



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
occupied Palestinian territory

## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

12 –18 AUGUST 2009

### LATEST DEVELOPMENT SINCE TUESDAY, 18 August 2009

- The UN in Jerusalem premiered its new short film, "Walled Horizons", documenting the humanitarian impact of the West Bank Barrier. The film is narrated by and features Roger Waters, a founding member of the Pink Floyd rock band.

### Gaza Strip

#### **27 killed, including five civilians, and more than 100 others injured during intense Palestinian internal fighting**

This week, 27 people, including five unarmed civilians, were killed and more than 100 were injured in armed clashes between Hamas-affiliated security forces/armed groups and members from Jund Ansar Allah group, allegedly linked to Al Qaida, in the southern Gaza town of Rafah.

The clashes erupted after the leader of the Jund Ansar Allah group declared the establishment of an "Islamic Emirate" in Gaza. Fighting continued for 15 hours, during which automatic weapons, rocket-propelled grenades and explosives were heavily used. Throughout the Gaza Strip, main roads were blocked by checkpoints, at which Hamas police searched vehicles. According to Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, three houses were demolished, and three other buildings, including two houses and a mosque, were badly damaged.

Hamas security forces declared all Gaza hospitals and Rafah governorate to be closed military zones; no media or Human rights groups were admitted. Human rights groups in Gaza have expressed concern over what they described as the disproportionate use of lethal force by the Hamas security forces during the clashes. They called on Hamas to take all appropriate measures to be to prevent repetition of such incidents and to investigate the high number of casualties. These clashes are the largest round of intra-factional Palestinian fighting since 15 September 2008, when eleven Palestinians were killed.

#### **Israeli military activities in Gaza—no casualties for the fourth consecutive week**

For the fourth consecutive week, there were no casualties due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Gaza. However, sporadic exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups and rockets launched towards Israel continued to take place.

Israeli military forces continued to enforce access restrictions on fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the coast and agricultural areas in the 300-metre restricted area along the border with Israel. In two incidents, Israeli patrol boats opened warning fire targeting Palestinian fishing boats west of Khan Younis, detained two fishermen, and forced the boats to return to shore. In addition, on three occasions during the reporting period, Israeli forces entered a few hundred meters into the border areas east of Khan Younis, Al Burajj and Al Maghazi Camp, conducted land-levelling, and forced Palestinian farmers to leave their agricultural lands.

## Frequent blackouts impede the functioning of public services

For the second consecutive week, the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) was forced to shut down one of its power generating turbines due to fuel shortages in Gaza; approximately, two million litres of industrial gas for the GPP entered this week, approximately 72% of weekly fuel needed for the power plant's operation. Scheduled blackouts stand at 6-8 hours, five days a week. Public services, including water/waste pumping, are affected, with regular access to running water for the entire Gaza population limited to 6-8 hours from one to four days a week. In addition, approximately 80 million litres of partially-treated sewage are being discharged daily into the environment, due to the high frequency of power cuts, lack of diesel and spare parts in Gaza. Since November 2007 Israel has curtailed imports of the GPP's fuel to 2.2 million litres a week, while the current estimated weekly needs set by the Power Plants Authority is 3.15 million litres a week.

## Weekly average of imported truckloads remains below needs - (9-15 August 2009)

This week, a total of 531 truckloads of goods entered Gaza, 19% less than the weekly average during the first six months of 2009 (655). Food and hygiene items made up the majority of imported goods - 494 truckloads (93%), including a limited number of livestock, which had restricted from entry since 4 July 2009.

Reconstruction materials including cement, steel bars, glass, wood and other miscellaneous items remain restricted from entry into Gaza. No exports were allowed out of Gaza this week. Limited exports from Gaza were last allowed on 27 April 2009.

