



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

10 –16 JUNE 2009

LATEST DEVELOPMENT SINCE TUESDAY, 16 June 2009

- In a statement issued on 17 June, a group of 38 United Nations and non-governmental organizations expressed concern over Israel's ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip, calling to attention the sanction's indiscriminate nature: it affects a population of 1.5 million, including ordinary women, children and elderly. The statement called for unimpeded access for all humanitarian assistance in accordance with international agreements and universally recognized international human rights and humanitarian law standards.
- On 17 June, Israeli military forces carried out the demolition of three tents and twelve animal barracks, as well as damaged four tonnes of fodder in Ein El Hilwa, in the Wadi El Malih area of the northern Jordan Valley. Twenty people were displaced, including nine children.
- Also on 17 June, Israeli military forces demolished 15 structures for herding communities in Jiftlik in the Jordan Valley, three of which were residential tents. Three households were affected.

West Bank

Intra-Palestinian conflict spreads to the southern West Bank

In the northern West Bank, security-related activities by PA forces declined in comparison to recent weeks, with no casualties reported. The number of Palestinian arrests made by Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces also significantly fell compared to last week (25 compared to 74). However, Intra-Palestinian violence, spilled into the southern West Bank governorates of Hebron and Bethlehem this week. On 15 June, a Palestinian man, allegedly affiliated with Hamas, died while in the custody of PA forces in the City of Hebron. According to the PA, the man died while attempting to escape by jumping from the second storey of the building where he was being held. However, eyewitness accounts reported by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights alleged the presence of torture marks on the body.

On the same day, PA security forces claimed to have dismantled a 35-kilogram bomb, and confiscated bomb-making equipment from a residential neighbourhood in the town of Ash Shuyukh (Hebron). Also during the reporting period, eleven Palestinians were arrested in Hebron and Bethlehem Governorates including four Hamas-affiliated members of the Bethlehem Municipal Council. Palestinian stone throwing at PA security forces was reported during one of the arrests in Bethlehem City, with PA security forces opening warning fire in response. No injuries were reported.

Palestinian child killed for suspected collaboration with Israeli forces

On 10 June, a 15-year-old Palestinian boy was found hung inside a warehouse belonging to his family in the town of Hajja (Qalqiliya). A PA police investigation indicates that members of his family killed him on suspicion that he collaborated with the Israeli army.

Israeli military activities: decrease in Palestinian casualties

There were eight Palestinians, including three children, injured this week by Israeli forces in the West Bank in various types of incidents. Two of the children were injured in anti-Barrier demonstrations in the villages of Bil'in and Ni'lin (Ramallah), and one was physically assaulted at a checkpoint. Four other Palestinians were also physically assaulted by Israeli forces, including two in an incident that took place after Israeli soldiers declared an agricultural area next to Safa village (Bethlehem) a closed military zone. The number of Palestinian injuries this week is more than 60% below the weekly average in the first quarter of 2009.

The number of IDF search operations during the week was roughly the same as previously, 139 searches compared to 137, and remains approximately 26% higher than the weekly average in the first quarter of the year (109). The northern West Bank governorates had by far the highest number of search operations—comprising almost 73% of all West Bank searches, during which Israeli forces searched mosques in Tulkarm city and Bala'a, as well as several retail shops in each location, among other locations. The number of people arrested by Israeli forces decreased from the previous week, with 56 searches compared to 85 in the previous reporting period.

Further easing of access

Recent weeks have seen measures by Israeli authorities that ease movement restrictions on Palestinians in the West Bank; this week, the trend continued as Palestinian access restrictions to and from the cities of Nablus and Jericho were further relaxed. As of 16 June, Huwwara checkpoint is open for all Nablus city residents to enter and exit Nablus without permits, although random vehicular security checks by Israeli soldiers still take place. Prior to the easing of access restrictions, delays and long queues were regularly reported at 'Huwwara checkpoint for vehicles exiting Nablus.

In the central West Bank, during the week (15 June), most of the infrastructure at the Jericho DCO checkpoint at the southern entrance to Jericho City was removed. Israeli military personnel remain in place, but are reportedly not conducting security checks. In addition, the Hamra, Tayasir and Ma'ale Efrayim checkpoints increased their operating hours to 24 hours a day, seven days per week. However, permit requirements for vehicular movement through these checkpoints to the Jordan Valley remain in force.

Demolitions and displacement in East Jerusalem and Area C continue

East Jerusalem

On 11 and 12 June, two Palestinian families demolished adjoining structures to their homes in the Old City of Jerusalem, after receiving demolition orders from the Jerusalem municipality for building without permits. Four persons, including two children and a pregnant wife, were displaced and ordered to pay a fine of 20,000 NIS.

