up – no one had the balls to come and say something from the political ranks. There wasn't what's called "a fresh incursion," and then that's already the approval of the political ranks. Yes, I remember a few, but it was tents for the most part. I don't remember something specific, but it happened.

**Do you remember in which areas?**

In the area of Ramallah, it was a very late period, I was in Hebron, but I remember that it happened in the Ramallah area, it was actually with that issue where they were...it was in 2003, they got smart.

**Why at the moment they defined something as an incursion was it not defined as a "fresh incursion"? Did they look the other way?**

No, they weren't looking the other way. No one would take it upon himself to look the other way. Looking the other way is something you take upon yourself. Even the oversight coordinator wouldn't take it upon himself. It could be that he didn't see, it happens, he's not walking around all day in the field. It's one coordinator for each sector. It's not a small area. He sees each area once in a...he comes to each piece of land once a month, month and a half, it's problematic. If they're looking the other way it's in the higher ranks. It's not, don't look among the clerks, it's not there.

**Meaning the clerks record and report everything. A stone moves – a report.**

If he sees it. There is a report, and it's reported to the commanders. The fact that the division commander knows that a stone moved, right? Or that the head of the civil administration knows that a stone moved – even if he has the authority to move it, he'll first speak with the settlers and tell them he's removing it, and he'll get the opinion of the aide to the Minister of Defence. And if it's a stone that was moved a long time ago – he won't deal with it. He won't take the evacuation upon himself. These are things you need balls to do.

**How does it work when you are talking about Palestinians and not Jewish settlers?**

Same thing. It's works the same way only the ranks approve evacuation... "fresh," [incursion] it's nonsense – it's the head of the civil administration, the division commander, the General of the Command, it flies...if they tell the aide, that's it, it flies.

But a Palestinian incursion, there is a ton of illegal Palestinian construction, there is a ton, it's a sea, you can't begin to understand the scope of this issue. How does it work? Oversight, injunctions, an investigative committee in Beit El, they come, they make a committee, they decide or until it's closed, normally on the level of the head of the civil administration and the General of the Command. There was a period when illegal construction was for the Minister of Defence. It was a sensitive period.

**As opposed to the stories about the Jews, where the aide to the Minister of Defence for issues of settlement...**

Yes, the approving rank is lower, yes.

**He is the head of the administration?**

No, it's the General of the Command.

**The implementation? How much illegal Jewish construction...**

There is no point in comparing quantity...if you'd say how much illegal Palestinian construction versus Jewish was destroyed, it's an amount...I don't know, I didn't check. Also, from the standpoint of violations, walk around in the area of Hebron, if I were to take you on a trip, I'll show you 50 points of illegal construction along the way. There is nothing to do.

**So for what like...permits and the like in Area C?**

You can get them, it's a long process.

**Do you know of proceedings where they got them?**

They get them, not for a new settlement, but they get them for settlement expansions, but it's a very long process. It's five-six years.

**Do you have an example?**

I remember examples of approval, I remember documents I read which were approved. It would go past me in the paperwork, it's not...it was approved by the infrastructure oversight unit, so it didn't even get to the head of the civil administration. It's not a decision, if it's in a strategic area, it's a decision that gets up to the higher ranks. But it really takes a long time, during the Intifada it took even more time, and there were cases of five years, but they would get it. They would get it. If it's an existing settlement – you can't say no. But they don't normally ask, the process was long, and they decided we won't evacuate illegal construction, they hope.

**The settlers do ask? Normally.**

For expansion of an organized settlement? Yes.

**And a new outpost? They didn't ask?**

Certainly not the civil administration. Certainly not during the time of \*\*\*, no chance, they hated him, they despised him. They spit on him. All of the connections that there were in the civil administration during the time of \*\*\* with the settlers and all of that nonsense didn't exist anymore during the time of \*\*\*. It just didn't exist.

**Do you remember waves of violence? On the part of the settlers towards the people of the administration?**

Yes, in Hebron I was hit with rocks, eggs, certainly, of course, why not? Racist comments, everything ■

## Glossary of military terminology and slang

**8/8** (or any other numbers) – the ratio between hours of duty and rest (which includes various chores).

**APC** Armored Personnel Carrier. There are several varieties: the standard APC is known as "Bardelas" and is quite vulnerable, although ubiquitous in the infantry. Heavy APCs are converted tanks of various models, known as "Puma" or "Akhzarit" "evil lady", and are rarer and have more armor

**Battalion** 300-400 soldiers, commanded by a colonel

**Brigade** 1,000-1,500 soldiers, commanded by a lieutenant general

**Company** 50-100 soldiers, commanded by a captain

**D9** a military bulldozer used by the Engineering Corps to demolish homes, among other things

**DCL** District Coordination Liaison, a.k.a. DCO (District Coordination Office). Branch offices of the Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria; a military body charged with the day to day affairs of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza

**Deployment** a period when a unit is deployed to the field to engage in routine security. Combat units are generally in deployment or in training

**Front command squad** a small band of soldiers accompanying a senior officer – usually a driver, medic, and radioman

**Gate guard** a guard at the entrance of a base or post

**H1/H2** administrative areas in Hebron according to the Hebron Accords of 1997. H1 comprises most of the city and is administered by the Palestinian Authority; H2 is the city center, which is under Israeli military rule and is also inhabited by Jewish Israeli settlers

**MAG** acronym for "machine gun" deployed at the platoon level; also ubiquitous on armored vehicles and guard posts. It provides for medium firepower and is not accurate

**M16** an American mid-range storm rifle, used by the Israeli infantry

**Orders group** before any military operation, a meeting of officers will be convened to discuss orders, objectives, procedures and possible incidents

**Platoon** 20-40 soldiers, commanded by a lieutenant

**Regional brigade** a brigade made up of rotating battalions that maintain logistical and tactical control of operations in a specific region in the Territories

**Rubber bullets** bullets covered with a layer of rubber. They are considered to be less lethal and are supposed to be shot in groups of three bullets held together by plastic wrap

**Ruger** a sharpshooting weapon used for riot control. In 2001 the Military Advocate General decreed that the Ruger is a lethal weapon and is not a means of riot control

**Security officer** a civilian charged with the security of a certain area or institution

**Settlement security coordinator** also known by its Hebrew acronym "Ravshatz." A civilian employee of the IDF charged with the security of the settlement

**Special security zone** a buffer area around a settlement or other Israeli installation in the Territories

**Squad** 5-10 soldiers, commanded by a sergeant

**"Straw widow"** a procedure according to which a force will take over a (Palestinian) home and use it as a hidden post for up to 72 hours

**"Wet"** Slang word for shooting, as opposed to "dry," i.e. with no fire

