Al Bowereh* is a northeastern neighborhood of Hebron (Al-Khalil in Arabic) that lies directly opposite Givat Harsina, one of the four neighborhoods of the settlement Kiryat Arba (1). The area has a population of approximately 340 people, including 174 under the age of eighteen (2). Israeli settlers have constructed the outpost named Hilltop 26 (3) on Palestinian farmland, and the outpost is considered illegal under both international and Israeli law. Settlers have erected seven buildings in the outpost. They regularly attack Palestinians living there, including children as they walk to and from school. This harassment takes the form of stone throwing, physical assault, the uprooting of grape vines and destruction of other crops, vandalism, and intimidation. In addition, due to the proximity of Road 60 and the settlement, the Israeli military has placed demolition orders on almost all of the remaining homes in Al Bowereh (4).

*The name Al Bowereh is transliterated from Arabic. The Arabic language comes from a different alphabet; other resources might transliterate it differently.
ROLE OF CPT
In above photo, a CPTer escorts children home from school. The bottom left photo focuses on the armed settler, escorted by an Israeli soldier, scaring the five girls in the photo, who eventually ran away from the settler threatening them as they walked home. In the presence of the Israeli soldier, the settler threatened to kill the CPT worker. The incident was witnessed by CPTers in September 2011.
Since November 2009, CPT has provided a consistent protective presence in the area, especially for the children returning home from school. Because there are currently 174 residents under the age of 18 in Al Bowereh, CPT’s accompaniment of the vulnerable school children is crucial. Normally, CPTers will arrive in Al Bowereh around 12:30 p.m. as the first batch of school children are arriving to walk home. CPTers then accompany the children to a safe point. They repeat this process until 2:45 p.m. when the last group of school children arrive. If any settlers are present, CPT attempts to deter violence and documents the details from the encounter.

CPT’s Palestine team also visits at-risk families in the area to build relationships and gather information. Since the beginning of CPT’s work in Al Bowereh, the team has visited the area every one to two weeks along with peace and human rights activist Hani Abu Haikel, asking the neighbors for an update on the status of the community, and checking for expansion of the Kiryat Arba settlement outpost. Team members report any developments in the outpost to Settlement Watch and other peace and human rights monitoring groups.
SETTLER VIOLENCE
Settlers, some of whom are armed, have become increasingly violent since the Israeli military dismantled the outpost in August 2010. Settlers responded by attacking Palestinian land, Israeli military vehicles and two international observers, who received treatment at a hospital. As the harassment progressed over subsequent months, CPT documented numerous incidents of settler harassment, which included uprooting 100 grape vines, throwing stones at school children, vehicles and homes, stealing things like bicycles and horses, intimidating, cursing and chasing school children, etc. One of the notable events occurred on December 16, 2009 when two settlers from Kiryat Arba attacked seven-year-old Omar Za’atari, while he walked home from school with two relatives. The two young settler men with a dog threw stones at the three boys and chased them. In his panic to get away, Omar tripped and fell on his face. His twelve-year-old brother ran back, scooped him up and raced to the safety of the closest house in the Al Bowereh neighborhood. When Omar’s father attempted to file a complaint the next day, the police insisted on interviewing the young boy, and when the seven-year-old Omar did not have a picture of his attackers they dropped the case. After conducting a community-wide survey on February 11, 2011, CPT discovered that almost all the families and children to whom CPTers spoke endure some kind of settler harassment on a weekly basis, and are frightened to leave the house and walk down the road. Most children simply stay indoors and do not play outside. Attacks on the children, which mostly involve stone throwing, can happen anywhere in Al Bowereh: at the top of the road next to the entrance to Harsina or down past the outpost. More recently, on February 17, 2011, a nine-year-old boy from the Maswade family was attacked by three teenage settlers, who chucked stones at the boy and hit him between the eyes on the bridge of his nose, leaving his face and clothes covered in blood. The settlers’ tactics extend beyond harassing and attacking school children, however. A member of the Sultan family told CPTers on January 10, 2010 that the settlers from the outpost often attack while the men of the neighborhood are away during the day. She expressed sorrow over her inability to help her neighbors, saying that when she hears their screams, she can only sit at the window and cry.
On the morning of September 20th 2010, the Abdul Rahman Sharif Sultan family of the Al Bowereh neighborhood awoke to find that Israeli settlers had cut down six dunams (6000 m²) worth of their mature grape trees and vines during the night. Sufian Sultan said “I have tended these trees since I have been very young and they have killed them. We raise these trees like children; they grow up and then (the settlers) kill them when they are all grown just so they can have our land.” According to Ma’an News, Sufian Sultan estimated that the immediate damage to the property reached thousands of dollars. Additionally, the grape harvests from this arbor would have fed (currently) three families with nineteen children. The vineyard would have continued to produce grapes for up to fifty years, if settlers had not destroyed the vines. (5) Israeli police told CPTers that they would not be able to pursue the perpetrators because there was "no evidence."

