



THE HUMANITARIAN MONITOR

JUNE 2009

June overview

The Gaza blockade entered its third year this June. This blockade has been characterized by the UN's most senior humanitarian official, John Holmes, as a form of collective punishment on the entire Gazan population. The blockade was imposed by Israel after the Hamas organization took control over the security apparatus in the Gaza Strip in June 2007. Since then, Gaza's largest and best equipped commercial crossing, Karni, has been shut down; the amount of imports allowed in have been reduced to approximately 20 percent of the level before the imposition of the blockade and limited, to a large extent, to food, medical and hygiene products; exports were entirely banned, except for a few exceptional truckloads of flowers. These measures have devastated the private sector economy and resulted in the closure of 95 percent of the previously operating businesses and the loss of 120,000 jobs. Moreover, the ongoing ban on



Gazans using mud bricks to reconstruct a home destroyed during the "Cast Lead" offensive. Photo by Patrick Zoll.

the import of construction materials is preventing the reconstruction of 6,300 homes, destroyed or seriously damaged during the "Cast Lead" military offensive, as well as dozens of schools and health facilities.

The supply of electricity also continues to be severely constrained by the blockade due to insufficient

ISSUES COVERED THIS MONTH

West Bank, including East Jerusalem: Demolitions and resultant displacement in East Jerusalem and Area C continue • First half of 2009: decrease in Palestinian casualties • Access into four cities further relaxed; mechanisms of control entrenched • Nablus City: gradual revival of commercial activity following access easing • Restrictions at checkpoints continue to hamper UN operations • Water shortages in Ramallah and Jerusalem governorates

Gaza Strip: The blockade entered its third year: 1.5 million people denied dignity due to the political stalemate • Increase in demand for electricity led to longer power cuts • Violence continues to affect civilian lives • Palestinian casualties resulting from tunnel-related incidents • Increase in access of patients to specialized treatment outside Gaza • A number of drug items and disposables remain out of stock • "Cast Lead" Fact Finding Mission

Other oPt issues: New Israeli procedure deepens Gaza-West Bank separation • Allegations of ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian detainees, including children • Funding

industrial fuel supplies and the inability to import parts to repair damage to the electricity network from “Cast Lead”. Since the beginning of 2009, the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) received only a few of truckloads of electric items, which were used to rehabilitate a limited number of electrical networks; there are currently 150 electrical materials (e.g. high voltage cables, transformers, wires and switches) at zero stock level and approximately 400 others in short supply. During June, there were daily electrical outages ranging from 6 to 8 hours affecting 90 percent of the Gazan population, while the remaining 10 percent have not received electricity at all due to unrepaired damages incurred by the network during “Cast Lead”. With the heavy summer heat, these outages are directly affecting refrigerated foods and air conditioning supply in individual households, as well as the provision of essential services like water and sanitation, health care and medicine storage, and waste disposal. As a result, public institutions

are forced to rely extensively on backup generators fueled by diesel, which for the last seven months has been imported only through the tunnels under the border with Egypt, due to a ban imposed on its import through the official crossings (except for small quantities for hospitals).

The severity of this situation led 38 humanitarian organizations to issue this month a unified statement calling for the free and uninhibited access of all humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip, in line with applicable international agreements. The statement described the atmosphere of deprivation and the deepening sense of hopelessness and despair among people in Gaza as unacceptable and concluded that the men, women and children of Gaza should be shown an alternative of hope and dignity before the situation deteriorates further.

West Bank, including East Jerusalem

Demolitions and resultant displacement in East Jerusalem and Area C continue

East Jerusalem

In June, a total of 11 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished in East Jerusalem: two by the Israeli authorities and nine self-demolitions by Palestinians following the receipt of demolition orders from the Jerusalem municipality. In the first six months of 2009, a total of 29 residential structures were demolished in East Jerusalem for lack of the requisite building permit, resulting in the displacement of 170 Palestinians, including 80 children. During the same period, seven other non-residential structures were demolished, affecting an additional 74 people. This is equivalent to a monthly average of six structures demolished and 28 people displaced, a 25 and 18 percent decrease, respectively, compared to the 2008 monthly averages.¹

In late June, the Israeli media reported that the Jerusalem municipality announced its intention to freeze 70 percent of outstanding demolition orders

affecting structures in East Jerusalem and negotiate compensation with owners of the remaining 30 percent, who will be displaced when their structures are demolished.² According to the reports, Jerusalem’s Deputy Mayor for East Jerusalem Affairs identified the inability to obtain a permit as the main cause of unauthorized or “illegal” construction, noting that in 2008 only 18 permits were issued to Palestinians in East Jerusalem. According to the deputy, “(t)o get a construction permit in East Jerusalem you have to be more than a saint.”³

Meanwhile, at least 37 structures in East Jerusalem were issued new demolition orders in June. Lawyers representing Palestinians whose homes are at risk of demolition have reported to OCHA that the Jerusalem municipality is increasingly issuing a new type of demolition orders against structures built without building permits that have been inhabited for over five years.⁴ In contrast to other types of orders, the new ones do not criminalize the owners of the “illegal” construction and do not involve the payment of fines. About 30 of these

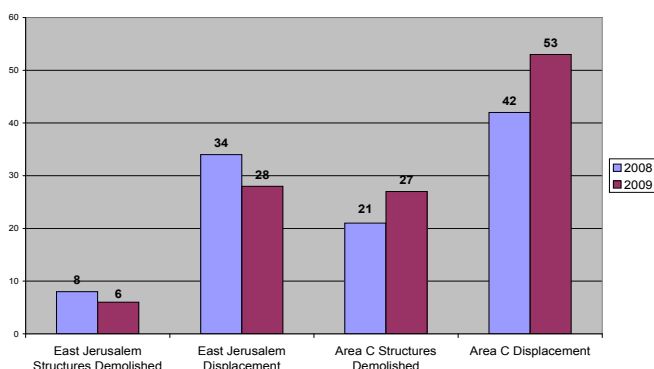
orders targeted houses in Al Bustan neighbourhood of Silwan, replacing orders issued in the past. These are the first orders to be distributed in Al Bustan since the Regional Planning Committee's rejection of the Bustan residents' proposed master plan on 17 February 2009.

