

Report on the Destruction to Palestinian Governmental Institutions in Ramallah  
Caused by IDF Forces Between March 29 and April 21, 2002

(Updated Report April 22)

Palestinian NGO Emergency Initiative in Jerusalem

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\* Also covered in preliminary report.

**INTRODUCTION**

**“They sought to destroy anything that was a sign that we are civilized people.”**  
(Comment by a Ministry employee on seeing the devastation in his office)

**PNA CIVIL INSTITUTIONS IN RAMALLAH**

The following report documents the damage inflicted on PNA civil institutions and offices of local government in Ramallah, during the Israeli invasion and re-occupation of Palestinian population centers by the IDF from March 29<sup>th</sup> through April 21<sup>st</sup>. It has not attempted to deal with the widespread destruction of Palestinian Police stations and other security force installations. The majority of the cases covered are ministries. The report covers 11 of them in detail; another four (below) have been similarly effected but data on them is not yet available. In all, it seems that only two Ramallah-based Ministries did not suffer IDF incursions; the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

### **Findings:**

- There is a very consistent pattern of systematic invasion, destruction and vandalism in all of the Ministries covered.
- In the majority of the cases covered, the Ministry was invaded **long after** any fighting was taking place in Ramallah\* – as such in the vast majority of cases, destruction was purely deliberate and not an outcome of military clashes.
- In about a third of Ministries detailed in the report, confiscation of documents (including paper files and hard disks) was undertaken while in the others – the damage was pure physical destruction of equipment plus general vandalism.
- Minister's offices are particular targets of all of the above but especially of a type of vandalism that goes far beyond destruction due to searches (in particular see Economy and Trade; Industry; Agriculture; Civil Affairs)
- Finance and administration offices are also particular targets of confiscation.
- Sledge-hammers seem to have been used in a number of cases to destroy equipment and furniture and even toilets (see Public Works, Economy and Trade and Agriculture).
- Structural damage to buildings was usually incurred by the use of explosives to open locked doors, however in a number of cases explosives were used purposely to damage the contents of buildings in which doors were unlocked (see especially Ministry of Higher Education and Education).
- "Sanctioned Theft" or the taking of equipment and monies with no intelligence gathering value (including Ministry checkbooks) has occurred in almost half the cases documented.

\*According to press reports, fighting in Ramallah had ceased by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April. The majority of cases covered in the report were invaded in the period following April 12<sup>th</sup>.

The detailed report of destruction of PNA institutions covers the following:

### **PNA Ministries (Ramallah)**

1. Ministry of Civil Affairs
2. Ministry of Education
3. Ministry of Finance Central Office
4. Ministry of Agriculture
5. Ministry of Economy and Trade
6. Ministry of Industry
7. Ministry of Public Works

8. Ministry of Transport:
9. Ministry of Social Affairs
10. Ministry of Higher Education
11. Health Directorate of Ministry of Health

Others not covered in the report but have also suffered from IDF incursions:

Ministry of Culture (occupied continuously by IDF from March 29<sup>th</sup> until April 21<sup>st</sup>)

Ministry of Information (occupied continuously by IDF from March 29<sup>th</sup> until April 21<sup>st</sup>)

Ministry of Interior (Inside Presidents Compound: shelled -- amount of destruction unknown – still unreachable)

Ministry of Local Government (information not yet available)

General Personnel Office (occupied and exited by IDF April 13)

### **PNA Non-Ministerial Institutions: (Ramallah)**

1. Palestinian Legislative Council (al-Bireh and Ramallah)
2. Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

### **Local Government Institutions:**

1. Ramallah Municipality
2. El-Bireh Municipality
3. Ramallah Chamber of Commerce
4. El-Bireh Municipal Library

## **I. PNA MINISTRIES**

### **1. Ministry of Civil Affairs\***

Location: Um al Sharayat

The Ministry of Civil Affairs is headed by Minister Jamil al Tarifi. It is the main address for Palestinians living outside the occupied territories who want to apply for visitor permits, family re-unification and residency permits. It also handles the customs and other administrative details for Palestinian returnees. As such, most of its work is done in liaison with Israeli officials who vet every application. The Ministry is housed in a five story building and divided into six departments. The Ministry was invaded by IDF troops on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> of April.

### **Damage: Extensive vandalism, some confiscation of materials and some theft.**

From a preliminary on-sight report by Ministry employees the following description was provided. The main doors to the Ministry were blown open (evidence of a blast), inside the main entrance reception area were the remains of a large pile of burnt documents.

Equipment: Inside the two sections that were visited thus far (there are six sections altogether), destroyed Xerox copiers (seem to be sledge hammered) as well as

destroyed computers and printers. The central phone exchange taken as well as a digital receiver in the Ministers office.

