



## Humanitarian Situation Update for the oPt

20 March 2008

*Overall: There has not been a significant improvement on the ground in the humanitarian situation since the reinvigoration of the political process following the Annapolis summit. A key reason is the increasing movement restrictions imposed by the IDF both within the West Bank and on the Gaza crossings. The high number of casualties during the IDF operation into Gaza in late February, and the increasing military activities in the West Bank, have further exacerbated an already difficult humanitarian situation. Since Annapolis, there was also a significant increase in the number of rockets and mortars fired from the Gaza Strip towards Israel.*

A. In the West Bank, a comparison of the 13 weeks before and after Annapolis<sup>1</sup>, demonstrates:

- Increased obstacles restricting freedom of movement - 580 as of Feb. 2008.

Prior monthly averages of the number of obstacles:

- 472 in 2005
- 518 in 2006
- 552 in 2007
- Increases in the number of structures demolished
- Increasing trends in IDF search operations
- Increased use of curfews on Palestinian villages

B. During the IDF military operation into the Gaza Strip (from 27 February to 4 March 2008):

- 120 Palestinians (34 children) were killed and 269 (at least 63 children) were injured in the Gaza Strip. At least 55 of those killed and 104 of those injured were civilians not directly involved in fighting.
- Two IDF soldiers were killed and 15 were injured in the Gaza Strip. In addition, one Israeli civilian not involved in fighting was killed and other 14 (including one child) were injured by rocket fire.
- 230,000 Gazans were without water for almost two days following damage to 8 electrical transformers and 2 high voltage lines affecting 10 water wells. Water supply to a larger part of the Gazan population was interrupted for shorter periods, due to lack of access of the Water Utility personnel to some wells in the Gaza Strip.
- A total of 11 buildings were destroyed in the Gaza Strip, all due to IAF missile fire. These structures include the Gaza Ministry of Interior, the Labourers' Union Federation building and five workshops.

### I. CASUALTY FIGURES (OPT AND ISRAEL): 1 JANUARY – 11 MARCH 2008

- 259 Palestinians (43 children) and 14 Israelis (4 children) were killed due to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.
- 767 Palestinians (181 children) and 103 Israelis (5 children) were injured due to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.
- 92% of direct conflict deaths among Palestinians and 68% of direct conflict injuries among Palestinians were in the Gaza Strip



## 2. GAZA STRIP

- **Fuel import restrictions** - Though the Nahal Oz fuel pipelines are open almost five days per week, fuel supplies to Gaza continue to be restricted to 10,000 liters of benzene and 100,000 liters of diesel per day. In February 2008, Israel allowed around 70,000 litres of petrol and 700,000 litres of diesel per week to enter Gaza, which is only 27% and 30% of Gaza's estimated weekly requirements. As fuel amounts are limited, the Gas Stations Owners Association has decided to limit fuelling to 50-100 NIS per car.
- Sanitation authorities are **still dumping 60,000 cubic meters of sewage** (20,000 cubic meters raw, 40,000 cubic meters partially treated) into the sea as a result of fuel, electrical and spare parts shortages.
- In February 2008, the Israeli government continued to limit the fuel for Gaza's power to only 2.2 million litres per week, enabling the plant to produce only 55 megawatts of electricity, which is less than 70% of its full capacity. In addition, in the same month, **Israel further reduced the amount of electricity** it supplies directly to Gaza by 0.5 megawatts. Power cuts of eight hours per day were felt everywhere in the Gaza Strip, except Rafah, throughout February 2008. Temperate weather led to a reduction in electricity cuts to 2-3 hours/day, but the cuts increased again to around eight hours/day when demands increased with a spell of hot weather.
- **Erez Crossing remains closed** for Palestinians except for medical cases and traders with the necessary previous coordination. **Rafah Crossing** was open on 2-12 March, allowing 257 patients, including those injured during the recent hostilities, to reach Egyptian hospitals. On 05 March 2008, the crossing was open in both directions, allowing for an additional 55 patients to exit Gaza and 200 persons who had been stuck in Al Arish to enter Gaza. **Karni Crossing**, the only Gaza crossing point with adequate infrastructure to process large quantities of goods appropriately and effectively, remains closed since June 2007. **The opening of Karni and the removal of Israel's ban on exports from Gaza are essential** for any hope of an economic revival and an improvement in the humanitarian and economic situation.
- Gaza's fishing industry, which employs around 5,000 Palestinians in Gaza, faces **significant difficulties due to access restrictions** (imposed by Israel since 2001) **and, more recently also due to severe fuel shortages.**<sup>2</sup> Therefore, since January 2008, 63% fewer of fishing trips have been taken place, compared to last year. This is likely to have a significantly negative impact on the upcoming sardine catch, set to begin in April.<sup>3</sup>