Area C: rise in closed military areas' demolitions

OCHA recorded more demolitions in Area C in June than in any month since it developed its Protection of Civilians database in mid-2005. During the month, 109 Palestinian-owned structures, including 27 residential tents, were demolished, resulting in the displacement of 162 Palestinians. Of these, eight were self-demolitions of structures at-risk of demolition.

OCHA data suggests that demolitions and displacement in Area C are on the rise: in the first six months of 2009, there was a monthly average of 27 demolitions and 53 people displaced in Area C, 29 and 26 percent higher, respectively, than the 2008 monthly averages. Over 80 percent of the Palestinians recorded by OCHA as displaced in Area C in 2009 were residing in areas declared closed by the Israeli military. This trend was clear in June, when all of the displacement occurred in closed military zones.⁵ The majority of people (79 percent) were displaced after the Israeli authorities distributed evacuation orders to 18 families from Khirbet ar Ras al Ahmar, a herding community located in a closed military zone in the northern Jordan Valley. During the forced evacuation, the Israeli authorities demolished by bulldozer 15 residential tents, 30 animal pens and 18 traditional 'taboun' ovens. Some two weeks later, the Israeli authorities demolished 30 structures belonging to two other Jordan Valley communities, both also located in closed military zones.

West Bank Demolitions and Displacement: Monthly Averages



Also during the month, the Israeli authorities approached some 20 families in Al Malih area of the northern Jordan Valley and ordered them to leave their homes for one night to allow for a military training exercise in the area. After the families were forced to evacuate their tents for several hours, taking only their mattresses and tractors, coordination between the Israeli and Palestinian District Coordination Liaison (DCL) offices, enabled them to return home before the military training began. The families were ordered to remain inside their tents for the duration of military training.



Animal pens in Jordan Valley Bedouin community (Al Hadiyiya) under demolition threat. Photo by Patrick Zoll.

Since 1967, Israel has designated over 20 percent of the West Bank as a closed military area (excluding the land behind the Barrier and the Green Line and settlement jurisdiction areas, both of which have also been declared "closed" by the Israeli military). Palestinian presence in these areas is restricted and construction is prohibited by the Israeli authorities. Enforcement of the access restrictions varies and the exact boundaries of the closed area are not clearly demarcated on the ground. Most of the families living in these communities are farmers and herders, many of whom have lived in the areas since before their declaration as closed and who rely on access to land for their livelihoods. They reside primarily in tents or tin structures, represent some of the most vulnerable communities in the West Bank and are considered priority groups for humanitarian assistance.

Of particular concern are recent measures adopted by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA), affecting two schools built in Bedouin communities in Area C. One school, located in the Jordan Valley north

of Jericho City, is currently comprised of five classrooms: two cement structures, one tent, and two zinc extensions. During the last academic year it was attended by about 60 children from the Ka'abna Bedouin community, from the first to the seventh grades. Due to the acute shortage of space, the Belgium Corporation has funded the purchase of two additional caravans by the Palestinian Ministry of Education. The caravans have been waiting in storage in Nablus since February 2009 and could not be installed, because the ICA has refused to issue the required permit, citing an existing plan to re-locate the Ka'abna community, including the school, to another area.

The other school, located next to the industrial zone of Mishor Adumim settlement (on the side of Highway 1), received a stop construction order from the ICA. This school, which was only recently constructed, is planned to serve in the coming academic year as a kindergarten and school for approximately 100 children between 4 and 7 years old from the Bedouin community of Arab Al Jahalin.

The construction of the school was triggered by the desire to prevent the drop out of children currently walking to PA schools located a few kilometres away from their community (in Jericho City and Al Eizarriya town) due to the lack of transportation means by their families.⁶ In addition, the new location will prevent the potential hazards facing the children while walking along the highway. According to a community representative, at least four children from the community were reportedly killed in road accidents on highway 1 in the past two years. The new building, which was constructed with the support of an Italian and Israeli human rights NGOs, is ecologically friendly and was built with mud and recycled materials.

First half of 2009: decrease in Palestinian casualties

In the West Bank, during June, one Palestinian was killed and 90 Palestinians and 14 Israelis were injured in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. More than one-third (35) of all Palestinian injuries were due to Israeli-settler related incidents,

NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS DAMAGING IMPACT OF HOME DEMOLITIONS ON CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

In June, the Palestinian Counseling Center, Save the Children UK and the Welfare Association released a report focused on the impact, which Israel's home demolitions have on Palestinian children and their families. The report is based on the findings of a 2007 survey of Palestinians, whose homes were demolished in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for various reasons, including during military operations, for lack of permit and as punishment.

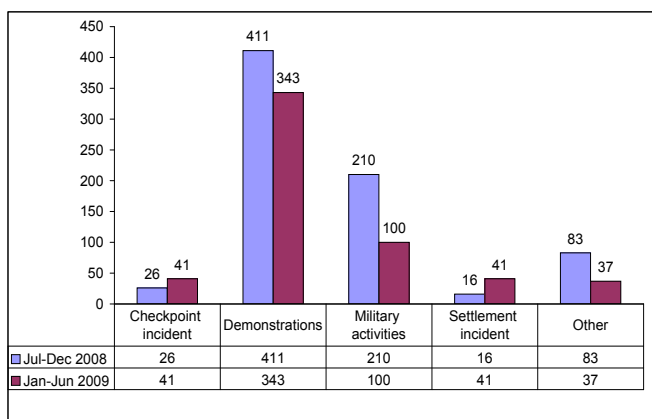
The survey found that house demolitions are followed by long periods of instability; over 71 percent of surveyed families reported that they moved at least twice following the demolition of their home and over 60 percent took at least two years to find a permanent residence. According to the survey, in the immediate aftermath of a demolition children face gaps in education, a reduced standard of living and limited access to basic services, such as water and health. The survey found that emotional and behavioural problems persist even after the six month period immediately following the demolition. Symptoms of psychological distress found among children included: increased aggression; depression; difficulty concentrating and bedwetting problems, among others. Anecdotal information gathered during the survey suggests that longer-term affects on education occur, including lower academic achievement rates and early drop out.

Based on its findings, the report recommends that all stakeholders – Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the international community and donor governments – act immediately to respond to house demolitions in a way that fulfills their legal obligations and meets the needs of families displaced by the demolition of their homes.