## Fuel imports remain below the estimated needs

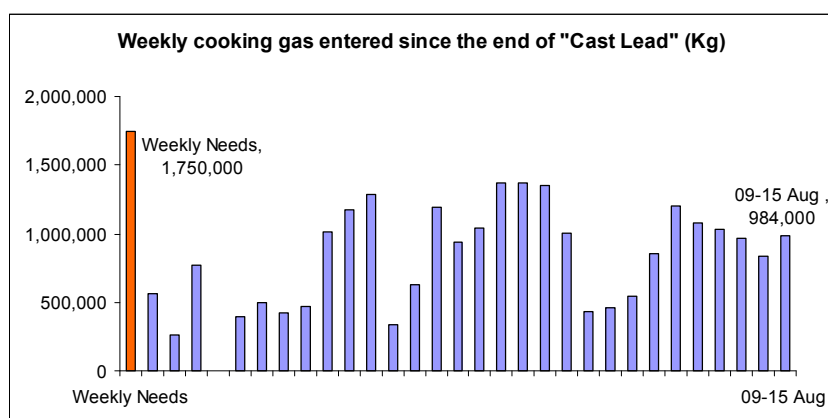
The Gaza marketplace is still mostly reliant on the fuel being transferred from Egypt through the tunnels under the Rafah-Egypt border, with fuel being transferred through the tunnels at rates of nearly

100,000 litres of diesel and 100,000 litres of petrol per day. This week, Israel allowed the entry of approximately 45,020 litres of petrol allocated for the Ministry of Health.

Imports of cooking gas slightly increased this week, with 984 tons entering compared to 840 which entered the previous week. According to the Gas Stations Owners Association (GSOA), this amount represents 54% of the estimated weekly needs.

## UNRWA calls for provision of \$181 million for Ramadan

On 17 August, UNRWA called for the provision of US \$181 million for food, jobs and cash to the poorest of Gaza's population for the upcoming month of Ramadan. According to UNRWA, seven months after the Israeli operation "Cast Lead", and three years into the Israeli blockade, life for the one million refugees in Gaza, roughly 70% of the population, is characterized by chronic unemployment, intermittent access to power and water, health hazards stemming from the



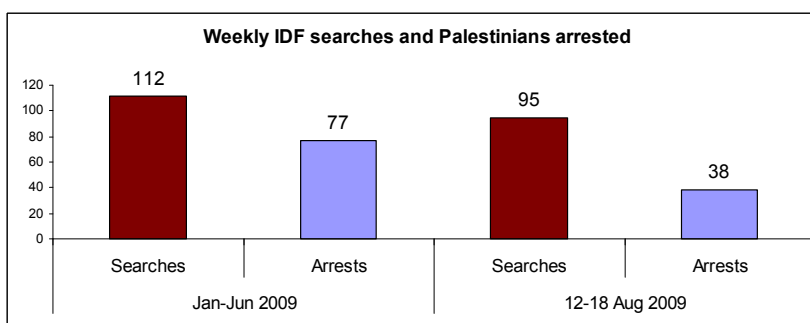
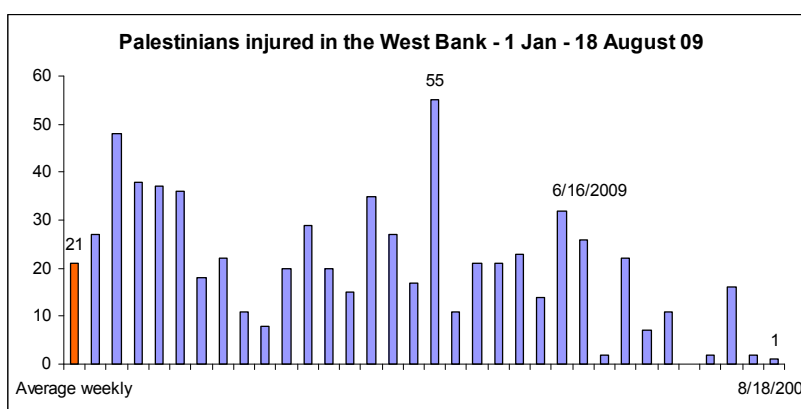
inadequate sewage system, and sub-standard housing with thousands living in tents or the rubble of their former homes.

