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January Overview

A number of incidents across the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) during January highlight the vulnerability of many herder and farming communities, most of them Bedouin, facing poor living conditions, access restrictions and/or risk of displacement.

In the West Bank, many of these vulnerable communities are located in the Jordan Valley and in the eastern slopes of the Bethlehem and Hebron governorates, where large tracts of land have been declared closed by the Israeli authorities for military training. In one such community, Khirbet Tana (Nablus), the Israeli military demolished 16 structures, including a school serving 40 children, thus displacing 100 of its 250 residents. Families living in three other communities located in “closed military zones” received eviction orders during January, placing 76 people at risk of displacement. In another Bedouin community in the Jordan Valley (Ka’abneh), the primary school



On 10 January, Israeli forces demolished the homes of more than 100 Palestinians, as well as the village school; since then students have been attending classes in a tent. Photo by Patrick Zoll

was served with a stop-work order (the precursor to a demolition order), and their residents began to be required special permits in order to cross the checkpoint controlling access into Jericho city (Yitav), which is their main service center. In 2009, at least 191 structures were demolished in Area C of the West Bank, the large majority of them in “closed military zones”, 20 percent fewer than in 2008.

ISSUES COVERED THIS MONTH

West Bank, including East Jerusalem: January overview • West Bank casualties; Palestinian injuries during demonstrations increased • Large-scale displacement in northern West Bank • Demolition and displacement trends in 2009, East Jerusalem and Area C • Focus on “Closed Military Zones”/“Firing Zones” • Bedouin access through Jordan Valley checkpoint further constrained • Humanitarian Response Plan for Area C • Significant movement easing in the Hebron governorate •

Gaza Strip: Gaza Strip casualties; Escalation of Israeli-Palestinian violence results in eight Palestinian fatalities during January. • The blockade continues; imports decline by 21 percent • Cooking gas rationing scheme continues • Further shortages of industrial fuel deepen electricity crisis • Gaza flooding and response • Overview: A Year after “Cast Lead”: humanitarian need remains high due to ongoing blockade • Update on Influenza A (H1N1) in Gaza in late 2009 • Medical referral abroad update • Israel releases report addressing Goldstone findings •

oPt-wide issues: Challenges to the implementation of the right to education in the oPt • Humanitarian Funding

While poor living conditions and access restrictions affect virtually the entire population of Gaza, some of its most vulnerable residents were the hardest hit by heavy January rains and subsequent flooding in the Al Mughraga area: approximately 800 residents, most of them Bedouin, had to be temporarily evacuated from their homes; some 500 of their sheep and goats, as well as hundreds of chickens, perished, and many bee hives were destroyed, further undermining their livelihoods.

Recent measures adopted by the Israeli authorities significantly reduce the ability of humanitarian agencies to provide assistance to the population of, or operate from, East Jerusalem, and may contribute to its further segregation from the rest of the West Bank. Employees of NGOs are being issued tourist visas instead of work visas, which preclude them from working inside Israel. In addition, access of health workers holding West Bank-IDs to East Jerusalem hospitals deteriorated once again in January.

In the Gaza Strip, the ability to bring essential commodities was further reduced this month, due to the total closure of the fuel crossing (Nahal Oz) turning

Kerem Shalom into the single functional crossing for goods (except for a conveyor belt at Karni Crossing). The gradual channeling of all humanitarian shipments to Kerem Shalom since the imposition of the blockade has significantly increased the cost of humanitarian deliveries due to its location, lack of storage capacity, and requirement of the Israeli authorities to repackage containers within pallets. Also this month, in a joint event with the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA), the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt, stated that “(t)he continuing closure of the Gaza Strip is undermining the functioning of the health care system... and causing on-going deterioration in the social, economic and environmental determinants of health”.

Easing restrictions on Area C for Palestinian use and ending house demolitions in the West Bank, lifting the blockade over Gaza, and facilitating the operation of humanitarian organizations, are essential to the improvement of the humanitarian situation in the oPt and to the restoration of dignity to its population.