## 3. WEST BANK

- Restrictions on Palestinian movement **continue to increase**: As of 19 February 2008 there were 580 obstacles blocking Palestinian movement in the West Bank,<sup>4</sup> compared to 472 (monthly average) in 2005, 518 in 2006, and 552 in 2007.
- There has been a noticeable **increase in house demolitions and resultant displacement** in last two months: During Jan-Feb 2008, 111 structures (51 residential) demolished resulting in the displacement of 381 Palestinians.<sup>5</sup> These demolitions hinder Palestinian development and the natural expansion of Palestinian populated areas.
- The agricultural sector, the herd-dependant in particular, has been **severely hit by a series of weather shocks** (drought and frost) **compounded by the imposed closure regime**, which includes, inter alia, checkpoints, roadblocks, age restrictions and the Barrier.
- In the last few months, the Israeli government **has approved the construction of hundreds of additional housing units in Israeli settlements** in the oPt, most of them in East Jerusalem and



the surrounding settlements. 38.3% of West Bank territory is taken up by Israeli settlements, outposts, 'closed areas' west of the Barrier, closed military areas, Israeli-declared nature reserves or other Israeli infrastructure.

- **Barrier construction continues.** Approximately 57% of the Barrier's planned route (723 km) is completed. When complete, approximately 9.5% of West Bank land, including East Jerusalem, will be isolated by the Barrier. Over 80% of Israeli settlers will be physically connected to Israel, while Palestinians will be separated from land, livelihoods and services, with access dependent on a restrictive gate and permit regime.

### **Humanitarian Assistance:**

Around 2 million Palestinians in the oPt received food aid from UNRWA and WFP.

Currently, 80% of Gazans receive some form of humanitarian assistance.

According to a poll conducted in May 2007, more than 70% of Palestinians feel that they need humanitarian assistance; 49% state that the importance of assistance in their lives has risen during the past six months.<sup>6</sup>

### **CAP 2008:**

The total financial requirement under CAP 2008 is USD 461 million, of which 1.3% was funded as of 18 March 2008. Protection sector is 12% funded, Food is 1% and the Economic Recovery is 2% funded (still the largest sector with financial requirement of about USD 158 million). Agriculture and Water and Sanitation sectors are 1% funded each. All other sectors are still not funded.



## ANNEX: KEY TRENDS—13 WEEKS BEFORE AND AFTER NOVEMBER 2007

### Increase in Curfew Hours in the West Bank

29/08-27/11 = **445 curfew hours** (weekly average = 34)

28/11-26/02 = **543 curfew hours** (weekly average = 42)

### Increase in Searches and Detentions/Arrests in the West Bank

29/08-27/11 = **1,125** search operations and **1,062** detentions/arrests (weekly average 86 searches and 82 detentions/arrests)

28/11-26/02 = **1,140** search operations and **1,160** detentions/arrests (weekly average 88 searches and 89 detentions/arrests)

### Increase in demolitions and resultant displacement in the West Bank

29/08-27/11 = **65** structures demolished and **332** people displaced

28/11-26/02 = **111** structures demolished and **381** people displaced.

### Increase in Detentions/Arrests in the Gaza Strip

29/08-27/11 = 21 search operations and **274** detentions/arrests

28/11-26/02 = 21 search operations and **354** detentions/arrests

### Increase in number of casualties due to Israeli military activity in the Gaza Strip

29/08-27/11 = **79** Palestinians killed (including 9 children) and **170** Palestinians injured (including 12 children)

28/11-26/02 = **177** Palestinians killed (including 5 children) and **336** Palestinians injured (including 31 children).

### Increase in rockets and mortars fired at Israel

29/08-27/11 = **267** rockets and **350** mortars

28/11-26/02 = **629** rockets and **696** mortars

### Slight decrease in casualties due to Israeli military activity in the West Bank

29/08-27/11 = **18** Palestinians killed (including four children) and **246** Palestinians injured (including 79 children)

28/11-26/02 = **16** Palestinians killed (including 2 children) and **236** Palestinians injured (including 56 children).

## End Notes:

1. 29 August 2007 – 27 November 2007 vs. 28 November 2007 – 26 February 2008.
2. Gaza fishermen may only fish in shallow waters, 6 nautical miles (nm) off the shore, as opposed to the 20 nm called for in the 1995 Interim Agreement.
3. For additional information on the 2007 sardine season see, OCHA Special Focus: Gaza Fishing - An Industry in Danger, April 2007.
4. This figure includes 87 staffed checkpoints within the WB territory, but excludes 8 checkpoints placed on the Green Line.
5. This figures includes 19 structures disassembled by Palestinians themselves upon being forced to do so by the IDF and one structure damaged by the IDF, and rendered uninhabitable.
6. University Institute for Development Studies (Institute Universitaire d'études du Développement [IUED]) Poll No.11 (unpublished) May 2007.