Confiscation of Records: Thus far some missing hard drives, but stolen papers from especially the Ministers office (neighbors told the employee they saw soldiers carrying out what seemed to be boxes of papers). Many destroyed documents.

Theft: Door to Minister's office blown open, the safe inside also blown open and its contents including documents and Ministry finances missing. Petty cash of 6,000 shekels taken from the finance department.

Other: The employee stated that the entrance and offices she entered were in complete disarray and severely vandalized. Besides broken equipment, broken filing cabinets and papers strewn everywhere -- many internal windows were smashed as well. Additionally, pictures on walls (especially with Palestinian themes) were found on the floor smashed. Also graffiti sprayed on walls. The employee stated that she was so horrified at the extent of the damage and vandalism that she was unable to visit more of the building and left in tears.

## **2. Ministry of Education\***

Location: Ramallah / Masyun district

The Ministry serves about one million children, i.e. a third of the total Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza. It is the main address for the overall administration of all government primary and secondary schools, their faculties, as well as archiving of student transcripts. On April 3<sup>rd</sup> at approximately 4:00 p.m. 30 APC's and tanks carrying approximately 150 soldiers broke down the ministry's main gates. Four employees in the Ministry were taken to open doors, in some cases when they had no keys doors were exploded open or broken open. Reports suggest that at other times even when staff offered to open doors they were ignored while soldiers forcibly broke in. Staff were made to stand outside in the cold for more than six hours while soldiers were inside the building.

**Damage: Extensive vandalism, theft and confiscation**

**External Damage:** IDF tanks demolished the main gate to the building and the main doors of the premises were forced open.

**Internal Damage:** The IDF forces vandalized the Ministry's offices, confiscating computers and educational aids and removing or destroying vital records and documents. Although it has not been possible for the Ministry to assess the full damage and destruction wrought, the following specific damage was noted by Ministry employees who were able to make a brief room by room survey of the damage when the curfew was lifted for a few hours.

*General:* the Ministry's computer net servers were removed

*financial office:* the main safe was blown open damaging its contents, including dossiers, promissory notes, cash, check books and vouchers

*-central office:* the Israeli forces blew up metal filing cabinets destroying vital documents.

- *all offices*: files have been torn up, and left in huge piles on the floor
- *Storage room*: the IDF confiscated computers, overhead projectors, video sets, and other valuable educational equipment
- *Central office*: The Israeli forces blew up and destroyed all main doors. They took away or destroyed records and references that are highly important for official transcripts.
- *Remaining offices in the Ministry*: The forces seem to have confiscated many floppy disks, CDs, files, dossiers and documents but more time will be needed to more accurately assess.

### **Impact**

The Ministry's records, which were confiscated or destroyed, have been built up over many years. The Ministry hopes it will be able to re-construct destroyed records for the issuing and certifying of students' transcripts from regional MOE offices. The MOE is unable to gain full and clear access to the premises in order to make a comprehensive and detailed assessment of the damage and losses at this point. However, it estimates the financial loss merely of equipment, such as computers, videos, TV sets and overhead projectors, to reach millions of dollars. Most of this equipment was financed by donor countries and organizations. The main and direct impact of this destruction, however, is on the one million Palestinian children who are enrolled in the school system and who constitute the main resource of Palestinian society in the future.

This data is based on a fuller report undertaken by the Ministry itself (See the Ministry report in the Appendix which includes also the destruction of schools. For the full text please contact Acting Minister of Education Dr. Naim Abu Hommos, Email [moepalestine@hotmail.com](mailto:moepalestine@hotmail.com) Fax + 970 298 3222

### **3. Ministry of Finance Central Office\***

#### **Location: Sateh Marhaba Area**

There are three buildings of the Finance Ministry in Ramallah. The Central Office in Suteh Marhaba has been visited by Ministry employees once the curfew was lifted, the other two (one in the Industrial district and one downtown) are occupied by the IDF and cannot be visited. The Central Office houses the Ministers office as well as a number of main departments (Accounts, Payroll, General administration etc...). It was broken into by a group of soldiers on April 3rd or 4<sup>th</sup> according to neighbors.

#### **Damage: Broken doors, Extensive Confiscation of Computers and Computer Hard Disks**

**Destruction:** Broken entrance doors and many internal doors destroyed, as well as windows. Elevator badly damaged. Destroyed Computers. Destroyed furniture.

**Confiscation:** Computer skeletons strewn on the floor, due to many hard disk drives being taken. The most hard hit section in terms of taken computers and hard disks seems to be the Payroll department. Documents strewn on the floor suggests that

paper files may have been taken but the employees did not have time to assess. Other computers were found with their screens on.