West Bank

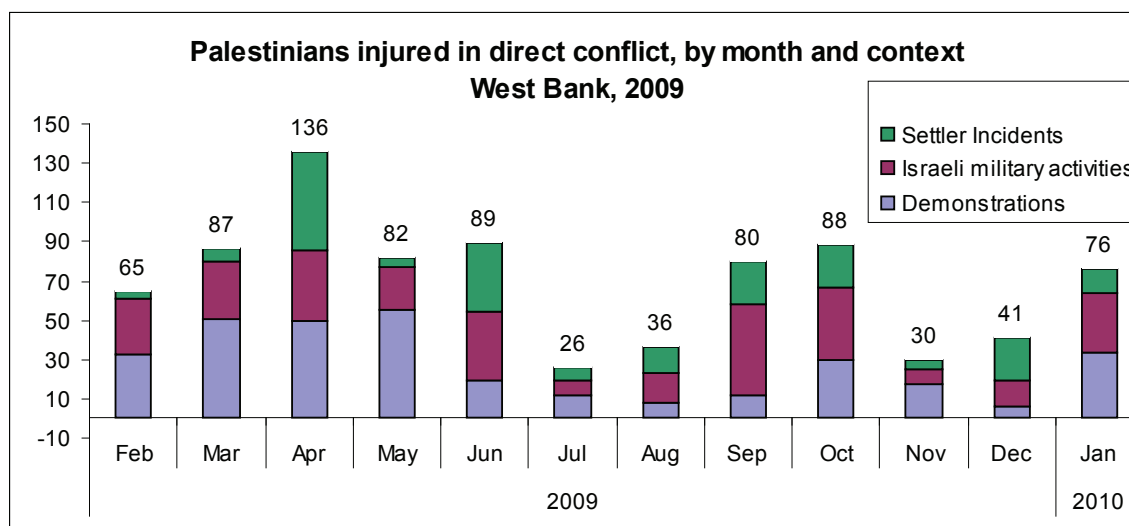
West Bank casualties

Palestinian injuries due to demonstrations increase in January.

For the third consecutive month, there has been an increase in the number of Palestinians injured in the West Bank by Israeli security forces and in incidents related to Israeli-settler violence. In January, a total of 76 Palestinians were injured within the context of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including 68 (twelve of them children) by Israeli military or police forces and seven by Israeli settlers. In addition, nine Israeli settlers were injured this month by Palestinians in

the West Bank, six of whom, including a one-year-old child, in incidents of Palestinian stone-throwing at vehicles along West Bank roads. No Palestinians or Israelis were killed in the West Bank in the context of Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Nearly half of all Palestinians injured by Israeli security forces (34 of 69 total injured) were in the course of the weekly anti-Barrier demonstrations held in the villages of Ni’lin, Bil’in (in Ramallah), and Al Ma’sara (in Bethlehem) and demonstrations



held in protest of the expansion of the Hallamish settlement at the expense of Palestinian land, in An Nabi Saleh village (Ramallah). Of those injured four were Palestinian children, including a nine-year-old child who was shot and injured in the head with a rubber-coated metal bullet by Israel forces during the demonstration held in Ni’lin on 1 January.

The remaining Palestinian injuries occurred during Israeli military operations or other miscellaneous incidents. One notable incident occurred on 13 January next to the village of Safa (Hebron) that resulted in three injuries when Israeli soldiers opened fire with rubber-coated metal bullets at farmers and foreign nationals trying to plant trees. In the past, the area of the incident had been declared as “state land” by the Israeli authorities, who refuse to grant authorization for its use to the farmers. Nearly 30 percent of the West Bank has been unilaterally declared by Israel as “state land”, and has been included in the boundaries of the Israeli settlements’ Regional and Local Councils, therefore precluding their use by Palestinians.

Also this month, seven Palestinians were injured by Israeli settlers,¹ and there were nine incidents of property damage by Israeli settlers reported. Of those injured by Israeli settlers, five were during or immediately after weekly protests held in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. Because of ongoing attempts by a settler organization to

expand its presence in the area², the neighborhood has become a flashpoint of Palestinian-Israeli tension within East Jerusalem, and has joined Ni’lin, Bil’in, Al Ma’sara and Nabi-Salah as the scene of organized weekly protests.