During the reporting period, the Jerusalem municipality, distributed 20 demolition orders in Al Bustan neighbourhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem, as well as an order summoning residents of a four-storey, ten unit building in Al Abbasiya, to report to the Jerusalem municipality for building without the requisite building permits. In Silwan, these are the first orders to be distributed since the Regional Planning Committee's rejection of the Bustan residents' proposed master plan on 17 February 2009.

Also this week, according to Israeli media, the Israeli Minister of Interior shelved the Jerusalem 2020 plan, a master plan for the city's development, on grounds that it allocates too much territory for Palestinian construction. The plan called for the construction of 13,500 residences for Jerusalem's Palestinian population, and for the development of infrastructure in areas of East Jerusalem. Currently, only 13% of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction and much of this land is already built-up. Since 1967, more than one-third of East Jerusalem land has been confiscated and allocated for Israeli settlements. As a result of the restrictive planning environment, at least 28% of all Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem have been built "illegally", placing more than 60,000 people at risk of displacement.

Area C demolitions and evacuations On 15 June, Israeli military forces, accompanied by representatives of the Israeli Civil Administration, issued orders to a farmer from Khirbet Tuwayil, in the Nablus Governorate, east of 'Aqraba village, for the immediate removal of two structures, including a residential tent and an animal pen. The order will effectively displace eight family members, including five children. Since January 2008, Khirbet Tuwayil, which is located in a closed military zone, has received demolition orders for structures all 20 families in the area.

In the Hebron governorate, on 14 June, Israeli authorities issued an order to dismantle a tent in the community of Umm Al Khair, located in the back of the settlement of Karmel, south of Yatta. Two days later, the IDF dismantled two tents belonging to a family from As Samu' for being too close to a military tower. There were 24 people affected.

Since 1967, more than 20% of the West Bank has been declared by Israeli authorities as closed military zones, where Palestinian access is prohibited (excluding closed areas between the Barrier and the Green Line). Most of these areas are located in the Jordan Valley and along the eastern slopes of the Bethlehem and Hebron governorates.

Settler-related incidents

In East Jerusalem, eighteen Palestinians were injured this week in scuffles between Israeli settlers and Palestinians in two separate incidents. However, in other parts of the West Bank, Israeli settler violence decreased for the third week in a row in the northern and southern parts of the West Bank, with no reported casualties. In the Nablus governorate, Israeli settlers set fire to 20 dunums of wheat fields belonging to farmers from Al Lubban Sharqiyah village, and threw stones at Palestinian vehicles along the main road between Qalqiliya and Nablus (road 55).

First cases of H1N1 flu reported in the West Bank

During the reporting period, the first H1N1 cases in the West Bank were reported in the governorate of Bethlehem. On 10 June, the Ministry of Health declared that a 4-year-old boy from Bethlehem City had contracted the H1N1 virus while visiting the United States. On 12 June, the Ministry reported that the child's mother had also contracted the virus.

Gaza Strip

Average weekly of imported truckloads remain below needs - (7 - 13 June 09)

Restrictions imposed by Israel on imports and exports to and from the Gaza Strip continue to damage the living conditions of the population. Only limited numbers of select items are allowed entry to Gaza.

This week, a total of 416 truckloads of goods entered Gaza, less than 15% of the weekly average of truckloads entered into Gaza in the first five months of 2007, before the Hamas takeover.

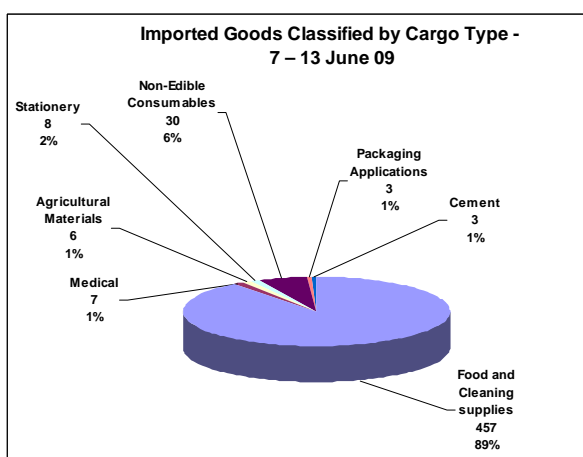
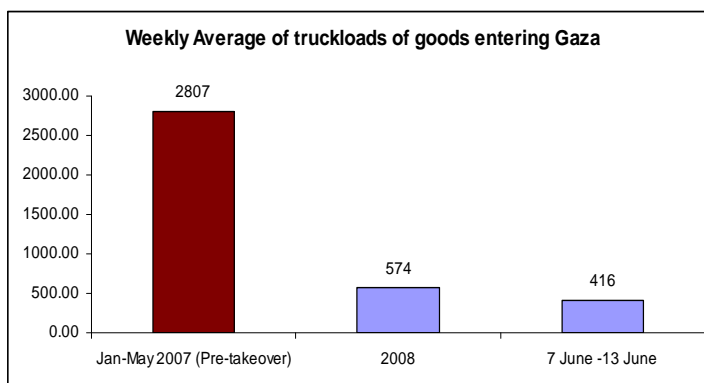
The entry of other major essential goods, including materials for reconstruction, spare parts for water and sanitation projects, and industrial and agricultural materials remain barred from entry or restricted to limited quantities.