27 directly by settlers and eight by Israeli security forces; more than 70 percent of these injuries (25) occurred in unarmed clashes in the Silwan and At Tur neighborhoods of East Jerusalem. Most of the remaining Palestinian casualties occurred in the first two weeks of the month: one Palestinian was killed and 15 others were injured in anti-Barrier demonstrations, and 11 Palestinians were injured at or near checkpoints. In the last two weeks of the month, nine members of Israeli security forces, but no Palestinians, were injured in anti-Barrier demonstrations..

In the first six months of 2009 there has been an overall decrease in the number of Palestinian casualties compared to the previous six months of 2008. A total of 15 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces between January and June 2009, compared to 19 from July to December 2008. During this period, three Israelis, including one child, were killed by Palestinians, compared to two in the second half of 2008. The overall number of Palestinians injured from January-June 2009 is also approximately 25 percent (562) below the parallel figure for the second half of 2008 (746), with significant differences in the distribution of injuries across different types of incidents.

Palestinians injured by Israeli forces by incident type



The number of Palestinians injured from general military operations, including military patrols and search operations, is less than half in the first six months of 2009 (100) of what it has been from July-December 2008 (210). On the other hand, the number of Palestinians injured

at or near checkpoints is almost 37 percent higher than it was in the previous period. There are also more than twice as many Palestinians injured while Israeli military or police forces intervene during confrontations between Israeli-settlers and Palestinians from January-June 2009 compared to July-December 2008.⁷

Organised violence: Israeli-settlers continue to “exact a price”

In West Bank areas not including East Jerusalem, despite relatively low numbers of Palestinian injuries by Israeli settlers (7 injuries in June vs. average monthly 10 injuries Jan-May 09), property vandalism by Israeli settlers was widely reported in the northern and southern districts. Throughout the month, more than 1,500 trees were reported burnt or cut down and hundreds of dunums of other crops, including wheat and barley, were also burnt by Israeli settlers. These events come in the context of an explicit strategy among Israeli settlers to exact a “price” for every attempt to dismantle a settlement outpost. This strategy was implemented on several occasions in 2008, with settlers mobilizing in large groups to attack Palestinians and their properties following attempts to dismantle settlement outposts. The “price tag” strategy⁸ indicates that Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians are not isolated incidents, but are in fact highly organized and tactically used to achieve political ends.

The “price tag” strategy, compounded by lax law enforcement on settler violence, is a clear protection concern.⁹ During the month, the Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem issued a statement protesting the closure of the police investigation file of an incident where Israeli settlers beat Palestinian shepherds near Susiya settlement (Hebron) with truncheons in June 2008, on grounds of “offender unknown”.¹⁰ B’Tselem also reported the Jerusalem District Attorney’s Office’s intention to withdraw the indictment against an Israeli settler who was filmed shooting a Palestinian at point blank range during the evacuation of the Rajabi House settlement in Hebron city in December 2008.¹¹

Access into four cities further relaxed; mechanisms of control entrenched

During June the Israeli authorities implemented a number of significant steps that have further eased the flow of Palestinian traffic to and from four West Bank cities: Nablus, Qalqiliya, Ramallah and Jericho. Initial field observations indicate that these measures have significantly reduced the amount of time required for Palestinians to access these cities.

As part of these measures one checkpoint controlling the southern route into Qalqiliya City ('Izbat Jal'ud) was completely dismantled. Four other checkpoints controlling key routes into the above mentioned cities are no longer staffed on a permanent basis and some of their infrastructure was removed: 'Asira Ash Shamaliya (north Nablus), Qalqiliya DCO (east Qalqiliya), 'Atara (north Ramallah), and Jericho DCO (south Jericho). Since these changes were implemented, Israeli soldier have occasionally performed checks at all of these four checkpoints for short periods of times. Regarding Nablus, while six permanently staffed checkpoints around the city remain intact (including Huwwara, Awarta, Beit Iba, At Tur, Beit Furik and Shave Shomoron), the permit requirements for vehicles leaving the city, previously implemented on some of these checkpoints, were lifted, and checks began to be performed only on a random basis [on the impact on Nablus commercial life see next section]. In addition, during the month OCHA documented the removal of 19 unstaffed obstacles throughout the West Bank.

By contrast, access of Palestinians with West Bank IDs to East Jerusalem from the north was further constrained. As of 14 June, Palestinians holding special permits must register at the Qalandiya checkpoint when entering and leaving, by having their magnetic cards and hand scanned.

The above measures took place in the context of a wider process of entrenchment of some of the mechanisms used to control and restrict Palestinian movement. This process includes, among other elements, the expansion of the "fabric of life" road network and of key permanently staffed checkpoints.¹² While in some cases these

measures have eased access, they exact a price from Palestinians in terms of land loss, disruption of traditional routes, and deepening fragmentation of West Bank territory.

To date, following the latest changes, there are a total of 613 closure obstacles within the West Bank territory (excluding checkpoints located on the Green Line), which obstruct the internal movement of Palestinians, including access into East Jerusalem. Despite some definitional differences, this figure has been confirmed by the IDF Central Command and OCHA, following detailed crosschecking and a series of joint field trips. Out of the 613 closure obstacles, 68 are permanently staffed checkpoints (five fewer than one month ago). Thirty-eight (38) of these checkpoints are located on West Bank roads, eventually leading into East Jerusalem and Israel, most of them along the Barrier; these checkpoints block Palestinian access to West Bank communities and land on the other side of the checkpoint. In addition, there are 522 unstaffed obstacles (roadblocks, earthmounds, earth walls, road barriers, road gates and trenches), and 23 "partial checkpoints", which are points of control staffed on an ad-hoc basis.

Not included in the 613 figure, but equally important, are 84 obstacles blocking Palestinian access and movement within the Israeli controlled area of Hebron City (H2), 63 crossing points along the Barrier, also known as "Barrier gates" which control Palestinian movement into West Bank areas on the west side of the Barrier, and an average of 70 random ("flying") checkpoints deployed every week since the beginning of 2009.

The closure obstacles constitute only one of several layers of a complex system of access restrictions applicable to Palestinians, which include, inter alia, restrictions on the use of main roads, the Barrier and its permit regime, closed military zones and nature reserves, and Israeli settlements and adjacent "buffer zones".