The other two settler-related injuries occurred when Israeli settlers entered the village of Beitillu (Ramallah) and clashed with the residents, in response to the demolition of a structure serving as a synagogue in a nearby settlement outpost by the Israeli authorities. The incident took place in the context of the so-called “price tag” strategy implemented by radical settler groups. In a report issued in November 2009, OCHA identified Beitillu, as one of the Palestinian communities particularly vulnerable to the settler “price tag” strategy.³

Large-scale displacement in northern West Bank

Israeli authorities raze the homes of more than 100 Palestinians in Area C

In January, the Israeli authorities demolished 37 Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank, displacing 109 Palestinians. All of January’s demolitions took place in Area C, most in one community in the Nablus governorate. This figure represents more than twice the monthly average of Area C demolitions in 2009 (16) and four times the 2009 monthly average of persons displaced (27).

On 10 January, Israeli forces demolished the homes of 100 Palestinians, including 34 children, in the community of Khirbet Tana (Nablus) in the Jordan Valley. The demolitions included 16 residential structures, the village school, 12 animal pens, two kitchens and a restroom. In addition, the community, which has an approximate population of 250 persons, was forced to self-demolish three residential tents. Khirbet Tana is a community of herders and farmers, residing for several decades in the area, which since the 1970s has been designated by the Israeli army as a “closed military zone” for military training (“firing zone”), where the Israeli Civil Administration prohibits construction (see box herein). Almost the entire community, which resides primarily in tents, tin shelters and caves and relies on land for its livelihood, was previously displaced in July 2005 as a result of demolitions, however, residents rebuilt their houses.

Emergency assistance was provided to cover the most urgent needs of the residents. This included food, tents and various non-food items, and livestock supplies, including veterinary medicine. The PA has also indicated that they will work with the community to identify and respond to any medium- to longer-term needs arising as a result of the demolition. The residents of the community are currently residing in tents near the remains of their demolished homes.

Also during the month, on 19 January, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) demolished two structures that were part of a residence in Jaba’ village (Jerusalem), due to the lack of a building permit. The demolition affected a Palestinian family of nine people, including five children, who are now staying in the part of the residence that was unaffected by the demolition.

During the month, the Israeli authorities continued to issue stop work and demolition orders against

Area C structures built without the required Israeli building permit. Structures affected by such orders in January included eight residences, five structures under construction, a two-story building, and caravans serving as a school, a mosque and a restroom.

There were two self-demolitions in East Jerusalem recorded by OCHA in January, resulting in seven people, including five children being displaced. During the month, according to Israeli media reports, the mayor of Jerusalem indicated that the Municipality intends to implement as many as 200 demolition orders in the wider Silwan area in response to a demand by the High Court that it seal and evict the residents of a nearby settlement outpost, Beit Yehonatan.⁴ In 2009, the Israeli authorities evicted 53 Palestinians from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem following the issuance of an Israeli court order supporting Israeli settler claims to land in the area. (Land ownership in this area has been the subject of a lengthy legal battle).