**Other comments/ Impact:** The general director suggested that the main destruction and loss was of the Ministry's financial records and accounts. The Ministry is in charge of disbursing salaries, health and pension payments to all government employees including teachers, hospital workers, the police as well as government bureaucrats. The GD says that given the loss of information, public sector employees face not getting paid in the foreseeable future until the records can be re-established. In addition, files for back pay and insurance may have been lost as well.

Information based on interview with General Director Mr. Sami Ramlawi tel. 059205038

#### **4. Ministry of Agriculture**

Location: Ramallah/Masyun

The ministry serves farmers and the rural population. The Ministry is housed in an independent six storey building which is composed of more than 8 departments plus the Minister and deputy Minister's offices. Approximately 114 employees work at this site.

The Ministry was occupied by IDF forces Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> of April neighbors witnessed approximately nine tanks and APC's pull up to the building. It was evacuated the next morning at approximately 4:00a.m. The following is based on an on-site visit by the director of the minister's office.

#### **Damage: Destruction of entrance by explosives. Extensive Vandalism, Some Confiscation and theft.**

**Physical Destruction:** Explosives were used to enter the building leading to severe damage of the entrance which is composed of a glassed-in veranda – all of its glass shattered. Any locked internal door blown open. The staircase is covered with broken window glass to the top floor. Equipment: The elevator is broken – its cables cut. In the reception, the central phone exchange has been smashed; throughout the various departments there are computer carcasses thrown on the ground. The Xerox copier in the Minister's office has had its insides ripped out.

**Confiscation:** Many files and offices in such disarray with files all over the floor it is still impossible to say exactly what has been taken. Many missing hard drives, in other cases whole computer bases (without the screens) have been taken.

**Vandalism:** "Not an office left untouched", papers and box files strewn all over the floor, overturned and furniture, broken file draws. The Ministers office seems to have been a special target, his secretary's office according to the employee "was

completely gone”. Parked behind the Ministry were 11 ministry cars and two mini vans. These had their windows smashed, and internal parts ripped out.

**Sanctioned Theft:** Third floor finance department had two safes blown open -- money and ministry checks taken. In the Conference room a television, overhead projector and film projector were taken. In the department funded by the Austrian government on soil and water – expensive equipment for testing soil and water composition were missing. Video and regular cameras taken from the agricultural extension department.

**Other comments:** the employee stated that there was so much vandalism throughout the Ministry much more time will be needed to get a detailed assessment of damage, theft and confiscation. She states that it was clear that soldiers also used the Ministry as a dormitory the night they spent there and that there were rotten food items and garbage found strewn in various places but especially in the Minister’s office.

Contact: Director of the Minister’s office; Shadin Zaghlul 059 868 657

## **5. Ministry of Economy and Trade**

Location Masyun/ Um al Shariyat

The Ministry is housed in an independent six storey building which is composed of approximately ten departments. According to neighbors, a contingent of IDF forces invaded the building on the night of Tuesday April 16 at 8:00 p.m. they exited the following day at 11:00 am.. The following is based on on-site visits by two Ministry employees.

**Damage: Destruction of entrance by explosives. Extensive Vandalism, Some Confiscation and significant theft.**

**Physical Destruction:** The front entrance destroyed and other internal entrances that were locked were blown open. The elevator was broken. Computer carcasses throughout offices. Broken furniture. Smashed toilets. Destroyed wall to wall carpeting. Xerox copier destroyed. Smashed computer disks. Minister’s office was especially targetted as was his secretary’s.

**Confiscation:** More time needed to assess. Missing hard disks and potentially some computer bases. In the international relations department files found laying open on a table included those on economic relations with Israel.

**Vandalism:** Strewn files everywhere, the WTO resource Center files and papers ruined, as well as the papers and disks in the intellectual property rights department. Box files thrown all over the floors. Minister’s furniture slashed and padding ripped out. Pictures on the wall of al Aqsa, Church of the Ascension and a framed piece of Palestinian embroidery taken down and smashed underfoot. Ministers office covered in garbage and remains of food. Soldier had also defecated in the office.

**Other comments:** Both employees stated that the vandalism was so widespread it will take time to get an accurate accounting of what is missing and broken. Again, it

seems that soldiers used the Ministry also as dormitory the night they spent there. Both were shocked at the personal nature of vandalism – the smashing of pictures from the walls and the dirt and food left rotting in the Minister's office.

Contact: Saeb Bamia; General Director in Charge of International Relations 059 445 253

## **6. Ministry of Industry**

Location: Um al Shariyat

The Ministry is housed in a five-storey independent building. There are sixty employees who work at this site. According to the guard and neighbors who live across the street On the night of April 8<sup>th</sup> at approximately 8:00 p.m. 2 tanks, 3 APC's and 2 jeeps pulled up to the Ministry. The soldiers spent a total of 14 hours inside, leaving the next morning at 10:00 a.m.. The following is based on an on-site visit to the premises by a Ministry employee.