CPTers, other internationals, sympathetic Israelis and journalists also experience regular verbal and physical abuse by the settlers. On January 23, 2010, they injured a young Israeli woman from Ta’ayush when they threw a stone at her head. Police would not allow an ambulance to take her to the hospital. (6)
International attacked by settlers in Al Bowereh, August 2010 (7)

Palestinian resident in Al Bowereh injured in settler attack, March 2011 (8)

Car window smashed by settlers, September 2011
Since CPT began its work in Al Bowereh, international observers have witnessed and documented on-going settlement expansion in Kiryat Arba as well as in the illegal outpost, even when there was a purported settlement freeze. In 2003 a trailer, a shed, two cabins and three other crude structures were built (9), in an attempt to grab more land and pressure the Palestinian residents to leave their homes. The settlement outpost is illegal under international and Israeli law.

Typically, two disturbing trends have developed when the Israeli government has tried dismantling Outpost 26 in the past. The first is a tactic called “price tagging” that involves settler violence towards Palestinians (10). For example, on August 5, 2010, after the Israeli military dismantled the outpost (Hilltop 26), CPT documented settlers hurling rocks and glass on the Palestinian road and burning a large number of mature grape vines (11). In August 2010, the Israeli military removed the outpost once again. In response to this removal, settlers, along with their allies from neighboring settlements, attacked Palestinian lands, Israeli military vehicles, and two internationals observing the situation, who received treatment in a hospital (12). In February 2011, settlers began rebuilding the outpost the same day that the Israeli military removed it; soldiers and border police watched and allowed the rebuilding.
outlined in blue is the Israeli settlement of Kiryat Arba. The Red area is confiscated land and the green line encloses land belonging to Palestinian residents of Al Bowerah.
RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT
Settlers placed **roadblocks** at the entrance to Al Bowereh in 2000 and the military installed permanent blocks later, including two enormous stones and an iron gate across the access road to the neighborhood. One stone is approximately twenty-five meters from the barrier gate and the other massive stone is another 100 meters down the road. These blocks prevent the residents from accessing their homes by car, forcing them to walk as far as three kilometers every time they leave or return to the neighborhood. The families in Al Bowereh can no longer drive their children to or from school in bad weather, ship produce to market, or carry large quantities of groceries to their homes without passing a settlement and military tower. The alternative routes are dirt roads that damage vehicles; they are also seven kilometers longer. Merchants bringing needed supplies into Al Bowereh, as well as ambulances and other emergency vehicles, face the same difficult and time-consuming detours. Moreover, the obstacles set the stage for settler harassment of the residents, including schoolchildren because they must walk a long distance past Givat Harsina and the outpost. In order to avoid settler harassment, villagers have fashioned an alternate path, but it is rugged, can be dangerous in the rain, and is difficult to navigate during the night due to lack of lighting.
On December 31, 2009, the Israeli military destroyed buildings belonging to the Sultan and Al Za’atari families, including a barn, animal pens, dovecote, and garage. The demolitions occurred after neighbors observed a group of both settlers and soldiers photographing these buildings. As CPTers arrived on scene, they observed border police, civilian police, and the operators of the demolition equipment laughing and joking with one another. Unfortunately, because of Al Bowereh’s location in Area C (13), most of the houses have demolition orders, meaning many more families have similar stories and the possibility of future demolitions is looming. (14)
LAND CONFISCATION

