



OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

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Protection of Civilians Weekly Report

21 - 27 January 2009

Latest Developments since 27 January

On 28 January, Israeli municipal authorities, accompanied by a special border police unit demolished a two-storey residence in the Beit Hanina neighborhood of East Jerusalem. Forty-five people, including 21 children and 2 elderly, were displaced. This is the first demolition in East Jerusalem in 2009.

Gaza Strip: On 29 January, seven civilians, including five children, and a Hamas member were wounded in an Israeli air strike in Khan Younis.

Israeli media reported that from 28-29 January, two rudimentary rockets were fired from Gaza towards the Israeli town of Sderot. No injuries or damages were reported.

Military activities affecting civilians

The ceasefire unilaterally implemented by Israel, Hamas, and other Palestinian factions since 18 January is partially holding. During the reporting period, OCHA documented two Palestinian civilians killed by the Israeli forces. In addition, two children from Gaza City died by unexploded ordinance, and a third child died of smoke inhalation—allegedly from white phosphorus fumes. In one incident on 27 January, an Israeli soldier was killed and three others injured in a bomb blast along the Israel-Gaza border, after which Israeli warplanes bombarded tunnels between Gaza and Egypt. A Palestinian farmer was killed in ensuing armed clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinians.

On 27 January, Amnesty International issued a report claiming Israeli use of flechette rounds in populated areas during the 22 day military operation in Gaza that began on 27 December. Flechettes are 4cm metal darts with four fins at the rear. Each flechette shell has between 5,000 to 8,000 flechette darts. When the shells explode in the air, flechettes are scattered over a wide area—about 300m wide by 100m long.

The ceasefire followed twenty-two days of Israeli bombardments and military operations in Gaza, which left, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, 1366 Palestinians dead and 5,380 injured. According to the Israeli Magen David Adom three Israeli civilians have been killed and 182 others injured from 27 December to 18 January (ceasefire date) by rocket and mortar fire by Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip. According to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ten Israeli soldiers were killed and 336 wounded during the course of the military operation (OCHA's casualty figures do not include the number of Palestinians or Israelis treated for shock).

Thousands of Gazans still homeless

Tens thousands of Gazans remain homeless, with most staying with relatives or other host families. In a telephone survey of 605 Gazans conducted just after the ceasefire was declared, Near East Consulting found that 37% of Gaza's population, more than 500,000 people, were displaced at some time during the hostilities.

At the height of hostilities, up to 90,000 people were displaced, including up to 50,000 children. (Source: Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights)

Gaza hospital capacity

Although hospitals still have a large number of intensive care patients, capacity has improved, allowing for other regular patient services such as elective surgery. Hospital electricity remains intermittent, with generators providing backup electricity supply. From 1 – 25 January, 93.5 truckloads of medical supplies entered into Gaza, which, according to WHO are enough to cover most current needs. Immunization programs have resumed.

The Erez crossing was opened intermittently during the week to allow for the evacuation of eight medical cases and eight escorts to West Bank hospitals (including East Jerusalem). The PA MoH in Ramallah has stopped authorizing the referral of patients from Gaza to medical treatment in Israel as in the past.

According to the WHO, since the beginning of hostilities, from 27 December to 22 January, 602 patients crossed into Egypt through Rafah for external medical treatment.

Electricity, Fuel and Water and Sanitation

Gaza water and sanitation conditions, which had severely deteriorated during the Israeli offensive, have somewhat improved; at least 70 percent of the water network is functioning although some areas are still not receiving water due to localized damage.

As a whole, the population of Gaza is receiving approximately 84% of its electricity needs (202MW). Conditions have somewhat improved, though most of the Gaza Strip still receives intermittent electricity, with scheduled 6-8 hour power cuts occurring twice a week in Gaza Governorate and North Gaza. Although there are no scheduled power cuts in Rafah and Khan Younis governorates, unscheduled cuts sometimes occur due to ongoing repairs to power lines. Some areas, including Jabalia, Zaitoun, and Sudania, still do not have power due to localized damage. This also affects water distribution in those areas.

On 25 January, the Gaza Power plant increased electricity production to 60 MW. Since the ceasefire, the power plant has received an average of 243,000 litres of fuel per day. The Power plant needs 450,000 litres daily to produce its full capacity of 80 MW.

Since the ceasefire, Israel has allowed in more than 720 tonnes of cooking gas--approximately 80 tonnes per day, far less than its estimated needs of 300 tonnes per day.

NGOs continue to face difficulties accessing Gaza

During the reporting period, NGOs continued to face difficulty accessing the Gaza Strip to carryout humanitarian work. Humanitarian personnel are able to enter Gaza through Erez crossing only after receiving prior clearance by the Israeli authorities. During the period, many NGOs did not receive a response from the Israeli authorities regarding their applications, while others were requested to provide additional information regarding their specific mandates, activities, funding sources, etc. Others have been denied entry altogether. A key problem has been inconsistency in the process; some staff members are informed that they have been approved, only to be denied entry when they reach Erez. In other cases, staff receive conflicting information from Israeli authorities regarding regulations that must be met before entry is allowed.

As of 28 January, there were over 30 internationals working with NGOs in Gaza and there were outstanding requests for over 140 NGO staff to enter. The inability of NGOs to enter their humanitarian staff into the Gaza Strip, along with inconsistent, unpredictable procedures, impedes NGOs' ability to effectively plan their humanitarian response and obstructs efforts to address the humanitarian crisis brought about by 18 months of closure and Israel's recent military operation.

Gaza Crossings

The higher numbers of truckloads entering Gaza since 28 December 2008 continued during the reporting period. From 19-25 January, almost 604 truckloads entered through Kerem Shalom, and 329 truckloads of grain entered through the Karni conveyor belt.