### **Damage: Destruction of entrance by explosives. Extensive Vandalism, Some Confiscation and theft.**

**Physical Destruction:** Front entrance blown open causing severed destruction to the reception/ entrance which was a glassed in outer-room/veranda with a tiled roof. Also destroyed by explosives, the basement storage depot which contained spare parts to technical equipment. The electricity circuit board for the building was destroyed in the process. The central telephone exchange destroyed. The largest Xerox copier destroyed probably in the process of exploding a door. Locked doors throughout the building blown open. Some computers in the Information Center destroyed. Destroyed furniture, especially in the Minister's office.

**Confiscation:** Many offices have papers and strewn all over the floor so it remains difficult to ascertain what has been taken. Some computer hard drives taken from the Information Center and it seems a number of computers missing. The hard disk of the Minister's secretary's computer taken. Archives in the Minister's and Deputy Minister's offices have been particularly focused upon. The safe in the Finance department blown open and its contents taken (the safe contained records but had no checks or money). A fax machine missing.

**Vandalism:** Papers and files throughout the building strewn on the floor, furniture turned over, Minister's office had chairs broken, books all over the floor, as well box files strewn everywhere. Remains of food and garbage in the minister's office. Fax machine broken.

**Other Comments:** The employee stated that bedding (mattresses the Ministry keeps for employees who live far away) were found moved to the top floor and it seems soldiers used the Ministry as a barracks for the night. Remains of food and coffee were also found.



## 7. Ministry of Public Works

Location: Suteh Marhaba

The Ministry has two locations. The newer location is within the Presidents compound and has been unreachable since the invasion began on March 29<sup>th</sup>. The old location in Suteh Marhaba was invaded by IDF troops on Thursday April 18<sup>th</sup> between 6 and 7:a.m. The soldiers only stayed 3 to four hours and then moved into the other side of the building which houses the Ministry of Transport. The two Ministries are housed in a four storey building divided in two with a separate front entrance for each. Approximately 60 employees work in the Suteh Marhaba location of the Public Works Ministry in five departments. The following is based on an on-site visit by a Ministry employee.

**Damage: Physical destruction by fire, almost total destruction of equipment, severe vandalism, some theft**

**Physical Destruction:** Front entrance blown open leaving extensive damage. The whole 4<sup>th</sup> floor and its contents destroyed by fire. Parts of the outer third floor destroyed by explosions. Internal doors either blown open or broken down. Windows and shutters destroyed. Toilets and sinks in bathrooms sledge-hammered causing extensive water damage. Furniture destroyed, computers destroyed, 3 Xerox machines seemingly sledge-hammered, large fax machine destroyed. Regular desk-top telephones smashed. Air-conditioning units smashed. Two cars of the ministry standing in front of the building destroyed by bull-dozer or tanks.

**Confiscation:** The employee stated the Ministry was in such a wrecked state it was hard to tell what had been taken. Clear that a number of hard disks had been taken and a number of computers. The safe in the finance office blown open and contents taken.

**Vandalism:** Extensive and total in terms of equipment. The employee stated that there does not seem to be a working piece of equipment left in the ministry. Couches slashed with knives, pictures on the walls smashed underfoot. Maps on the walls torn to pieces. Tables and chairs smashed. The door to the Ministers office was unlocked but it was destroyed anyway. Worst hit in terms of vandalism were the Minister's office, Finance office and Technical office.

**Comments:** The fourth floor destroyed by fire was a guest house apartment of the ministry. All that was left standing was the metal skeleton of the bed. Neighbors had called for a fire engine once they saw the fire but it was not allowed to reach the Ministry. Probable causes of the fire were large gas canisters used for central heating located in the next-door Ministry of transport (see transport below) which were probably set-off by explosion of doors.

For further information contact: Muhammad Ghneim General Director for Technical Affairs 059 546 375.

## 8. Ministry of Transport

Location Suteh Marhaba (shared building with Ministry of Works)

According to neighbors, the same group of soldiers who invaded the Ministry of Public works went immediately onto invade the Ministry of Transport (at approximately 11:00 am on April 18<sup>th</sup>). They remained there just a few hours but inflicted heavy damage. The Ministry is divided into six departments.