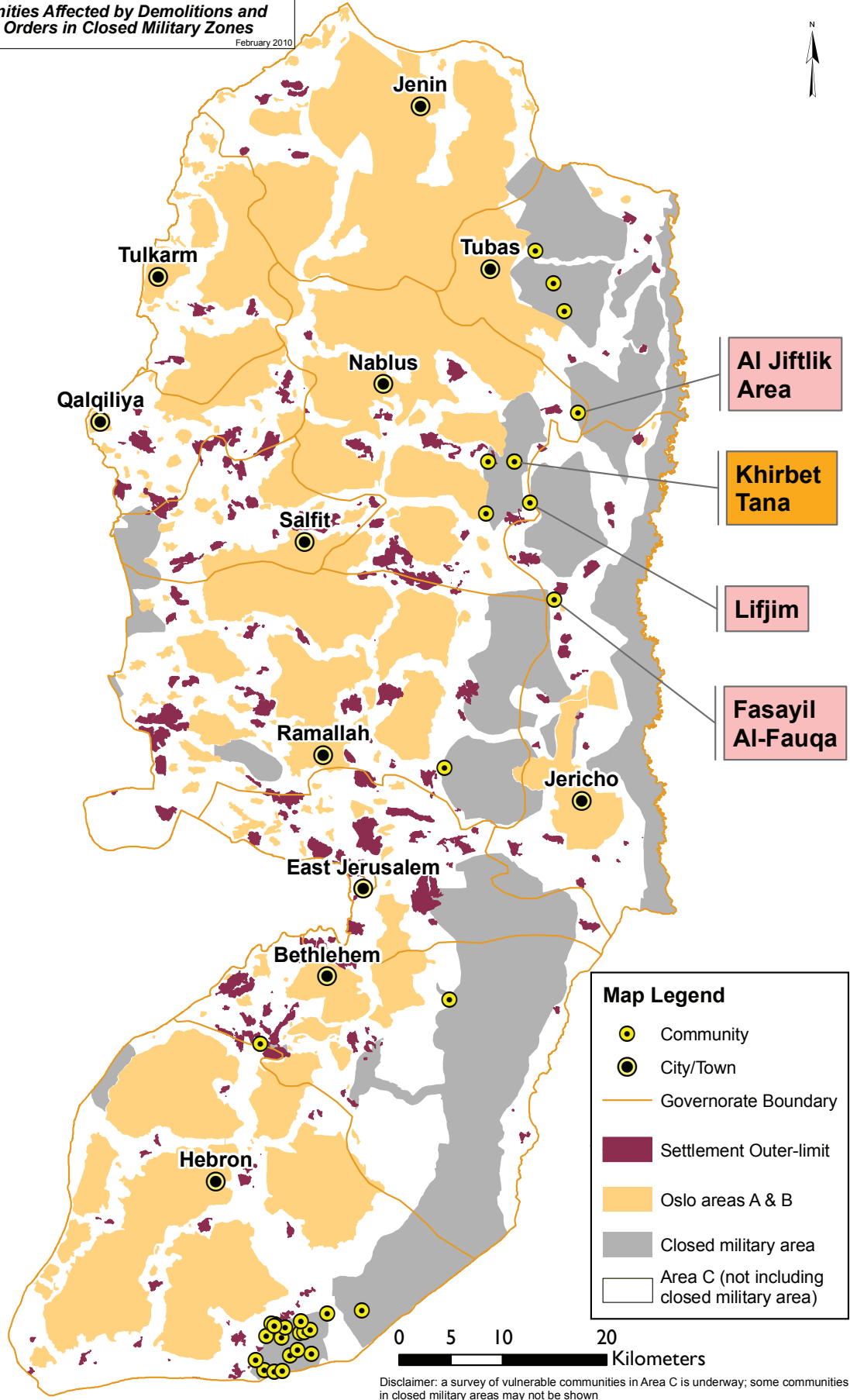
Bedouin access through Jordan Valley checkpoint further constrained

Since mid November 2009, most members of Al Ka’abneh Bedouin clan living in various sites in Al Auja area of the Jordan Valley, are being denied vehicular access through the nearby Yitav checkpoint, which controls the main route into Jericho City. This restriction, has greatly affected the community’s access to Jericho City, on which they totally depend to attend to their health, water, education and shopping needs. Upon being denied access at the checkpoint, people from the community have been forced to call the Palestinian DCL to intervene to have the Israeli soldiers allow them passage to their homes.

Between March 2005 and April 2007, a permit was required for all West Bank vehicles and pedestrians for entry into the northern Jordan Valley via Hamra,



February 2010



Disclaimer: a survey of vulnerable communities in Area C is underway; some communities in closed military areas may not be shown

DEMOLITION AND DISPLACEMENT TRENDS IN 2009, EAST JERUSALEM AND AREA C

East Jerusalem: At least 80 structures were demolished in East Jerusalem in 2009;⁵ compared to 93 in 2008. This included both demolitions carried out by the Israeli authorities as well as self-demolitions carried out by Palestinians on order from the Israeli authorities. These demolitions led to the displacement of at least 300 people, including 149 children. Another 186 people, including 82 children, were otherwise affected as a result, for example owing to a partial demolition of their home or places of work.

Most of the demolitions took place in areas such as Beit Hanina, Silwan, At Tur, Jabal al Mukabbir, Ath Thuri, Ras Khamees, Wadi al Joz, Sur Bahir, Isawiya and the Old City. In addition, several hundred demolition orders were issued to the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem in the course of year, in particular in the areas of Beit Hanina, Silwan (including Bustan), At Tur, Ath Thuri and Jabal Al Mukabbir. According to conservative estimates, there are at least 1,500 demolition orders outstanding in East Jerusalem. In total, as many as 60,000 Palestinian residents in the city may be at risk of house demolitions and displacement.⁶

In addition, 53 people (two families), including 20 children, were forcibly evicted from their homes in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah following organized attempts by settler organizations to gain control of the area. At least 24 other homes, and their 300 residents, remain at risk of forced eviction, with legal proceedings already having been initiated against eight families.