Nablus City: gradual revival of commercial activity following access easing

According to information provided to OCHA by the Nablus Chamber of Commerce (CoC), since the beginning of 2009, Nablus City has seen a slow, albeit significant, revival of the commercial activity that has been stunted by the closure of the previous eight years.¹³ This revival has been attributed, to a large extent, to the measures implemented by the Israeli authorities in the past few months, which have eased access to and from the city. Particularly significant in this regard are the lifting of the restrictions on the access of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship into the city on Saturdays and the revocation of the “back-to-back” and permit system imposed on commercial trucks.

Palestinians with Israeli citizenship generate considerable income for Palestinian cities located in the northern West Bank, due to the short distance between these cities and some of the main Palestinian towns inside Israel, the relatively high purchase power of this population, and the attractive prices offered in West Bank markets for some goods compared to prices in Israel. The prohibition on the entry of Israeli citizens into Area A, including Nablus City, has been enforced since the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000. The Nablus CoC estimates that the number of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship who have entered Nablus City increased from a few hundred in April 2009 to a weekly average of 3,000 in June. The value of sales during Saturdays has increased accordingly from 1 million NIS a day to around 2 million NIS.

Since 2003 and until recently, commercial trucks entering or leaving Nablus City through the Awarta checkpoint were required to have either a special permit or the performance of the “back-to-back” procedure, which entailed offloading and reloading goods. In addition, a number of items, including fuel and wheat, could be transported without a permit only on Israeli-plated trucks. Overall, the “back-to-back” procedure considerably increased transaction costs, caused damages to goods, and reduced the competitiveness of Palestinian goods. Nablus traders reported incurring additional transaction

costs ranging between 100 to 300 NIS per truck, as a result of the “back-to-back” procedure. While direct estimates on losses and damage of goods are not available, the CoC reports that truckloads of sugar, cement and furniture were the most affected by the system, incurring losses of an estimated 200-300 NIS per truckload.

The CoC estimates that following the removal of the restrictions at the Awarta checkpoint the daily average of trucks has increased from 250 truckloads to 700-750. Moreover, despite the increase in traffic volume, the lifting of the “back-to-back” procedure allowed a significant reduction in the average waiting time, from two hours in past years to a current average of 20 minutes.

Nablus City, which is the main economic and services hub in the northern West Bank, has the highest concentration of businesses vis-à-vis the rest of the governorate than any other West Bank city; one-third out of 42,884 businesses in the Nablus governorate are located in Nablus City, compared to, for example, Ramallah and Hebron cities, which host less than 10 percent of the businesses in their respective governorates.¹⁴ As a result, the impact of the tight closure on Nablus City and the resultant shrinkage of commerce activity have had a greater impact than similar restrictions imposed on other West Bank cities. Between 2002 and 2006, unemployment rates in the governorate fluctuated at around 25 percent of the labour force, up from 7 percent in the third quarter of 2000, before the outbreak of the second Intifada.¹⁵ From 2007 onwards, unemployment levels began to gradually decline, alongside a reduction in violent incidents and a slight relaxation on checks at some checkpoints, compared to previous years, and reached 13 percent in the first quarter of 2009.

Restrictions at checkpoints continue to hamper UN operations

Access restrictions imposed by Israeli security personnel at checkpoints, those along the Barrier in particular, continue to hamper UN operations in the West Bank. During June, UN staff members reported a total of 71 incidents involving access delays or denials at checkpoints, resulting in the loss of 1,303 staff hours (or the equivalent of 173 UN staff days).¹⁶ While the number of incidents in June

constitutes a mild increase of 18 percent compared to May (60), the increase in the number of lost hours is more than fivefold, reflecting the larger number of staff members involved in each incident (238).

Overall, the total number of incidents recorded in the first half of 2009 was 20 percent lower than the parallel figure during 2008 (542 compared to 676) and the total number of lost hours decreased by 72 percent (3,331 compared to 11,856).

More than half (56 percent) of the reported incidents in June involved Israeli security personnel demanding to search UN vehicles. The large majority of this type of incident occurred at the two main Barrier checkpoints controlling vehicular access into East Jerusalem from the north and the south - Qalandiya and Tunnels checkpoints respectively. According to the UN Convention on Privileges and Immunities (1946), of which Israel is a signatory, UN property and assets are immune from search; therefore, UN staff is instructed not to allow vehicle searches.

In addition, a number of other incidents were triggered by the demand of Israeli security personnel to UN national staff not holding an identification card issued by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to exit their vehicle and undergo a physical check.

Water shortages in Ramallah and Jerusalem governorates

The increase in the water demand during June, mainly due to the beginning of the summer, coupled with the water shortage crisis ongoing

for the last decades, has led to deterioration in the water supply to many communities connected to the water network throughout the West Bank.¹⁷

According to the WaSH (Water and Sanitation, Hygiene) cluster, the latter include communities in the Ramallah and Jerusalem governorates, which are served by the Jerusalem Water Undertaking (JWU), a Palestinian public utility distributing water purchased from the Israeli Water Company, Mekorot. The affected population served by the JWU is estimated at 70,000 out of 320,000 people residing in 58 communities, including relatively large towns and villages such as Birzeit, Abu Qash, Kobar and Beit Hanina. Most households in these communities are receiving water intermittently, with some of them being supplied only once every ten days.

As a result, affected households are forced to increasingly rely on the purchase of water from privately owned water-tankers. As noted by the World Bank, the price of water from non-network sources is about four times higher than the price of water supplied by network sources, thus severely impacting poor households.¹⁸

While these areas have been affected by discontinuous water supply during previous summers, the current situation constitutes a further deterioration. The main reason for this is the decision by Mekorot to cut the water supply to the JWU by 15 percent - from 34,000 to 29,000 cubic metres a day - implemented since November 2008.

OPT CHILD PROTECTION FIGURES AT A GLANCE: JUNE VS. MAY 2009

Conflict-related casualties:

Palestinian children killed: 0 vs. 1 by UXO

Israeli children killed: 0 vs. 0

Palestinian children injured: 18 vs. 19 (including 3 by UXO)

Israeli children injured: 0 vs. 0

Displaced as a result of house demolitions: 98 vs. 0; 15 in E. Jerusalem; 83 in Area C.

Palestinian children in Israeli detention: 355, including one administrative detainee, compared to 346 in May.

