

secure entry permits for the other two staff members. The Court rejected the petition,

and the two other researchers were not allowed into Israel. **(Case 23038)**

## Roadblocks

There are more than 300 roadblocks in the West Bank.<sup>49</sup> Some, particularly those at the entrance to Israel and to settlement blocs, are permanent, while others are unannounced and posted in various locations for different lengths of time.

Roadblocks have created a new meaning for the term “distance” – the main component in the definition is no longer the number of kilometers between point A and point B, but rather the number of roadblocks along the route. Every roadblock delays traffic by many hours, during which Palestinians are exposed to humiliation and abuse by soldiers. In the absence of clear instructions, the decision as to who will pass and who will not is up to the individual soldiers at the roadblock, and is mostly arbitrary.

Since March, HaMoked has handled more than 500 appeals from residents of the Territories and representatives of various organizations, asking to allow the passage of persons who had been detained for many hours, and to restrain the soldiers. HaMoked’s communications with the Civil Administration, the different DCO’s and the soldiers on the ground, yielded results in most cases, but only after many hours. When clients requested, HaMoked pursued an investigation into the incident and if necessary sought indictments.

N.G., a disabled person who is a resident

of Jerusalem, his wife and their eight children were trying to pass through the roadblock at Qalandiya. One of the soldiers opened their car door, took N.G.’s crutches and started playing with them. N.G.’s entreaties to give them back were to no avail, and the soldier kept them for about an hour. Only after HaMoked intervened were the crutches returned, and N.G. was allowed through the roadblock. **(Case E656)**

On October 3, an ambulance carrying a pregnant woman on her way to have a Cesarean section was detained at the Huwwara roadblock. The ambulance reached the roadblock at 10:20 AM, but by 10:50 AM was still not allowed through. The ambulance driver contacted HaMoked. After HaMoked called the Civil Administration, the ambulance was finally allowed to pass, at 11:10 AM. **(Case E403)**

On the afternoon of October 22, HaMoked received calls from Jerusalem residents who were being held at the Qalandiya roadblock on their way home. The roadblock was opened and closed intermittently, and people and cars went only allowed through very slowly, which created long queues. Since the roadblock

was set to close at 7 PM, people waiting in line started to become tense. As the first call came in at 5:10 PM, HaMoked contacted the Civil Administration, which promised that the soldiers at the roadblock had been instructed to let all Jerusalem residents through before the roadblock closes for the day. However, at 7 PM there were still 15 cars of Jerusalem residents, including sick people and children, outside the roadblock. Only at 9:25 PM did the soldiers decide to allow the cars through, after some had been waiting for more than five hours. The cars went through very slowly – the soldiers would not let any car through until the driver gave them a box of cigarettes and a lighter. Drivers who would not comply were not allowed to pass and were told they would be forced to wait until the roadblock reopens in the morning. One of HaMoked's clients refused to pay up, and despite HaMoked's efforts, which went on until midnight, he was not allowed through. HaMoked's inquiries revealed that extortion cases at the roadblock are commonplace: the day before, soldiers demanded NIS 50 from each driver, and in other cases they demanded food and beverages. HaMoked was unable to convince clients to file complaints, as all were afraid of the soldiers' revenge if they discover the identity of the complainant. **(Case E464)**

At around 3:30 PM on August 21, Mr. and Mrs. A. and their nine-month-old baby reached the Qalandiya roadblock on their way back home to Kafr Aqab. It was a hot day, and the father, H.A., asked

the people in line before him to let them through. People agreed. One of the soldiers came up to H.A. and asked why he was cutting the queue, took the ID cards of the husband and wife (Kafr Aqab is part of the jurisdiction of Jerusalem and inhabitants are Israeli residents) and informed them that they would not be allowed through the roadblock and that they would not be getting their IDs back. H.A. said they would move back to the end of the line, and asked to get his ID back. The soldier then called his friends, grabbed H.A. by the neck and pulled him away. His wife asked the soldiers why and where her husband was being taken, but one of them shoved her and she fell to the ground with her baby. When she got up, assisted by people around, the soldier who had grabbed her husband by the neck, said that her husband would not be released until she left the roadblock. But even after Mrs. A. left, the soldiers did not let Mr. A. go: they sat him down next to them in the sun, ignoring his entreaties to let him move to the shade, and during the four hours he was sitting there, they punched and humiliated him. Requests to the police and DCO at Beit El to stop the abuse were to no avail, since incidents of this kind are not within the purview of these bodies. H.A.'s wife came to HaMoked's offices, and a complaint was lodged with the IDF, demanding that the incident be investigated and that abuse of this kind should not recur. As of the date of this report, no response has been received. **(Case 22489)**

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49 Haaretz, November 3, p. B4.