**Damage: Heavy internal and external physical destruction to the building, as well as its contents; confiscation and heavy vandalism.**

**Physical destruction:** Burnt extensive parts of fourth floor and third floor; part of outer wall of the third floor destroyed and laying in the street. Entrance destroyed by explosives. Internal doors blown open, as well as destroyed windows and shutters. Inside extensive destruction of equipment and furniture. The damage from fire makes an accounting difficult of what exactly lost on upper floors. Lower floors computers and xerox copiers as well as office furniture smashed seemingly by sledge-hammers.

**Confiscation:** Some computer hard disks and computers – exact accounting still not possible. Safes blown open in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor finance and administration offices contents taken. Some files missing. In the Registration department (on the part of the fourth floor not effected by the fire) a large number of files are missing. The employee stated that approximately 40% of their documents seem missing from the building.

**Vandalism:** Throughout, equipment has been destroyed, as well as furniture. Even staplers were found smashed. Minister's office furniture, television and furniture in the main conference room sledge-hammered. Six Ministry cars parked in the garage of the Ministry were severely vandalized with sledge-hammers and some of their gas tanks filled with soil or other material.

**Sanctioned theft:** Money (in the amount of approximately 250,000 NIS) and checks inside the finance department's safe taken.

**Other comments:** The employee stated that it was probably large gas canisters used for central heating the Ministry stored on the third floor, and set off by the exploding of the door that set off the fire. The destruction of the outer parts of the wall of the third floor may have occurred when the gas tanks blew up. The fire took most of the fourth floor and large parts of the third floor. The fire also affected the fourth floor of the neighboring Ministry of Public Works. According to the employee, the Minister's office (not effected by the fire) was totally vandalized

Contact: Muhammad Jaradat 059 269 397

## **9. Ministry of Social Affairs:**

Location: Masyun

The Ministry serves social welfare recipients throughout the occupied territories. Its main beneficiaries are female-headed households living in deep poverty. The Ministry is housed in an independent four-storey building. According to neighbors 2 tanks and 3 APC's pulled up to the Ministry on Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> of April at 4:30 p.m. They left

the following morning at 9:00 a.m.. Guards of the Ministry expecting soldiers to come had left the front entrance open, however the soldiers broke through the Ministry's garage doors with a tank.

**Damage: Garage door demolished, destruction of furniture and equipment, confiscation not clear, substantial vandalism.**

**Destruction:** Garage entrance and a Ministry car inside destroyed by tank. Broken internal doors and destroyed shutters Due to the way that furniture and equipment were piled on top of each other (mostly on the third floor) still unable to assess the damage.. In other offices some broken computers and furniture. Smashed fax machines.

**Confiscation:** Not clear because extent of files thrown on the floors as well as the way furniture and equipment thrown in heaps.

**Vandalism:** Each department had their files thrown on the floors. The most hard-hit was third floor housing the departments in charge of the handicapped, the women's unit and the planning office. It seems to have been used as a barracks as such all furniture and equipment dumped in piles either in the corners or in the hallway. Food and garbage remains left.

**Additional Comments:** The employee stated that she did not have enough time within the curfew lifting to adequately assess the situation. The Minister's office furniture and equipment had been smashed but seems to have not been as badly vandalized as those in other Ministry's. The employee suggested that it was because it was in a very vulnerable position on the top floor. Next door neighbors had turned their lights on at some point and were shot at and told to turn them off.

## **10. Ministry of Higher Education**

Location: Um al Shariyat

The Ministry oversees the work of Universities and Community Colleges throughout the occupied territories. The Ministry is housed in a six story independent building, housing approximately 12 departments.

On Friday April 19<sup>th</sup> at approximately 8:30 pm, neighbors witnessed four APC's pulling up to the building. They saw the soldiers blow open the main entrance door with explosives and then counted another 11 explosions while the soldiers were in the building. The army exited the premises after approximately an hour..

**Damage: Total destruction by explosion of all the Ministry's electrical equipment. Front entrance destroyed by explosion, windows shattered, partitions in the offices destroyed. No signs of confiscation, or theft. Extensive vandalism**

**Physical Destruction:** Front entrance destroyed by explosion, windows shattered, partitions in the offices destroyed. In the reception, telephone exchange was shattered. Main destruction was blowing up of almost all electrical equipment in the building.

On the same Friday that the Ministry was invaded, the curfew was lifted during the day. Knowing that the IDF was making incursions into all of the Ministries, staff went that morning to open all of the internal doors in the building in an attempt to avert destruction caused by explosions of locked doors. When they were able to visit the site on Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup> what they found was that on each of the six floors any electrical equipment (computers, copiers, fax machines, scanners, printers telephones etc...) were taken into the hallways, put in piles and detonated. The main frame network for the computer system similarly destroyed. The destruction to partitions seems to have been an outcome of the explosions of equipment.