Gaza Strip

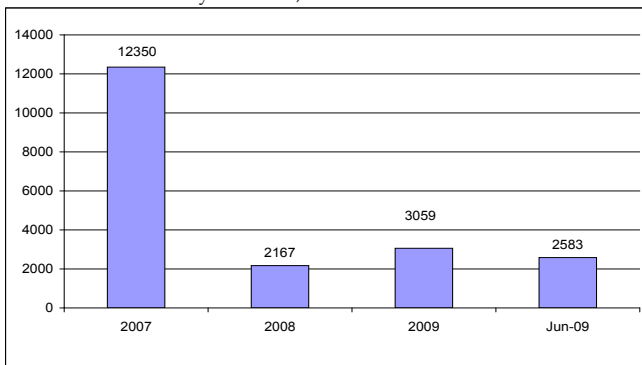
The current quantities supplied by Mekorot make up only about 60 percent of the estimated needs of the areas served by the JWU (45,000-50,000 cubic metres a day).

The blockade entered its third year: 1.5 million people denied dignity due to the political stalemate

The blockade imposed by Israel on Gaza, which has entered its third year, continued to undermine the livelihoods of Gaza's population and prevent the reconstruction of houses and infrastructure destroyed during the last armed conflict. According to media reports, on 10 June, the Israeli security cabinet adopted a decision whereby any relaxation in the blockade regime would be dependant upon progress in the negotiations for the release of the captured Israeli soldier, Gilad Schalit.¹⁹

During June, there was a 15 percent decline in the number of truckloads allowed into Gaza, compared to May 2009 (2,583 compared to 2,960). The total constituted only 21 percent of the monthly average of truckloads that entered Gaza in the first five months of 2007 (12,350), before the blockade. Truckloads imported by humanitarian agencies constituted 29% of the imports, while the rest were imported by the commercial sector.

Gaza imports -monthly average during the first five months of the years 2007, 2008 and 2009



Israel's 22 March 2009 decision to enable the unrestricted entry of all foodstuffs, provided that the source is approved by the Israeli authorities, remains unimplemented. Therefore, while truckloads carrying food products made up 77 percent of all imports during June (1,989), some items, including baby formula, tea, some canned food and jam, remain barred.

This month, limited quantities of new items, including agricultural fertilizers, car tyres, house repair tools and cattle, entered Gaza, some of them for the first time since November 2008. In addition, 18 truckloads of cement and gravel, to be used for the expansion of the Palestinian side of the Kerem Shalom crossing, were allowed entry. While limited quantities of construction materials were allowed in during the previous months for public infrastructure projects, this is the first shipment directed at private enterprises allowed in since 4 November 2008.

Construction materials needed to rebuild and repair houses and infrastructure damaged in the last Israeli military offensive, including cement, gravel, wood, glass and steel bars, remained barred. The results of a joint UNRWA-UNDP housing survey indicate that 3,600 housing units were totally destroyed, 2,700 sustained major damage and 52,000 houses need minor repair. Other essential items, including clothing, school textbooks, livestock, raw materials for industries, steel pipes, and spare parts for the sewage, water and electrical networks, also remained severely restricted or entirely barred.

The amount of cooking gas which entered Gaza in June represented only half the amount that entered during May 2009. According to the Gas Stations Owners Association (GSOA), the shortage of

UN RECONSTRUCTION INITIATIVE

A number of organizations, including UN agencies, are actively seeking ways to initiate early recovery projects. Currently, limited work is ongoing to rehabilitate damaged agricultural assets, such as agricultural lands, greenhouses, seed banks, and irrigation networks, to clear unexploded ordnance and remove the 600,000 tons of rubble generated as a result of Operation Cast Lead. By contrast, very little progress was done on the reconstruction of housing, roads, education and health facilities and the rehabilitation of the water and sanitation system. The UN Secretary-General has presented to the Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak a UN proposal entailing the opening of the crossings for materials to complete construction work on housing, health and education facilities suspended since June 2007. Intensive consultations with the Israeli government have taken place and the UN awaits Israel's response.

cooking gas during June resulted in the 22 cooking gas distribution centres operating two days a week only. In contrast, there was a slight increase in the amount of industrial fuel to operate the Gaza Power Plant (9.5 million litres), in comparison with May (9.3 million litres). This amount, however, represents only around 70 percent of the monthly needs, as estimated by the Power Plant Authority. As a result of shortages of industrial fuel, combined with the lack of spare parts needed for the Power Plant, scheduled power cuts throughout the Gaza Strip have remained in place (See section on electricity below).

The total ban on the import of petrol and diesel for private use has continued since 2 November 2008. According to the GSOA, petrol and diesel have continued to enter through the tunnels located under the Egypt-Gaza border on a daily basis since mid-March 2009. Tunnels remain an important economic lifeline for Gaza's population, supplying the market with goods barred from entering Gaza through the Israeli-controlled crossings.

During the month, no exports were allowed out of Gaza. Before the imposition of the blockade in June 2007, the average volume of exports was 1,380 truckloads per month or 60 truckloads per day, carrying a range of products, including furniture, garments, cash crops, vegetables, processed food,

metal products and handicrafts.²⁰ According to the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA) between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Israel should allow the export of 400 truckloads per day from Gaza.

Increase in demand for electricity led to longer power cuts

The supply of electricity within Gaza continued to be severely constrained by the ongoing blockade, which has resulted in a reduction in the capacity of the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) and in the inability to repair damage incurred by the electricity network during the "Cast Lead" offensive.

Current production levels of the GPP are approximately three quarters of its full capacity (60 out of 80 MW), mainly due to the Israeli decision, implemented since November 2007, to cut the amounts of industrial fuel imported into Gaza. This cut followed a dramatic reduction in the previous 140 MW production capacity in June 2006, when the Israeli airforce targeted and destroyed six electric transformers at the GPP, immediately after the capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

In addition, since the beginning of 2009, the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) received only a few truckloads of electrical items, which were used to rehabilitate a limited number of electrical

HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS MARK THE END THE SECOND YEAR OF THE BLOCKADE OF GAZA

As the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip enters its third year, a total of 38 humanitarian organizations, including three United Nations agencies (UNRWA, OHCHR and UNFPA), issued a joint statement to express deep concern over the continuation of the blockade, which is affecting the entire 1.5 million population of Gaza, in particular women, children and the elderly.

