



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

14 - 20 July 2010

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS SINCE TUESDAY, 20 JULY

- On 21 July, two Palestinians, including one civilian, were killed and seven others, including four children were injured when Israeli troops fired four tank shells at an armed Palestinian approaching Israeli troops who had entered into Gaza.
- On 22 July, Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian who according to Israeli media was attempting to enter the settlement of Barkan in the West Bank district of Salfit.
- On 21 July, Israeli forces demolished three uninhabited residences and seven other structures in Al Lubban Al Gharbi, Ramallah Governorate, 80 people were affected.

West Bank

Demolitions in Area C; at least 122 people displaced

This week, there was a significant increase in the number of demolitions in Area C, with at least 86 structures demolished in the Jordan Valley and the southern West Bank, including Bethlehem and Hebron districts. In 2010, at least 181 Palestinian structures have been demolished in Area C, effectively displacing 251 people, including 115 children. Approximately 600 others have been otherwise affected.

In the Jordan Valley, there were a total of 80 structures demolished in the Tubas communities of Al Farisyie (79) and Fasayil al Fouqa (1) due to their location within an Israeli-defined closed military area. These included 26 residential tents, one residential barracks with an extension for livestock, 22 animal shelters, seven taboun ovens, eight kitchens; ten bathrooms and barracks used to store agricultural equipment. At least four water tanks and large quantities of food and animal fodder were also damaged or destroyed. As a result, at least 116 people, including 52 children, were displaced. In addition, as the displaced families were not present during the demolition, much of their belongings were buried in the rubble.

Approximately 80 percent of demolitions in 2009 in Area C targeted herding or farming communities living in areas declared closed by the Israeli military as training or "firing" zones. Although most of these areas, which amount to some 18 percent of the West Bank, have been "closed" for several decades, numerous residents report that they have never seen the Israeli military training in their vicinity. Many of the communities living in these areas have resided there since before 1967.

In Hebron and Bethlehem districts, due to lack of Israeli-issued building permits, Israeli forces demolished two uninhabited houses, two cisterns, a storage room, a water pool, and removed a bus used as a shelter as well as irrigation pipes used to irrigate agricultural area of 26 dunums. Confrontations took place between Palestinians and the Israeli forces leading to three injuries (see also casualties section). Although these demolitions did not result in any displacement, at least 63 Palestinians, including nine children were affected.

1. Various other restrictions on Palestinian construction and presence apply in the rest of Area C in the West Bank. See OCHA, Restricting Space: The Planning Regime Applied by Israel in Area C of the West Bank, December 2009.

In addition, Israeli authorities issued stop-work, demolition orders, or 'evacuation' orders to Palestinians living in the Area C villages of Bardala in the Jordan Valley, Baqa'a area of Mikhmas (Jerusalem district), and 'Arab Abu Farda (Qalqiliya).

There is concern that Israeli authorities could escalate demolitions throughout Area C, following an Israeli media report this week indicating that, in a deposition to the Israeli High Court submitted a month ago, the State Attorney announced that the Israeli Civil Administration intended to increase such demolitions. According to official Israeli figures, there are more than 3,000 outstanding demolition orders throughout Area C. However, it is nearly impossible for Palestinian families and communities to obtain Israeli building permits to maintain, repair or construct homes, animal shelters or necessary infrastructure in Israeli-controlled areas. As a result, many have no choice but to build "illegally" and risk demolitions and displacement.

Casualties resulting from Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Israeli forces injured 13 Palestinians this week, including three children; the majority of injuries occurred during demonstrations. There were no Israeli casualties reported during the week. So far in 2010, seven Palestinians and two members of the Israeli security forces have been killed in the West Bank in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In addition, 761 Palestinians and 101 Israeli soldiers and policemen have been injured in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Eight Palestinians, including two children, sustained injuries in weekly demonstrations protesting the construction of the Barrier in Ramallah governorate (five in Bil'in and Ni'lin villages) and against restrictions on Palestinian access to agricultural areas near the settlement of Karmeit Zur in the Hebron governorate (three in Beit Ummar village). Several cases of tear gas inhalation were also reported. Other demonstrations against the Barrier, settlement expansion, and access restrictions ended with no injuries.

Search operations resulted in one Palestinian injury by physical assault in Bethlehem, and another operation in the Silwan neighborhood of East Jerusalem resulted in the arrest of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy. The remaining Palestinian injuries, including three women and a 17-year-old boy, occurred in Hebron City during incidents involving physical assault by Israeli forces.

Israeli forces conducted 126 search operations inside Palestinian towns and villages, significantly higher than the weekly average (98 searches) since the beginning of 2010.

This week there was also a relatively low number of incidents involving Israeli settler violence: OCHA recorded two minor incidents resulting in damage to Palestinian property and none leading to casualties. This is less than half of the weekly average of settler incidents leading to property damage or casualties in 2010 (5.2 incidents per week). Although there were some reports of Palestinians throwing stones at Israeli settler vehicles, there were no injuries or property damages reported during the week.

Gaza Strip

Military activities affecting civilians

During the reporting period, a 15-year-old Palestinian boy was injured when Israeli forces opened fire at a group of Palestinians collecting scrap metals in the vicinity of the former Erez Industrial Zone—about 500m southwest of Erez Checkpoint. Since the beginning of 2010, OCHA has recorded

the injury of 26 Palestinian civilians, including eight children, who were targeted while collecting rubble and scrap metals from the destroyed buildings near the border fence between Gaza and Israel.