**Confiscation:** None apparent

**Theft:** None apparent

**Vandalism:** Besides the destruction of equipment, this includes primarily broken glass cabinets and contents of shelves and files strewn on the floor throughout the building.

Contact: Gabi Baramki 059 898 031

## **11. The Directorate of Health**

Location: al Balu'a and downtown main street (next to Baladna Cultural Center)

The Ministry of Health's main building is located in Nablus. In Ramallah, the Ministry has two locations; an administrative building in al Balu'a and the Ramallah Regional Health Directorate building in the downtown area that is composed of specialized out-patient clinics plus storage and supervision facilities of the Ministry for the Ramallah region. Both locations were invaded.

### **A. Health Directorate Building:**

Location: downtown

This is a two-storey building containing 6 specialized out-patient clinics, a storage depot of pharmaceuticals, a health insurance department and a health supervisors' offices.

According to neighbors, the building was invaded by a contingent of IDF forces on Wednesday April 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Damage: Exploded front doors, broken internal doors and some equipment; extensive vandalism.**

**Physical Destruction:** Mainly from blowing open the entrance. Inside, broken doors, parts of the false ceiling pulled down. A few computers damaged from being thrown on floor, as well as blood-testing equipment.

**Vandalism:** Throughout files were strewn across the floors. Most hit by vandalism was the pharmacy storage depot. Shelves of medicines and other medical materials thrown over and contents all over the floor.

**Confiscation and Theft:** None apparent

### **B. Administration Building**

Location: al Balu'a

The Administration building is housed in a private apartment complex and is housed in five apartments which have been turned into offices which are divided among five departments:

According to neighbors the IDF invaded the building on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April in the evening. Soldiers exited the building 5 days later. The offices were clearly used as an army barracks.

**Damage: Mainly broken internal doors, vandalism including slashing of furniture, smashing of pictures and files thrown on the floors. Negligible destruction of equipment (one computer), no signs of confiscation or theft.**

**Destruction:** Broken internal doors. One computer smashed.

**Vandalism:** Files thrown on the floor throughout. Deputy Minister's office most severely vandalized: upholstered furniture slashed with a knife, pictures taken from the walls and smashed underfoot.

**Confiscation and Theft:** None apparent

## **II. PNA Non-Ministerial Institutions: (Ramallah)**

### **1. Palestinian Legislative Council (al-Bireh and Ramallah)\***

The Palestinian Legislative Council (or parliament) has two main buildings within el-Bireh/ Ramallah. The al-Bireh building is the main administrative office of the PLC while the Assembly Chambers are based in Ramallah in the Ministry of Education.

#### **A. Main Administrative Building in al- Bireh**

##### **Damage: Vandalism, Confiscation and Sanctioned Theft**

Based on an on-site visit by the PLC director general, and two PLC staff, as well as witnesses in the neighborhood, the following preliminary report can be made. Israeli troops broke in late Tuesday night, around 1:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 10. The actual break-in was witnessed by neighbors living across the street from the PLC building.

**Destruction:** Soldiers broke into the main entrance and subsequently the door and glass partition of the Economic Committee, the Budget Committee, the Political Committee, and the Legal Committee. Most of the damage included breaking and removal of doors and windows. Some equipment was damaged and broken.

**Sanctioned Theft:** A computer and many files were taken from the Speaker's Office. A computer was also taken from the technical departments office.

**Confiscation:** Files and documents taken from the Speakers office and the Chief Clerks office. Hard drives taken from computers. All the computers were open in the personnel department.

**Vandalism:** The Library and the Public Relations Unit have suffered extensive vandalism, books and files were thrown all over the floor. The door of the "Hansard" (sound and video equipment) office was broken, documents were thrown on the floor, but the equipment was left intact.

The IT Unit, Information Department, and Director's General office did not sustain any damage. Cars and vehicles parked on the streets were damaged, and troops took keys of vehicles from the Technical Department. Telephones are operating at the Council, and the Council has electricity.

(The above information is based on ARD report provided by Dr. Mahmoud Labadi, PLC director general, and two PLC staff Faisal Zakarneh, and Ahmad Abu Dayyeh, along with Amin Sbeih of ARD/PLC2 project)

## **B. Legislative Council Chambers in Ramallah Ministry of Education Building**

The Chambers of the Legislative Council are where the 88 members meet when the PLC is in session. The Chamber auditorium includes not only seating for the council members, but expensive technical equipment for computerized voting, video coverage of sessions and a closed circuit communications system to link it with the administrative building in el-Bireh.

### **Damage: Destroyed Doors; Confiscation of Video Archive of PLC Sessions**

At approximately 4:00 p.m. on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, around 150 soldiers, with 30 tanks and APCs, forced their way into the Ministry of Education's Compound. The soldiers detained four employees of the Ministry of Education's compound, including Mr. Salah Soubani, and made them walk in front of the soldiers and open doors.