The statement highlighted that the amount of goods allowed into Gaza constitutes only one-quarter of pre-blockade imports. Eight out of ten of the truckloads allowed into Gaza contain food items, which are restricted to only 18 types, including tea, coffee and certain types of canned food items like tomato paste. Necessary goods, such as seedlings, calves, clothes and shoes, continue to be restricted from entering Gaza. Furthermore, early recovery materials, including construction materials, continue to be banned, leaving thousands of Palestinians unable to reconstruct their houses that were destroyed or incurred damage during "Cast Lead".

The statement concluded with a call for the free and uninhibited access of all humanitarian assistance, in line with applicable international agreements. It also warned that the blockade is creating an atmosphere of deprivation in Gaza that can only deepen the sense of hopelessness and despair among people and called for the Palestinians in Gaza to be shown an alternative of hope and dignity.

networks; there are currently 150 electric materials (e.g. high voltage cables, transformers, wires and switches) at zero stock level and approximately 400 others in short supply.

GEDCO estimates summer demand to be 250 MW (megawatts), thus creating an electricity deficit of 53 MW, or 21 percent of the demand, compared to the current supply (197 MW).²¹ As a result, 90 percent of Gaza's population experienced daily power cuts of 6-8 hours during June, up from five hours during February-May 2009. The remaining 10 percent, who reside mainly in Jabalia, Beit Lahiya, east of Khan Younis and some areas in Gaza City, have been without electricity since the beginning of "Cast Lead" in late December 2008, following damage caused to the electricity network. The extension of the power cuts has increased the reliance of public institutions and service providers on electrical generators, the operation of which depend on the import of diesel and spare parts through the tunnels.

Violence continues to affect civilian lives

Sporadic incidents of violence, which include clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian factions, shooting incidents at people in restricted land and sea areas, and Israeli air strikes, continued to undermine the security and livelihoods of civilians inside the Gaza Strip.

During June, a total of six Palestinians died and 11 others were injured in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, compared to four killed and six injured in May. Since the announcement of the unilateral ceasefires on 18 January 2009, a total of 30 Palestinians have been killed and 39 others injured. Palestinian armed factions fired sporadic rounds of rudimentary rockets and mortar shells towards southern Israel, resulting in no Israeli injuries.

Among this month's fatalities, four were alleged armed militants killed in an armed clash with Israeli forces near the Gaza-Israel border. This was the deadliest incident since the announcement of unilateral ceasefires on 18 January 2009. The other two fatalities died of wounds sustained during

the "Cast Lead" offensive, including an 11-year-old Palestinian boy. In addition to the six fatalities, two construction workers were killed this month while they were trying to demolish some of existing structure of a house that was damaged during "Cast Lead".

Four fishermen and one farmer were injured this month, after Israeli forces opened fire in their direction, enforcing restrictions on access to sea and land. This practice not only endangers the lives of civilians but severely undermine the livelihoods of farmers and fishermen. Access restrictions to areas adjacent to the border with Israel and to deeper waters have been tightened in the previous months. On three separate incidents this month, Israeli naval troops damaged two Palestinian fishing boats, confiscated another two boats and arrested six fishermen. According to the Gaza Fishermen's Syndicate, the main concern is the lack of consistent channels of communication between the fishermen and the Israeli patrol boats. In addition, on several occasions, Israeli tanks and bulldozers conducted land leveling operations in areas adjacent to the borders, next to Al Bureij Camp, East of Jabalia and Al Maghazi camp, causing further destruction of already damaged land during the recent Israeli offensive.

Civilian's lives also continued to be jeopardized also by internal Palestinian violence. During this month, four Palestinians were killed and another seven were injured in various incidents, including family feuds, the reckless use of weapons and in unclear circumstances. Fatalities include: a 21 years-old woman hanged by her family after being accused of "immoral behavior"; a man killed when an explosive charge prematurely blew up east of Khan Younis; and two men found dead east of Deir Al Balah and Beit Hanoun in unclear circumstances.

Palestinian casualties resulting from tunnel-related incidents

During June, the import of goods into Gaza through the tunnels under the Egyptian-Gaza border around Rafah continued unabated with reports that more and deeper tunnels are in operation.

This dangerous activity continued to exact a heavy

human price: during June three Palestinians were reportedly killed and 14 others were injured. The three deaths and ten of the injuries resulted from tunnel collapse and electrocution, while the remaining four were injured when the Israeli air force fired missiles targeting tunnels. In one of the collapse incidents that resulted in the death of one man, six Palestinians were trapped in a tunnel, but later rescued. Additionally, on 12 June, four Palestinians were injured when the Egyptian security forces reportedly destroyed 14 tunnels. This brings the total number of fatalities and injuries registered by OCHA in these circumstances in the first half of 2009 to 27 and 47 respectively, compared to a total of 46 fatalities and 69 injuries reported throughout 2008.

Increase in access of patients to specialized treatment outside Gaza

During June, the Referral Abroad Department of the Palestinian Ministry of Health issued 1,356 referral documents for patients in need of medical treatment unavailable in public hospitals in Gaza, of which 38 percent were for hospitals in East Jerusalem, Jordan and Israel, 27 percent for Egyptian hospitals, and 35 percent were for NGO hospitals in Gaza. The total number of referrals was one quarter above the parallel figure during May.

Of the 690 applications for permits submitted to the Israeli authorities during June (including for referrals issued in May) to leave Gaza through the Erez crossing, 68 percent were approved, two percent denied, and 30 percent were under review by the end of the month. About seven percent of the applicants, all of whom are included in the last category (“under review”), were requested to meet with representatives of Israel’s Security Agency (formerly the GSS) in order to have their applications processed. Overall, according to the Palestinian Liaison Officer at Erez, a total of 465 patients were able to leave Gaza through Erez during June, constituting a 53 percent increase compared to the parallel figure during the previous month (304) and an 11% decline compared to the monthly average of 524 patients in 2008 (524).