This week, on four different occasions Israeli forces entered Gaza to a distance of about 300 metres from the border fence east of Khan Younis, to conduct search and land-leveling operations. In addition, on 15 July, Israeli naval forces opened fire towards Palestinian fishing boats west of Beit Lahia Village, forcing the boats to shore. No injuries were reported.

Palestinian armed factions launched a number of rudimentary rockets towards southern Israel, including at military bases located on the border, resulting in no injuries.

Tunnel-related incidents

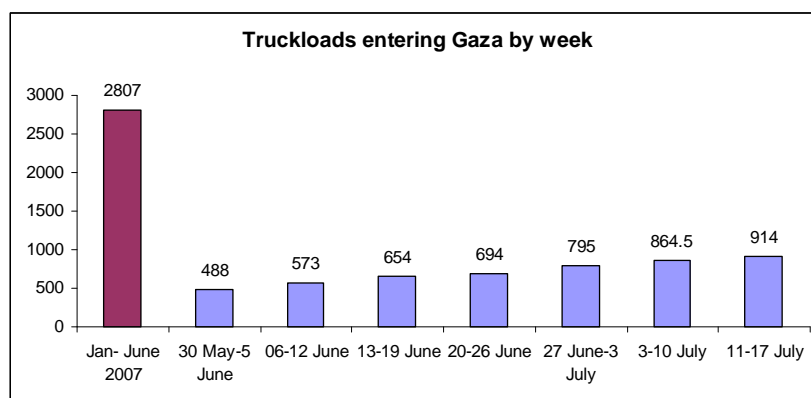
On 18 July, a 22-year-old Palestinian man was killed (electrocuted) and four others were injured in two separate incidents. In addition, a Palestinian Medical Rescue team extracted five persons from a collapsed tunnel on 17 July. Since the beginning of 2010, 33 Palestinians, including two children have been killed and 62 Palestinians have been injured in tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border.

The Egyptian authorities conducted operations during the week aimed at finding and detonating underground tunnels between Gaza and Egypt. On 15 July, Egyptian authorities detonated one tunnel opposite the Salah Eddin main gate. No injuries were reported.

Gaza Crossings: the volume of imports continues to increase; humanitarian impact remains limited

Since the 20 June Israeli announcement of measures to ease its three-year blockade of Gaza, the weekly volume of imported goods has steadily increased. This week (11 - 17 July 2010), a total of 914 truckloads entered Gaza, the highest number of truckloads recorded since Feb 2009, but only a third of the weekly average of truckloads that entered Gaza (2,807) during the first five months of 2007, before the imposition of the blockade.

The amount of food items entering Gaza continue make up the bulk of goods entered, although their proportion of total imports has decreased to 66 percent (603 truckloads), as compared to roughly 76 percent in the first five months of 2010. While food made up most of the new consumer goods that have entered Gaza since the announcement, a number of new 'productive items' entered this week for the commercial market, including water irrigation pipes, wood profile for green houses, cloth fabric, empty cans, and chicken incubators.



Local sources indicate that, with the increase in volume and variety of goods entering through the Israeli crossings, there has been a corresponding significant reduction in the level of imports through the commercial tunnels under the border with Egypt. There are also indications that goods entering through the underground tunnels are increasingly focused on construction materials and fuel.

Despite the increase, the flow of imported goods remains affected by long delays due to the limited capacity and cumbersome procedures at the Kerem Shalom Crossing. As a result, the commercial sector was allocated 90 to 105 truckloads per day, less than half of current demand.

Import of constructions materials, most of which have been defined as 'dual-use items' continues to be restricted. With the exception of glass, wood and aluminum (allowed for the commercial sector during the past few months), only limited amounts of construction materials designated for three projects implemented by international organizations were allowed this week into Gaza.

Slight increases in imported industrial fuel and cooking gas

This week, 1.45 million litres of industrial fuel entered Gaza for use by the Gaza Power Plant (GPP)--the largest amount entered in a given week since the first week of May 2010. However the increase (from 890,000 litres in the previous week) is not enough to meet demand: according to the GPP authority, the amount entered represents 46 percent of the 3.15 million liters required to run the power plan at full capacity. Despite the increase, only one of the two turbines at the plant could be operated and the power cuts of up to eight hours per day continued for most of the population.

Cooking gas imports also increased to 969 tones of cooking gas this week from 944 tonnes entered in the previous week. This week's imports represent 69 percent of the estimated requirement of 1,400 tons, as estimated by the Gas Stations Owners Association. Because of shortages, rationing of cooking gas introduced in Nov 2009 remains in place.

Israel allows entry of shekels into Gaza

On 19 and 20 July, the Israeli Government approved the transfer of one hundred million shekels (25.8 million dollars) from Palestinian banks in the West Bank to their branches in Gaza, as well as the exchange of an additional 30 million damaged shekel notes. The amount of cash allowed into Gaza represents approximately 42 percent of the total amount requested by the Palestinian Monetary Authority (PMA) (239 million shekels). The Bank of Palestine stressed the importance of additional cash transfers before the end of the month to alleviate the currency liquidity crisis in Gaza.

Gaza 'Umra pilgrims leave Gaza to Mecca through Rafah crossing

On 20 July, a group of pilgrims from Gaza left through Rafah crossing after the resolution of a passport dispute with the PA in Ramallah. On 19 July, the Ministries of Endowment and Religious Affairs in Gaza and West Bank jointly announced that approximately 230 Gaza residents will be allowed to leave Gaza for pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. The Rafah border crossing with Egypt has been opened since 2 June, and according to the Egyptian authorities it will remain so until further notice. Since then, on average, 350 people a day have crossed into Egypt and some 290 have crossed from Egypt to Gaza per day (more than 7,600 in total).