

Brigade's harassment of the population in April. Nahalin, near Bethlehem, was also declared a closed area on April 12-13th, the anniversary of last year's massacre of five village residents by the army. These are only a few examples.

The real prelude to the May 20th massacre was on April 26th, Eid al Fitr, the Muslim holiday at the end of the Ramadan fast. Residents of Jabalya camp in the Gaza Strip were on their way to the cemetery to pay their respects to the dead, as is the custom on this day. They were suddenly confronted by a military force which fired teargas without warning. In the ensuing clash, three Palestinians were shot dead as Israeli soldiers fired indiscriminately into a crowd of 4,000. Approximately 225 people were injured, about half by gunfire. They ranged in age from 2 to 80 years. On the same day a West Bank youth was shot and killed in a similar march to the cemetery in Qabatyia.

Army Chief-of-Staff Shomron himself supervised the operation in Jabalya, including shooting live ammunition and loads of teargas from army gunships, and

imposed a longterm curfew on the camp. Jabalya's residents are however experienced at defying curfews; 5,000 grouped together and stormed military command posts, giving the Zionist troops an all-day battle and injuring 12 soldiers. The comment of Matan Vilnai, military commander of the Strip, makes one think that the occupation forces had planned the whole thing. As quoted in *Haaretz*, April 27th, he said, «We expected that a matter of this sort would happen. The quiet was suspicious in our eyes. In the end, it exploded.» It is noteworthy that last year at Eid al Fitr, two Palestinians were killed and 150 injured in Nusseirat camp in the Strip.

A joint communique issued by *Al Haq* and the Palestine Human Rights Center concerning the events in Jabalya, April 26th, listed a series of previous incidents involving multiple and indiscriminate killings and injuries: -December 16, 1988, eight Palestinians were killed and 20 injured in Nablus, during a funeral procession.

-April 13, 1989, five Palestinians were killed and 30 injured in Nahalin, fol-

lowing a night raid on the village.

-May 19, 1989, five Palestinians were killed and 46 injured in Shabura, Rafah Camp, following the lifting of a long curfew.

-June 16, 1989, three Palestinians were killed and 40 injured in Rafah.

The statement concluded: «The events in Jabalya indicate that the Israeli army is continuing to pursue a policy of excessive force including the illegal use of lethal force and the wilful and brutal infliction of injuries.»

A further Zionist atrocity occurred after the May 20th massacre. On June 12th, an Israeli soldier hurled teargas into the window of the UNRWA health center in Gaza. Inside were several hundred women, children and infants, waiting for preventive care services. Sixty-six persons, mainly children sustained serious injury. The Zionist soldier was released after a brief detention for acting beyond the scope of his orders.

Shatta Camp - frequently curfewed  
-photo by Tordai