In addition, a total of 559 patients crossed to Egypt through the Rafah border crossing, 19 of them in

the first two weeks of June and the rest during a three-day opening towards the end of the month. The table below shows the number of patients who crossed into Egypt through Rafah Crossing since the beginning of the year 2009:

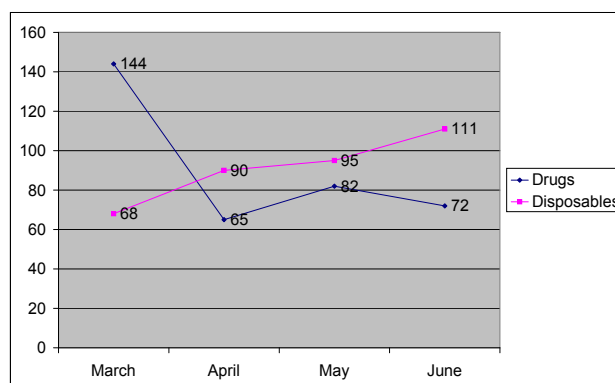
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Number of patients who crossed into Egypt through Rafah border crossing	1053	337	60	495	450	559

This month, WHO confirmed the death of two patients who died as a result of their inability to cross Rafah, which was closed over the period in which they should travel, and another one who died after his permit request to exit through Erez Crossing was denied. This brings the total death toll of patients in these circumstances since the beginning of 2009 to 20.

A number of drug items and disposables remain out of stock

According to the Gaza Central Drug Stores, of the list of 416 essential drug items and 596 essential disposable items, 72 and 111 respectively were at zero level during June. While there has been an overall decline in the number of drugs out of stock since March, an increase has been observed in the number of disposables. Even though clearance procedures implemented by the Israeli authorities at the crossings have occasionally caused delays in the supply of drugs and disposables, these shortages are related mainly to the poor management and distribution of supplies available in Gaza, the unreliability of estimated needs, inefficiencies in the procurement process, and funding shortfalls.

Out of Stock Items March-June 2009



”Cast Lead” Fact Finding Mission

The International Independent Fact Finding Mission (FFM) led by Justice Richard Goldstone continued investigating international humanitarian and human rights violations related to the “Cast Lead” operation. Technical experts within the mission visited numerous locations in Gaza and interviewed a wide range of witnesses and victims. In accordance with its mandate, the mission intended to visit Israel to investigate acts against Israelis in Israel. However, Israel has refused to cooperate with the FFM and has denied entry to Israel and access to Gaza through Israel.

As part of its fact finding efforts, public hearings were held in Gaza between 26 June and 1 July. The public hearings allowed victims, survivors and witnesses to submit information and speak for themselves before the public. This was the first time that victims in Gaza had had a chance to publicly express their experiences during the conflict to a UN fact finding body. Oral testimonies were accompanied by simultaneous interpretation in Arabic/English and broadcast on a live video link to the general public, journalists, radio stations, and media agencies at the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS). A second session of public hearings took place in Geneva on 6 and 7 July to address alleged violations in Israel and the West Bank and included the views of military experts.

Other oPt issues

New Israeli procedure deepens Gaza-West Bank separation

In the context of a number of petitions filed with the Israeli High Court of Justice by a human rights group (HaMoked), challenging the prohibition of Gaza residents from relocating to the West Bank, the State Attorney submitted a new procedure defining “humanitarian cases” eligible for exceptional permits.²²

After the outbreak of the second Intifada in 2000, Israel froze the updating of addresses of Gazans who had moved to the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem, which is regulated by a separate regime) in its copy of the Palestinian population registry. As a result, thousands of Gazans living in the West Bank are considered by the Israeli authorities as

“illegal aliens,” and risk being expelled to the Gaza Strip. Since November 2007 Israel has required Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to apply for temporary permits to stay in the West Bank.

According to the new procedure, family relations by themselves do not qualify as a “humanitarian reason” that would warrant the issuance of a permit to relocate to the West Bank. Only orphans, chronically ill people or elderly invalids – none of whom have relatives in Gaza who can care for them – may be allowed to move to the West Bank to join first-degree relatives living there. Applicants will be given temporary permits, first for six months and then for a year, and only after seven years will the Israeli authorities consider whether to allow the applicant to reside permanently in the West Bank.

The procedure’s stricter criteria mean that couples and families divided between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have virtually no chance of reuniting. The new restrictions affect the thousands of registered Gaza residents who live in the West Bank, many of whom have spouses and children there and who will continue to face constant risk of expulsion and displacement.

According to a joint position paper published by HaMoked and another human rights group, Gisha, the new procedure violates Israel’s commitment in the Oslo Accords to treat the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a “single territorial unit,” and formalizes the separation between the two territories. The groups assert that the procedure also violates the rights of residents of an occupied territory to freedom of movement, to choose their place of residence, and to maintain family life – all recognized in international law.

Allegations of ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian detainees, including children

The UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (26 June) was marked this month by a number of NGOs and UN agencies in the oPt and Israel. In related events and reports the organizations raised concerns related to the treatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli and Palestinian detention and interrogation facilities.

The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI) released a report charging the Israeli authorities with ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees.²³ PCATI's research indicates that Israeli security agencies, primarily the IDF and the Israel Security Agency (formerly the GSS), regularly shackle detainees in "painful and humiliating manners" that, at times, amounts to torture. Over the past year, PCATI documented 574 cases of painful shackling, including shackling for hours and, in cases, days. According to the report, while the Israeli authorities justify the shackling of detainees on security grounds, a significant part of the documented cases occurred over the course of interrogations and during the provision of medical treatment inside highly fortified security facilities.

Defence for Children International – Palestine Section (DCI), released another report claiming that Palestinian children detained by the Israeli military are regularly exposed to ill-treatment, amounting in some cases to torture.²⁴ Forms of violence identified by DCI include: excessive use of blindfolds and handcuffs; slapping and kicking; painful position abuse for long periods of time; denial of access to toilets; solitary confinement and sleep deprivation; and physical and psychological threats to the child and his/her family. The report raises additional concerns related to the lack of respect to the right to due process of child detainees in the Israeli military court system. Issues of particular concern include: the trial and sentencing of 16 and 17 year old children as adults; restricted access to lawyers, especially during the interrogation stage; denial of family visits; and the trial of children in regular military courts, rather than juvenile justice courts. In DCI's experience, which represents 30-40 percent of children brought before military courts, the primary evidence against most children is a confession extracted during a "coercive interrogation." Because of a lack of faith in the military court system, DCI reports that these children's cases are often plea bargained in order to avoid harsher sentences and lengthy trials.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the oPt organized two events marking the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, in collaboration with Palestinian partner organizations in the West Bank and Gaza

Strip. The events brought together Palestinian Authority ministries, local and international human rights organizations, UN agencies and the donor community to discuss issues related to the torture of Palestinian detainees. In particular, discussions focused on the UN Committee Against Torture's Concluding Observations on Israel, issued in May, as well as on means of providing better support through monitoring, investigating and following-up allegations of torture in Israeli and Palestinian facilities and providing psychological and other services to survivors.

