



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

15-21 APRIL 2009

### Latest Developments since Tuesday, 21 April

- The Israeli authorities demolished four residential structures in the West Bank due to the lack of the required building permits, resulting in the displacement of 37 Palestinians, including 25 children. One of the demolished houses was located in East Jerusalem and the other three in an area south-east of Nablus. In the latter, an additional four families received demolition orders set for Friday, 24 April.
- On 21 April UNIFEM launched a survey focusing on the needs of men and women in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath on the Israeli military operation ( Dec. 27, 2008 – January 18, 2009). Throughout the findings, respondents regardless of gender and region or social category, consistently rate psychological trauma and stress as main concerns and express a critical need for psychological support services. (to view the report: [http://domino.un.org/pdfs/GenderNeedsSurvey\\_GS.pdf](http://domino.un.org/pdfs/GenderNeedsSurvey_GS.pdf))

## West Bank

### Military activities affecting civilians

During the reporting period, Israeli military forces killed two Palestinians, including one child, and injured eleven others, including two children. On 17 April, Israeli forces opened fire on Palestinians allegedly throwing Molotov cocktails at the Bet El settlement (Ramallah), killing a Palestinian boy and injuring a Palestinian man, both from Al Jalazoun refugee camp. In 2008, two Palestinians from this camp were killed under similar circumstances.

The second fatality occurred during an anti-Barrier demonstration held in Bil'in village (Ramallah), when Israeli-forces shot and killed a Palestinian demonstrator with a tear-gas canister. The IDF launched an investigation into the killing. Weekly anti-Barrier demonstrations have recurred in Bil'in village since 2005. Similar demonstrations were held this week in Ni'lin (Ramallah) and Ma'sara (Bethlehem) villages, resulting in a total of seven injuries.

Also this week, a 17-year-old Palestinian boy carrying a knife in the vicinity of the settlement of Haggay (Hebron) was killed by the settlement's security personnel in unclear circumstances.

In addition, two Israeli policemen sustained light injuries when a Palestinian driver hit them with his vehicle near Hizma checkpoint.

During the week, the number of Israeli military search operations rose compared to the previous week (104 vs. 96), and is roughly the same as the 2008 weekly average (103). By contrast, the number of Israeli arrests of Palestinians fell from 66 arrests last week to 60 arrests during the reporting period—well below the 2008 average of 84 arrests per week.

## Israeli-settler violence and other related incidents

Throughout the West Bank, sporadic incidents of Israeli settler violence, including stone-throwing at Palestinian vehicles, physical assault, and vandalism, were reported, resulting in six Palestinian injuries.

In the southern West Bank, the heightened tension that began on 2 April following an attack where a Palestinian killed a 13-year-old boy and injured another seven-year-old boy from the Israeli settlement of Bat Ayin, continued this week. Several incidents involving Israeli settlers harassing Palestinian farmers and herders and vandalizing private Palestinian agricultural property were reported during the week. Overall, three Palestinians were injured and the winter produce of a 40-dunum plot of land owned by residents of the village of Tuwani (Hebron) was destroyed by Israeli settlers.

In Nablus governorate, a number of incidents of Israeli stone-throwing at Palestinian vehicles and vandalism were reported. As a result, one Palestinian was reported injured and five vehicles were damaged.

In addition, Israeli military forces entered this week the village of Kifl Haris (Salfit governorate), forced Palestinian shops to shut down, and imposed an eleven-hour curfew on Palestinian residents of the village to facilitate the movement of approximately 6,000 Israeli settlers to a Jewish religious shrine located in the village.

## Palestinians access to East Jerusalem and its sites of worship restricted

The general closure imposed by Israeli authorities on the West Bank on 7 April ended this week on 18 April. During the closure, all Palestinians with permits, with a few exceptions, were barred from entering East Jerusalem and Israel during the Jewish holiday of Passover.

Following reports of attempts by Jewish groups to hold prayers inside Al Aqsa mosque compound, Palestinian religious and national institutions called on all Palestinians to gather in Al Aqsa Mosque. From 16-18 April, Israeli security forces deployed in and around the Old City and adjacent neighborhoods, barring male Palestinian worshipers below the age of 50 into the Mosque's compound for prayers. Restrictions were also placed on Christian access to the Holy Sepulchre Church during the Eastern Orthodox Easter celebrations. Among Palestinian Christians, only those residing inside the Old City were allowed entry, all other Palestinian Christians, including those holding Jerusalem IDs, were denied access to the Holy Sepulchre Church.