Decline in cooking gas; other limitations on fuel imports (7 - 13 June 2009)

The Gas Stations Owners Association (GSOA) reported that two cooking gas tankers, each with a capacity of 120 tonnes, have been connected to a pipeline set up at Kerem Shalom crossing. In addition, two other fuel pipelines at this crossing will transfer other types of fuel. The capacity of this newly installed fuel transfer system at Kerem Shalom remains unclear. Israeli authorities have indicated that fuel will be entered to Gaza through this crossing, instead of through Nahal Oz crossing, though existing infrastructure at the latter will remain in place.

This week, for unclear reasons, the lowest reported amounts of cooking gas entered Gaza since early May 2009; 434 tonnes of cooking gas entered, less than 25% of Gaza's needs as estimated by GSOA. Cooking gas is still available on the open market, albeit with occasional shortages.

In addition, approximately two million litres of industrial gas for the power plant entered this week, approximately 64% of weekly fuel needed for the power plant's operation. No petrol or diesel fuel has been imported into Gaza through the Nahal Oz fuel pipeline since 2 November 2008, except for limited quantities for UNRWA. Since that date, most petrol and diesel in Gaza available on the open market for public use is transferred through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border. Local sources indicated that fuel transferred through the Gaza-Egypt border tunnels into Gaza last week was



significantly reduced, down to approximately 40,000 litres of diesel and 20,000 litres of petrol per day, respectively, compared to the daily of 100,000 litres each entered during the previous weeks. Egyptian diesel and petrol are still available on the open market, although the price of petrol increased from 03 to 3.5 NIS/lit. Diesel prices stand at 02 NIS/lit.

Military activities continue to impact civilians' livelihoods

This week, four Palestinian civilians were injured when an Israeli Air Force aircraft fired three missiles targeting tunnel areas near the Gaza-Egypt border, south of Rafah. Palestinian armed factions continued to launch sporadic rounds of rudimentary rockets towards southern Israel and IDF troops stationed at the border. In addition, Palestinian factions set off explosives on two separate occasions near Israeli troops patrolling in border areas. No Israeli injuries were reported due to any of these attacks.

The recent expansion of the so-called "buffer zone" continues to drive Palestinians hundreds of meters away from the Gaza Strip's border with Israel, further reducing their access to farm land. These restrictions, officially up to 300 metres from the border, are enforced by frequent warning fire from the IDF in the direction of Palestinian farmers working in the area. In addition, there are reports of movement restrictions along an even wider swath of land in areas east of Rafah and Khan Younis. During the week, Israeli tanks entered Gaza, into border areas near Johr Ed-Dik, Jabalia and Rafah, and IDF troops stationed at the border fence opened fire into areas east of Rafah, forcing Palestinian farmers to leave their farms.

Israeli naval forces continue to restrict access of Palestinian fishermen to fishing areas beyond three nautical miles along Gaza's 38-kilometre coastline. Israeli patrol boats opened warning fire on six separate occasions, targeting Palestinian fishing boats west of Rafah, Deir Al Balah, Gaza City and Beit Lahia, forcing the boats to return to shore. No injuries were reported in any of these incidents. According to the Gaza fishermen's syndicate, there are no clear, consistent channels of communication with the Israeli patrol boats. In most cases, the opening of Israeli gunfire is the only indication that fishermen should return to shore. .

Other casualties

This week saw three deaths and six injuries in various circumstances, including the reckless use of weapons. In a separate incident, a man was killed and a woman was injured when a masked man opened fire in their direction close to the Gaza European hospital, east of Khan Younis. In addition, two Palestinian men were found dead in open areas east of Deir Al Balah and Beit Hanoun, and a woman was shot and injured in Al Nusairat Refugee camp, in unclear circumstances. Finally, three people were injured this week in a family feud.

Tunnels incidents at Gaza-Egypt border continue to cause fatalities

Due to ongoing restrictions placed on the entry of goods from Israel, Gazans continue to rely on the transfer of goods through tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border. These poorly-built tunnels pose high risks to the lives of those using them. This week, in two separate incidents, two Palestinians were killed and four others were injured in incidents of tunnel collapse or electrocution. On 12 June, Egyptian security forces reportedly demolished 14 tunnels in an area south of Rafah city.

Gaza police seize humanitarian aid supplies from charitable association

Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights reported that Gaza authority police in Beit Hanoun seized 674 kits of aid supplies, which were to be distributed by an international aid organization through a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to a number of families in Beit Hanoun. Instead, the Hamas-affiliated police distributed the confiscated kits to a different group of families. The local NGO said that their distribution list had been previously coordinated and approved by the police and the Ministry of Social Affairs.