Area C: At least 191 structures were demolished in Area C in the course of 2009, which is lower than the comparative figure for 2008, when 237 demolitions took place. All but nine of the demolitions were carried out in the first half of the year. The demolitions, most of which took place in the Tubas, Jericho, Hebron and Nablus Governorates, led to the displacement of 319 people, including 167 children; an additional 572 people, including 332 children were otherwise affected. The majority of demolitions in Area C target poor and vulnerable herding or farming communities that reside close to settlements or in areas declared closed by the Israeli military as training or "firing", zones (see box herein). According to official figures there are at least 3,300 outstanding demolition orders through Area C.

Tayasir and Yitav checkpoints for those whose addresses on their IDs was outside Jericho and the northern Jordan Valley. In 2007, the requirement discontinued for pedestrians and those travelling in public transportation vehicles but continued for private vehicles until today. Moreover, those who obtain permits to cross in private vehicles must have the vehicles licensed in their names before being able to drive them through the checkpoints toward the Jordan Valley. While Al Ka'abneh members are indeed residents of the Jordan Valley, about 100 of the 150 families belonging to this clan are registered in the population registry and in their IDs as Hebron and Ramallah residents. Until recently, however,

and despite the general prohibition, they were exempted from the permit requirement following regular coordination between the Palestinian and Israeli DCLs.

The alternative route available for the community to access Jericho City is significantly longer and more costly (via Al 'Auja village, Road 90 and through the southern entrance to the city). Following the recent change, the Palestinian DCL office has sent a letter to its Israeli counterpart requesting the resumption of the prior arrangement, but there has been no official answer thus far.

FOCUS ON “CLOSED MILITARY ZONES”/“FIRING ZONES”

Since 1967, the Israeli authorities have declared some 18 percent of the West Bank “closed” for military training, or “firing zones.”⁷ The large majority of these areas are located in the Jordan Valley and along the eastern slopes of the Bethlehem and Hebron governorates. Palestinian access to these areas is prohibited, as is construction, however, enforcement of the access restrictions varies and the exact boundaries of the closed areas are not clearly demarcated on the ground. Many of the communities located in the “firing zones” have lived in the areas since before their declaration as closed and report that they have never seen the Israeli military training in close proximity to their homes.

These areas have been closed under the authorities provided to the Israeli military commander by Military Order No. 378, Order Regarding Defense Regulations, originally promulgated in 1970 and since, revised multiple times. Under the order, the Israeli military commander may issue an order declaring any area closed. Persons entering or present in the closed area without permission of the military commander, unless otherwise exempted, may be removed from the area. The authority to remove a person present in a closed zone without permission does not apply to a person who is a “permanent resident of the closed area.” However, as the requirements for ‘permanent’ residency remain unclear, many communities’ attempts to be classified as such have failed.⁸

In 2009, there was an increase in the enforcement of restrictions applicable to these areas, including the placement of signs marking “firing zones” in various Jordan Valley locales, and in evictions and demolitions affecting communities living there; over 80 percent of the Area C demolitions in 2009 occurred in areas declared “firing zones”. In 2010, in addition to the displacement in Khirbet Tana (see section herein), a number of other closed zone communities have been threatened with displacement:

- the community of Lifjim, southeast of Nablus city received eviction orders in January against three structures, placing 29 persons, including 23 children, at risk of displacement;
- the community of Fasayil al Fauqa (Jericho) received an eviction order targeting five tent dwellings and two animal shelters belonging to three families, placing 18 persons, including 11 children, at risk of displacement; and
- a community in the Al Jiftlik area (Jericho) received eviction orders targeting seven tents, owned by three families; four of the tents are used as residences and three as animal shelters. The orders place 29 Palestinians, including 23 children, at risk of displacement.

Many of the families residing in the “firing zones” are among the most vulnerable in the West Bank and are considered priority groups for humanitarian assistance. Most families reside in very basic structures (e.g. tents, tin shelters, etc.); they are farmers and herders, including Bedouins, and rely on access to land for their livelihoods. These families have limited access to services (such as education and health) and no service infrastructure (including water, sanitation and electricity infrastructure). In addition, they face a number of daily challenges including restricted access to grazing and agriculture land; planning and zoning restrictions that force many to build without a permit and face the risk of house demolitions;⁹ water scarcity (from drought and inequitable allocation of water resources); settler violence; and harassment from Israeli soldiers.