This week, OCHA released the report: *Locked In: The humanitarian impact of two years of blockade on the Gaza Strip*, which takes an in-depth look at the impact of the Israeli-imposed blockade on the 1.5 million residents of Gaza. The report highlights how the blockade has triggered a protracted human dignity crisis, with negative humanitarian consequences, including the degradation of living conditions caused by an erosion of livelihoods and a gradual decline in the quality of vital services in the areas of health, water and sanitation, and education.

## West Bank

### Military activities affecting civilians

Two Israeli settlers were injured near Sinjil (Ramallah), with live ammunition allegedly shot from a Palestinian vehicle as they were driving on road 60. They were evacuated to an Israeli hospital. Following the shooting, Israeli forces conducted search operations. In south Hebron, Israeli forces conducted a large-scale search operation in the villages of Wadi ash Shajina and Khirbet Bisim, during which the villages were placed under curfew. Two firearms were found and three people were



arrested. The operation lasted for more than seven hours. In the northern district of Qalqiliya, Israeli forces conducted a search operation and closed the main entrance to the village of 'Azzun, following incidents of stone throwing in the area by Palestinians targeting Israeli military forces.

On 14 August, anti-Barrier demonstrations were held in the villages of Ni'lin and Bil'in (Ramallah), 'Azzun 'Atma (Qalqiliya), and Al Ma'sara (Bethlehem). There were no injuries reported, however, Israeli military forces continued to use tear-gas and "skunk bombs" in Ni'lin and Bil'in to disperse the crowds.

Since mid-June 2009, there has been a decrease in the average numbers of Palestinians injured weekly due to Israeli military activities in the West Bank (see graph). The downward trend continued this week, with only one Palestinian injured by Israeli military forces: on 13 August, a 24-year-old Palestinian man was injured when he was physically assaulted by IDF soldiers as he was crossing the Beit Yattir checkpoint, in the closed military area between the Green Line and the Barrier.

## Israeli settler incidents in East Jerusalem

Two weeks after the eviction of nine families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, confrontations continued to occur between Palestinian residents of the neighbourhood and Israeli settlers, who are residing in the former homes of the evicted families. This week, two Palestinian female children of one of the evicted families and one foreign national were injured in the confrontations and five Palestinians and three Israeli settlers were arrested; all were released within a day. Also during the week, Israeli right wing activists organized demonstrations in support of Israeli settlement policies in East Jerusalem at the Shepherd Hotel in Sheikh Jarrah. Two demonstrations were held in protest of Israeli policies in East Jerusalem, including one organized by activists of the Israeli Peace Now movement. The Jerusalem Municipality has approved at least 20 residential units to be built by Israeli-settler organizations in the area where the hotel is located.

## West Bank demolitions, property seizure, and stop-work orders

During the reporting period, Israeli forces demolished two partially built cisterns, and seized two water tankers, four containers, and other agricultural materials in the villages of Suba and Halhul in the district of Hebron. In addition, Israeli authorities issued a stop-construction order against a newly-built petrol station. The petrol station did not have requisite building permits for being built close to road 60. In total, 17 people were affected by the demolitions, seizures, and stop-construction orders.

## West Bank Access

Beginning on 15 July, Palestinians with Israeli citizenship were allowed to enter the city of Nablus by vehicle for the shopping festival, a practice which ended on 16 August. However, Palestinians with Israeli citizenship are still allowed to enter Nablus on foot, leaving their vehicles at the checkpoints.

In Qalqiliya, Israeli forces closed the main entrance of the village of 'Azzun following incidents of stone throwing in the area by Palestinians targeting Israeli military forces (*see West Bank military section*).