A group of about 50 soldiers forced Mr. Soubani to accompany them to the Legislative Council Chambers, next to the elementary school, on the grounds of the Ministry compound. They asked several questions about the Chambers: Who attends the meetings? What do they do in the sessions? Do people work there or live there? Any door that could not be opened with a key, was blown up with an explosive charge. [Several people living in the neighborhood heard the explosions.] A door to the school was blown up and the door between the school and the PLC Chambers was also blown up. The soldiers looked through every room of the PLC wing. They took all of the video-cassette tapes from the lower video room, at least a hundred tapes of Council sessions, put them in plastic bags, and carried them away. As far as Mr. Soubani knows, no equipment was stolen or damaged in the raid.

The soldiers did not appear to be from a special unit. They wore basic green army fatigues. They did not use names when they talked to each other, instead they called each other by numbers, except for one soldier who was repeatedly referred to as "Sharon".

When the rooms were inspected today, April 4<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Salah Soubani confirmed that sound (Hansard) and Video equipment seemed to be in place and intact.

*The above report is based on ARD/PLC2 project interview with Mr. Salah Soubani, director of the Information Department at the Ministry of Education-Ramallah*

## **2. Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)\***

Fieldwork Administration Section  
Location: Radio Road near Lions Square (al Manara)

The Central Bureau of Statistics is headed by Dr. Hasan Abu Libdeh. The main section of PCBS is in Balu'a area and is where most of the statistical data bases and reports are housed, as well as administrative records and finances. That building was invaded by IDF troops during the first re-occupation of Ramallah in October 2001. At that time soldiers confiscated hard disks and vandalized a number of the offices. As of this writing (April 13<sup>th</sup>) the Balu'a office has not been touched. However, the Fieldwork section in downtown Ramallah which serves as the administrative center for fieldwork has been invaded on four occasions. The department is located in a four-storey residential and commercial building and is composed of four apartments.

**Damage:** (Only covers first three invasions – as yet no confirmed information on damage wrought by April 12<sup>th</sup> break-in). Two broken doors, some broken windows -- both in the course of soldiers entering into the building. Damage is relatively light and there is no extensive vandalism.

**Comment:** The director of the section said that that it has been entered by soldiers on four occasions; March 30<sup>th</sup>, April 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 8 and April 12th. Based on visiting the site after the first three incursions he thinks the main aim was general search since the apartments they entered (two) only saw light vandalism such as broken cupboards and some strewn papers. Equipment was not damaged. However, neighbors report that on the most recent incursion into the building (April 12<sup>th</sup>) they heard explosives being used.

Contact: Dr. Hasan Abu Libdeh 295 1038

## **3. Palestinian Academy for Science and Technology**

**Location: Sharafeh, Al-Bireh**

The Palestinian Academy for Science and Technology was established to develop national science and technology strategies by acting as an umbrella organization for institutes engaged in basic and strategic research.

A neighbor has been able to make one visit to the Academy offices and reported:

### **Structural damage:**

Israeli forces blew open both main doors and smashed the glass door to the balcony; bullet holes have damaged internal doors.

### **Vandalism**

The offices have been vandalized. 2 computers have been smashed and thrown on the floor; the computer server and two desks have likewise been smashed. The glass in a bookcase has been shattered. Papers, files and books are strewn over the floors.

**Sanctioned Theft:** The petty cash box, which contained about 1,500 shekels, has been stolen.

None of the Academy staff members has been able to access the premises and hence a full damage assessment, particularly of theft and possible confiscation, has yet to be made.

Contact: Irene Akra: 5830712

### **III. LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS**

We have only been able to gather preliminary information based on on-site visits about the following:

Ramallah Municipality  
El-Bireh Municipality  
Ramallah Chamber of Commerce  
El-Bireh Municipal Library

#### **1. Ramallah Municipality\***

Damage: Extensive vandalism, potentially some confiscation and theft  
Ramallah Municipality is located near Clock square, it contains departments of administration, the court room, engineering, health, sanitation, archives, surveying and finance.

On the evening of Saturday, March 30, a contingent of Israeli soldiers forcibly entered the Municipality and remained inside for approximately 12 hours. The building was empty when the soldiers entered. The main door was forced open by spraying it with over fifty bullets of different calibers. The Municipality, was empty when soldiers broke in, nevertheless they remained there for approximately 12 hours.. Based on a preliminary site visit, by municipality staff once the curfew was lifted they report the following.

