

March To Freedom

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’lin Village Takes Down The WallBy Ahmad Mesleh- ’lin Youth Center

(source: Stop The Wall)

After the people had concluded their Friday prayer in the fields near the village, more than 100 farmers, youth, international and Israeli peace activists marched towards the Apartheid Wall and their confiscated lands. Participants brought car tires and a big home made ladder to climb the high wall.

Right at the beginning of the protest, the youth had prepared a surprise for the Occupation forces: by using home made equipment one of the youth climbed the concrete wall and tied a chain at the holes in the upper part of the Wall’s cement components. Pulling this rope, the people managed to take down three concrete blocks of the Wall. This is the first time something like this has happened, and the people were happy to have such a success. This was the first message: one day the wall will fall and ’lin will be the start.

Then, one of the youth passed over the wall and he set fire to car tires, damaging the fence and the sensors that are fixed on the fence. Another group burned more than 10 tires at one of the gates in the concrete wall, all the smoke went to the settlement, and this is the second message sent from ’lin’s people: The wall will not prevent them from going to their lands that were taken from them.

The protesters were divided into two groups; the first was near the concrete wall, the second were out in the fields. The demonstrators encountered a huge number of soldiers, more than 70 soldiers and 15 jeeps. The army started launching a large amount of tear gas canisters at the people, the area was covered with tear gas, and dozens of people suffered from breathing difficulties. Everybody was treated locally by Red Crescent volunteers. However, youth had been collecting full tear gas canisters in the last couple of weeks and they started shooting these back to the soldiers. This was a strong message from the village: ‘shoot us, and we will shoot back’.

The occupation forces opened the gates and more than 20 soldiers entered at high speed shooting tear gas at the people and chasing them through the olive groves. Occupation soldiers used a police vehicle to spray chemical water and to launch tear gas through the machines that are fixed on the jeeps and which launch 64 tear gas canisters at a time. The demo ended after four hours of protesting.