Gaza food supply: Karni conveyor belt operating, large influx of wheat into Gaza

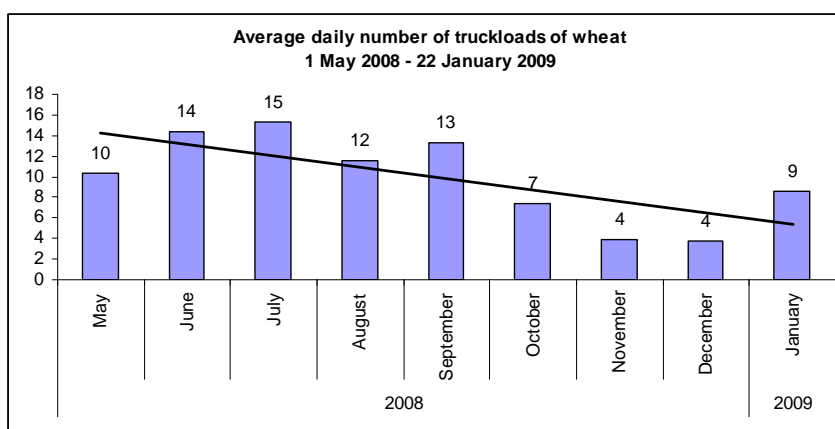
From October through the end of 2008, there were severe wheat shortages in Gaza, resulting in the closure of Gaza's wheat mills on several occasions. From 19-22 January, the conveyor belt located at Karni crossing was opened for the first time since 16 December 2008, allowing of 173 truckloads of wheat grain into Gaza, bringing the average number of truckloads of wheat grain per day entering into Gaza in January to more than twice the daily average in December and November 2008, it remains less than one third than it was in July 2008—the month immediately following the 19 June ceasefire. Long queues at bakeries continued through the reporting period. (See Chart below)

Total Truckloads entered by crossing and type 19-25 Jan

CROSSING	TYPE	TRUCKS
Karni	Animal Feed	121
	Human Food	
	Products	208
Karni Total		329
Kerem Shalom	Human Food	
	Products	483
	Hygiene/Cleaning	
	Supplies	11
	Industrial/Electrical	
	Applications	1
	Medical Supplies	43.5
Non-Edible		
Consumables	64	
Other	1	
Kerem Shalom Total		603.5
Grand Total		932.5

Despite the rise in food imports, price increases, lack of currency, and damage/destruction of agricultural fields have all contributed to food access difficulties. All 10 UNRWA distribution centres are distributing daily food rations to approximately 25,000 people. During the reporting period, WFP distributed 95 tonnes of food to some 6,000 beneficiaries in Gaza and North Gaza, and on 26

January, began a school feeding program to provide milk, biscuits and canned meat to students.



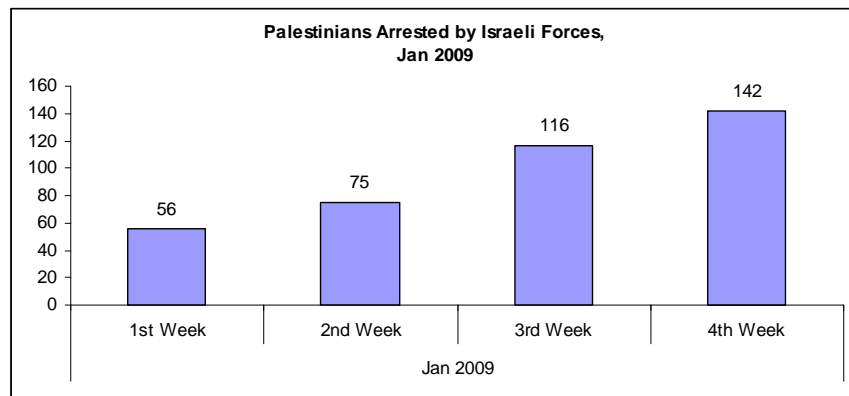
West Bank

Protests against the Barrier and the Israeli Gaza offensive continued in the West Bank villages of Ni'lin, Bil'in (Ramallah), Jayyus (Qalqiliya) and Ma'sara (Bethlehem). Some demonstrations developed into violent clashes between stone-throwing demonstrators and Israeli security forces, who responded with live ammunition, rubber-coated bullets, teargas and physical assault. As a result 24 Palestinians, including eight children, one Israeli and two foreign activists were injured. In addition, several incidents of stone-throwing at IDF checkpoints resulted in three Palestinian injuries this week.

The total number of Palestinians arrested this week by the Israeli security forces continued to increase and reached 142, continuing a four-week upward trend.

On 25 January, for the second week in a row, Israeli military forces conducted search and arrest operations in the town of Husan

(Bethlehem). The IDF entered the village at midnight and imposed a 19-hour curfew. Fifteen Palestinian children were arrested. The Israeli forces converted seven houses into military observation points and searched two mosques. Previously, on 21 Jan. Israeli authorities handed out two stop-work orders against two homes in the village. The two homes are under construction.



West Bank access and closures

A general closure was imposed by the Israeli authorities on the West Bank from 22 January to 24 January. Palestinians were not allowed to enter East Jerusalem for the Friday prayer with the exception of worshippers over 45 years old holding special permits

On 22 January in the northern West Bank (Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqiliya and Salfit districts), Israeli authorities renewed the orders issued for requisitioning the land on which the Barrier was built and extended them to 31 December 2011. The area between the Barrier and the Green Line has been closed since October 2003. According to research conducted by OCHA and UNRWA, only about 20% of those who used to work the land in this area now receive permits.

In the southern part of the West Bank, Israeli military forces re-instituted six closures previously removed in the area of Massafer Yatta (Hebron).