"Every department was vandalized,... Furniture was turned over and damaged, paper files and documents were tampered with, dispersed and thrown to the floor, surveying plans and building license files were destroyed, office doors were broken; glass windows, doors and partitions were smashed, and extensive damage was inflicted on the PCs and computer network. Many of the PCs were damaged; the CPUs and hard disks either damaged or taken by the soldiers, and so was the main server. Two steel safes were blown open which contained important documents pertaining to the work of the Municipality and some petty cash. Internal concrete block wall partitions were destroyed, and extensive damage was sustained by the heating, electrical and computer cable systems."

The Municipality staff has not been able to make a complete assessment of the damage nor determine the extent of the missing equipment, documents and other items.

The forced intrusion into the municipality was witnessed by reporters and guests staying at a nearby hotel.

#### **2. Al-Bireh Municipality\***

Based on data provided by municipal engineers who were able to briefly visit the building when the curfew was lifted.



Damage: Destruction of outside walls, doors, furniture, computers, municipal works jeep destroyed, some confiscation of files and hard disks, extensive vandalism, theft

**Destruction:** An IDF contingent arriving in tanks broke into the building on the second day of Ramallah's invasion (Saturday March 30<sup>th</sup>). The tanks broke down the outside walls of the municipality and crushed the municipal works jeep parked outside. Entrance and internal doors broken down. Shattered windows. Broken furniture. Five computers destroyed (some for hard disks, others just vandalized). Fax machine shattered.

Confiscation: A number of files seemed to be missing and at least two hard disks taken from computers. The municipality was unable to see what other documents were taken as yet because of the amount of papers strewn on the floor.

**Sanctioned Theft:** \$12,000 surveying equipment missing

Vandalism:

A number of offices were in complete disarray, with overturned furniture and broken file cabinets. Destroyed files. Computers, central telephone system and alarm system no longer function.

### **3. Al-Bireh Municipal Library\***

Located Near al-Bireh Municipality.

The library building was visited by municipal engineers briefly when the curfew was lifted. A contingent of soldiers invaded the building on the second day of the invasion 30<sup>th</sup> March

**Damage: Primarily vandalism, destruction of computers, broken doors and windows, Confiscation of books and journal**

**Destruction:** External doors, shattered windows, 3 computers broken.

**Vandalism:** extensive papers and books on the floor

**Confiscation:** One computer screen was on suggesting that its hard disk had been taken. A substantial amount of books and journals seem to be missing although exactly how many (and what type) cannot as yet be assessed.

### **4. Ramallah Chamber of Commerce (New Building)**

Location: (Nazlat Rukab's across from Ramallah Post office)

Based on on-site visit when curfew lifted by Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Salah Odeh

The Ramallah Chamber of Commerce serves the whole district of Ramallah. The Chamber of Commerce owns two attached buildings with the Chamber housed in two floors in the new main building across from the post office. In the new building a number of offices were rented out to the private sector (doctor's clinic, a development research institute, lawyers office etc...). The private businesses only had their doors broken open and were searched. The offices of the municipality were widely

vandalized. There are no working offices of the C.C. in the adjacent (old) building, which is mainly rented out to private businesses and associations. The old building suffered extensive fire damage (see below under NGOs the offices of the Palestinian Teachers Union).

**Damage: External doors blasted, internal doors blasted or broken down. Smashed computers and Xerox copier, extensive vandalism**

On Sunday March 31<sup>st</sup> a Contingent of soldiers broke into the Chamber of Commerce building. They blew down the main entrance to the five floor building. The front entrance was completely blackened by the blast. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, where the offices of the Chamber of Commerce are located, they also blew open the door with explosives. The large brass sign at the entrance with the C.C.'s insignia was shattered completely and the stairwell blackened by explosive blasts. Inside, the first office they entered suffered the most damage. Four computers were destroyed (thrown on the ground and smashed), the Xerox copier was also thrown on the ground and broken. There was wide-scale vandalism throughout the other offices with files and papers strewn on the floor. Whether hard disks or paper files were taken cannot yet be assessed. Furniture in the president's office was vandalized. The door to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor conference room was blown open but nothing seems to have been touched inside. Also the door to the roof was broken open but again there was no other visible damage. Electricity lines throughout the building were hanging from the ceiling, there is no electricity functioning in the building.

On the 19th of April, the Ramallah Chamber of Commerce building was raided yet again. This time the Israeli forces made sure not to miss an office in the 5 story building. The offices of the Chamber of Commerce were specifically targeted. Salah Oudeh, the secretary general of the Chamber of Commerce estimated that the damage will need at least \$100,000 to repair the chamber offices alone. A bomb was detonated inside the building elevator - the cost of that alone is estimated around \$40,000. Nothing seems to have been taken from the other offices in the building but the extent of the vandalism is shocking.

For further information on this report contact:  
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