Funding

By the end of June, the CAP (Consolidated Appeals Process) had received just over half of the funds required to meet needs identified by humanitarian actors. The funding for the CAP 2009 (following the Mid Year Review in June) is now at 51% with funding worth \$412 million received to date out of \$803 million requested.

There were a number of rises in levels of support for under-funded sectors during the month, including Shelter (up from 11% in May to 22% in June); Health (which in May was 23% funded and is now 43%); and agriculture (34% of funds required have been received, a rise of 9% over the previous month). These increases are welcomed, however the disparity between funding levels from sector to sector continues to be of concern to implementing agencies. Contributions worth \$65m have yet to be allocated to sectors.

The discrepancy in funding between projects for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank continues (Gaza-only projects are 53% funded, support for activities in the West Bank stands at 43%).

Three projects were approved for support from the Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) during June to the value of \$340,000 to deliver emergency relief to the population of Gaza in a variety of ways, including the provision of fresh food produced by Gazan farmers to vulnerable families; rehabilitation activities for those left disabled by the conflict; providing repair of infrastructure and equipment to the Blood Bank service.

The HRF balance now stands at approximately \$ 1

million, however two new urgent projects are due to receive funding in the coming weeks to the value of \$500,000, leaving the capacity of the HRF very low. OCHA oPt is requesting fresh support for the pool fund from existing and new donor partners.

Endnotes

- 1 Demolition figure for 2008 derived from official figures for the period January – August 2008, combined with demolitions recorded by OCHA during the last quarter of 2008. Official demolition figures were provided to B'Tselem by the Jerusalem municipality and the Ministry of Interior in September and November 2008. Displacement figure from B'Tselem. See www.btselem.org.
- 2 Israeli media also reported during the month that the municipality had approached the residents of the Bustan area of Silwan neighborhood and Wadi Yasul neighborhood in order to reach a resolution regarding tens of outstanding demolition orders affecting these communities. Nir Hasson, "Jerusalem municipality offered compromise to prevent demolition of Arab neighborhood," *Ha'aretz*, Hebrew edition, part 1, pg. 3, 30 June 2009.
- 3 Nir Hasson, "After U.S. pressure, Barkat to halt 70 percent of East Jerusalem demolitions," *Ha'aretz*, 26 June 2006.
- 4 This type of order is based on paragraph 212 of the Israeli Planning and Building Law of 1965.
- 5 Fifteen structures were demolished in an area near the village of Jiftlik (17 June 2009) and 15 structures were demolished in Ein al Hilwa of the Al Malih area (18 June 2009).
- 6 Palestinian Counseling Center, Save the Children – UK and the Welfare Association. "Broken Homes: Addressing the Impact of House Demolitions on Palestinian Children and Families", April 2009.
- 7 These figures only refer to Palestinians injured by Israeli forces. Palestinian casualties by Israeli settlers are excluded from this count.
- 8 For further information on "price tag", see OCHA's special focus "Unprotected: Israeli settler violence against Palestinian civilians and their property. December 2008."
- 9 See OCHA, Unprotected: Israeli settler violence against Palestinian civilians and their property, Dec 2008, available at: http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_settler_vilonce_special_focus_2008_12_18.pdf
- 10 B'Tselem, Police close investigation in settler attack case, 7 June 2009, available at: http://www.btselem.org/English/Settler_Violence/20090607_Susiya_attack_File_closed.asp.
- 11 B'Tselem, Bring Ze'ev Braude, the shooter from Hebron, to justice, 8 June 2009, available at: http://www.btselem.org/English/Settler_Violence/20090608_Charges_on_Hebron_settler_shooting_dropped.asp
- 12 For further elaboration see the latest Movement and Access Update issued by OCHA in May 2009, available at: <http://www.ochaopt.org/>
- 13 Data and information featured in this article were provided to OCHA by the Nablus Chamber of Commerce during meeting on 28 May 2009.
- 14 The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). The Population, Housing and Establishment Census in 2007. Preliminary findings published in 2008.
- 15 Palestinian Bureau of Statistics. Labour force surveys.
- 16 An access incident is an incident that involves a delay or denial of movement of a UN staff member, who is travelling for duty purposes.
- 17 For details on the impact of the water crisis on rural communities not served by a water network and current response by humanitarian agencies see, Humanitarian Monitor, May 2009.
- 18 The World Bank, Assessment of restrictions on Palestinian water sector development, April 2009, available at: [www.worldbank.org.West_Bank_and_Gaza](http://www.worldbank.org/West_Bank_and_Gaza).
- 19 The Jerusalem Post. Cabinet: Gaza crossings tied to Shalit deal. <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1244371062402&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>. The Prime Minister Office. Security Cabinet meeting on the situation in Gaza. <http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/Communication/Spokesman/2009/06/spokecabinet100609.htm>.
- 20 Palestine Trade Centre (Paltrade). Gaza Crossings monthly report. May 2009.
- 21 Of the 197 MW, 60 MW are produced by the Gaza Power Plant, 120 MW supplied by Israel, and 17 MW by Egypt.
- 22 The new procedure is available at: http://www.hamoked.org.il/items/9027_eng.pdf. The procedure was submitted in March 2009 at the Court's request, and publicized by HaMoked and Gisha in June.
- 23 The report, Shackling as a Form of Torture and Abuse, is available for download at <http://www.stoptorture.org.il/en/node/1441>
- 24 The report, "Palestinian Child Prisoners: The systematic and institutionalized ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian children by Israeli authorities," is available for download at www.dci-pal.org.

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency

for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), Al Haq, Badil, Save the Children (UK), Defence for Children International – Palestine Section (DCI-PS), Oxfam GB, Palestine Hydrology Group (PHG), ACF-E, AAA, ACPP, ACAD, and members of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM).

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