## Gaza Strip

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### Military activities affecting civilians

For the second consecutive week, no Palestinian or Israeli casualties were reported. There were occasional incidents of Israeli open-fire from land and sea, and several Palestinian rockets and mortar shells fired from Gaza towards southern Israel and Kissufim military base. Two Palestinian fishermen were detained by Israeli patrol boats.

On 16 April, a four-month-old Palestinian infant died of wounds sustained during Operation "Cast Lead".

## Israel's Gaza blockade

Israel's 22-month blockade continues to affect all aspects of life. There are ongoing shortages of medical supplies, food, construction material, fuel, and equipment supplies for water treatment plants. The ban on concrete and other construction materials continues to impede the ability of Gazans to rebuild homes and necessary infrastructure destroyed during "Cast Lead". Tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border continue to function as a means of compensating for shortages of necessary items that are restricted from entry through Israeli-controlled crossings.

### Water access

Because of continued shortages of many spare parts and supplies needed to repair Gaza's water networks damaged during "Cast Lead", access to water remains difficult for approximately 9% of Gaza's population. Of the 132,000 people affected, approximately 32,000 remain without water and 100,000 receive only an intermittent water supply—every 2-3 days. The last shipment of water pipes entered on 2 April 2009.

**Fuel to water utility resumed:** The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) receives fuel from a local supplier funded by the World Bank Emergency Service Support Project (ESSP). However, the ESSP contract was temporarily suspended in March 2009, due to the lack of fuel entering Gaza. To help alleviate the effects of the Israeli entry restrictions on fuel, UNRWA provided the CMWU with 92,000 liters of fuel—a single month's requirement to pump ground water and sewage. On 15 April, fuel supply resumed to CMWU; thus far, 80,000 litres were received by CMWU.

### Fuel shortages

There was a 26% decrease in the amount of industrial fuel allowed into Gaza compared to the previous week (1.6 litres vs. 2.2 million liters). The amount received represents 52% of the weekly requirements to operate the Gaza power plant at full capacity. Only 633 tonnes of cooking gas entered Gaza during the week--36% of the estimated weekly needs.

No petrol or diesel has been imported into Gaza through the Nahal Oz fuel pipeline since 2 November 2008. However, the Gas Station Owners' Association estimates that fuel continues to enter through the Rafah- Egypt border tunnels at a rate of nearly 100,000 litres of diesel and 70,000 litres of petrol per day.

## Health

### Shortages in medical supplies

Hospital equipment is in urgent need of spare parts and maintenance, and the 22-month blockade has prevented some supplies from being replenished. Medical supply shipments often face inconsistent delays at border crossings, and continued power cuts and blackouts have damaged hospital equipment and information systems. Additionally, 65 essential drug items are out of stock at Gaza's Central Drug Store, and 23 items are down to a single month's supply. Further, 90 central medical disposable items are out of stock. Some of the unavailable drugs include medicines for chronic diseases.

### Still no agreement on the Referral Abroad Department

Since the Hamas Authorities in Gaza Strip took over the Referral Abroad Department (RAD) on 22 March 2009, no new patient referral documents have been approved by the PA in Ramallah. Israeli

Authorities refuse to coordinate the exit of Gaza patients carrying the Hamas-appointed medical committee's documents. However, from 22 March to 15 April 2009, 170 Patients were allowed to cross Erez to hospitals in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, of whom, 131 were holding referral documents issued prior to 22 March; additionally, 39 patients crossed Erez with the help and coordination of human rights organizations.

Egyptian Authorities reopened Rafah crossing between 18 - 21 April for patients, students and Palestinians holding residency permits in other countries, allowing approximately 200 Palestinian patients to cross to Egypt on 18 April. However, according to World Health Organization (WHO), the Egyptian hospitals treated those carrying documents issued by the Hamas-appointed committee (80% of the patients) only after the Egyptian Physicians Union and Sharee'a Committee intervened to facilitate the patients' treatment in Egypt, taking full financial responsibility for the patients' treatment.

According to WHO, since 22 March 2009, three Palestinians patients died while waiting to exit Gaza for medical treatment, and WHO currently is investigating four additional cases. According to WHO, from October 2007 to March 2009, a total of 65 chronically-ill Palestinian patients died before being able to access the medical facilities outside of Gaza.



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