

Another one of those nights

A., 3. Februar 2010

I am sick. Yesterday, when my friend M. and I arrived in Ramallah, we heard the good news that Mohammad al Khatib, the coordinator of the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee who was arrested in a night raid last Thursday, was to be released. Immediately, people started phoning each other to arrange for the bail, to have someone drive to an airport where the only post office that was still open was so as to pay the bail and spare Mohammad another night. Until Midnight, people waited for Mohammad at Qalandia checkpoint and finally brought him to Bil'in to see his family. It was a great moment. I had stayed behind at my friend's flat in Ramallah as I couldn't move.

The friends came back from Bil'in around 2.30. At 4.30, I received another one of those calls: Two Palestinians and my close friend, an international who sometimes lives with me and whom we had just convinced to stay here longer and join the Coordination Committee, got arrested. And again, there followed an hour of phone calls, and trying to see who was responsible, which lawyer could take care of whom, what steps to take.

My friend got arrested, because, as the soldiers were raiding the house of one Palestinian, they had declared the area a military zone and ordered everyone to back off 50m away from it. It seems this might have been in reaction to the past night-raids, and especially the last one when all internationals and especially my friend refused to obey any orders unless the soldiers show an order that declared the area a military zone.

The second Palestinian, a photographer, was arrested when he stepped into the "military zone" (the area in front of the house that the army was raiding) to take a picture. My friend got arrested when she tried to intervene.

The two Palestinians are lucky already released. My friend is still being detained, but a lawyer is now on his way to her and word is that she might get released today. That would be good.

Another such night for many of us. I get a phone call like this once every week, right now.

Yesterday, three young men from the village of Nil'in turned themselves in to the army after the army had repeatedly invaded their homes and threatened to kill them.