Blue line represents past settlement expansion.
Pink line delineates most recent expansion.
Givat harsina neighbourhood of Kiryat Arba settlement, October 2011
Every Friday, settlers from Kiryat Arba walk or drive through Al Bowereh to pray at the top of a nearby hill called Jabal Sultan, because their leader Natanel Ozeri had been killed by Palestinians believed to be connected to Hamas, on this hill years before. These prayer gatherings are a source of anxiety for Al Bowereh residents because of the possibility of settler harassment and further land confiscation. Area residents, who have ownership papers for this land that date back to Ottoman times, intended to build a housing project for teachers before the Israeli Civil Administration designated the area “state land” in 1997. Despite the 1997 ruling, police and civil administration refused to remove the settler encampment until a direct injunction was issued by the Israeli military government months later. On February 25, 2011, CPTers observed a bulldozer leveling the land on another nearby Palestinian-owned hilltop. As CPT approached, it appeared that two soldiers and two settler security guards were drawing the parameters for a new settlement. CPTers asked to see the official permission to level this land and the men gave the team a yellow scrap of paper. The paper was obviously not an official document, but the four men ignored further appeals by CPT and continued to clear the land of stones. Anwar Sultan, the owner of this land, whose grandfather had owned it before him, told CPT the case concerning this hilltop had been volleyed around in the unjust military judicial system, a common ploy by the Israeli military in order to allow facts on the ground to evolve while a claim is in the system. Sultan concluded, “We know everything, but we can’t do anything...The settlers come and do what they want.” (15)
CURRENT LEGAL STATUS OF AL BOWEREH

Al Bowereh is owned by all members of the neighbourhood. The ownership of the area is managed by Abu Washdee, an elder member of the area. In 1982, the village tried to build on what is referred to as Hilltop 26 and were stopped by the Israeli military. In 1986, members of Al Bowereh appealed to the Israeli high court and won. This resulted in legal ownership of the hilltop currently inhabited by settlers. Natanel Ozeri, an Israeli settler, later attempted to inhabit the land but the court ordered the Israeli military to evict him. Following the death of Natanel Ozeri, (16) a subsequent hearing was held by an Israeli military court (17), which ruled that the area was ‘state land’. However, the ruling from 1986 was not presented by the lawyer for Al Bowereh residents. Al Bowereh residents are currently involved in a new court case.
Entrance to Al Bowereh 2010

Entrance to Al Bowereh 2011
Empty Security Posts
November 2011
In 2011 CPTers witnessed and documented the opening of the iron gate, installed by the Israeli military. In addition, approximately two meters behind the iron gate, a large yellow gate was installed. This gate however, remains closed. Human rights observers also noticed that the security posts beside the gates are vacant. CPT has been informed that that the yellow gate was installed by the settlers residing in Kiryat Arba and that the area is no longer a concern for the Israeli military. CPT and other Human Rights organizations are currently working towards the removal of the yellow gate and to open the road to Al Bowereh.

For more information please click the below link;
http://palestinianrightscommittee.org/take_action.html
1) http://peacenow.org.il/eng/content/hill-26-karmei-netanel
2) www.cpt.org/files/palestine/REPORT%20TO%20OCHA.doc
4) http://www.btselem.org/planning_and_building/illegitimate_considerations
5) See pictures at http://cpt.org/index.php?q=gallery&g2_itemId=23988&g2_page=1
6) http://www.cpt.org/cptnet/2010/03/06/al-khaliil-hebron-update-17-january-14-february-2010
9) http://peacenow.org.il/eng/content/hill-26-karmei-netanel
10) http://www.btselem.org/settler_violence


13) Area A is under full Palestinian control; Area B is joint Israeli-Palestinian control, and Area C is under full Israeli control. http://www.btselem.org/download/settlements_map_eng.pdf


16) http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Memorial/2003/Netanel+Ozeri.htm