Some of the herding communities rely on separate seasonal residences to meet their livelihood needs. These communities will seek shelter in one place during the winter months and then move further up the West Bank slopes during summer, when temperatures become too high and vegetation too absent to support their livestock. Both of these locations are equally vital for the herding and farming communities to maintain their livelihoods.

The ongoing threat of eviction by the Israeli authorities forces families to live in a constant state of insecurity. Given the requirements of their herding lifestyle, communities feel that there are few options available to them that would enable them to maintain their livelihoods while “legalizing” their status with the Israeli authorities. As a result, most re-locate in the same area and re-build their structures following eviction and demolition.

Humanitarian Response Plan for Area C

Over sixty percent of the West Bank is designated as Area C, where Israel retains security control and jurisdiction over planning and construction. While the exact Palestinian population of Area C is unknown,¹⁰ it is estimated that as many as 150,000 Palestinians live in Area C, many of whom are among the most vulnerable residents in the West Bank. Though service provision to populations in Areas A and B of the West Bank has increased over recent years, communities in remote parts of Area C are still struggling to adequately access basic social services and assistance, such as water/sanitation, primary education and basic shelter. As a result, Area C has been identified by the humanitarian community as a priority area for humanitarian assistance.

While the Palestinian Authority (PA) is responsible for the provision of services in Area C, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) retains control over planning and construction. For example, the responsibility for education and health services for Palestinians in Area C rests with the PA, however, difficulties in obtaining Israeli building permits from the ICA undermine the ability to provide these basic local services for the construction or expansion of schools and health clinics. The aid community has also faced considerable challenges due to difficulties related to the permit requirements.¹¹

To address the most critical needs of the population living in Area C, humanitarian aid partners have developed a framework for assistance in Area C that focuses on meeting the urgent needs of vulnerable communities in the areas of water, education and shelter.

Significant movement easing in the Hebron governorate

This month OCHA recorded the removal of 25 closure obstacles throughout the Hebron governorate, including 22 earthmounds, two roadblocks and

a road gate. Nine of these obstacles had been located along Road 60, the main north-south traffic artery, and Road 356, preventing residents of nine Palestinian communities and towns (approximately 9,000 people) direct vehicular access to these roads. The remaining obstacles blocked routes leading to agricultural areas.

Also during January, the Israeli army began allowing Palestinian vehicles to access a previously banned segment of Road 3265 in the western Hebron governorate. This road was closed approximately seven years ago and left for the exclusive use of Israeli settlers commuting between the settlement outpost of Neghohot and Israel. This closure forced some 25,000 people living in 12 Palestinian villages along the road to make a long detour to reach their service centres in the cities of Hebron and Dura. The opening of the road this week follows a ruling by the Israeli High Court of Justice in October 2009, which established that the ban on the use of the road by Palestinians is illegal.

These measures continue the gradual easing of Palestinian movement between urban centers to the east of the Barrier, implemented by the Israeli authorities in previous months. By contrast, no parallel improvement has taken place regarding access of Palestinians to and from areas behind the Barrier, including East Jerusalem, and the Jordan Valley, as well as within the Israeli controlled area of Hebron City (H2), continued to be severely restricted. As of 2 February, there were approximately 550 movement obstacles throughout the West Bank, 80 fewer than in February 2009.¹²

Ongoing concerns over access for humanitarian workers in the West Bank

WHO reports that access to East Jerusalem hospitals for staff holding West Bank-ID cards deteriorated once again in January, with hospital staff (excluding physicians) facing great difficulty reaching their places

of work as permits issued in November 2009 are no longer valid, as of the beginning of January 2010.

In July 2008, the Israeli authorities began limiting the entry of all hospital staff holding West Bank IDs (including medical staff and non-medical personnel) to only three checkpoints to East Jerusalem: Qalandia in the north, Gilo in the south, and Zaytoun to the east. These checkpoints are known for long delays and the new policy resulted in employees arriving late to work. While the policy initially also applied to physicians, the measure was relaxed in November 2008 and physicians were again allowed to enter via any checkpoint, while this was not the case for all other hospital staff nor for the patients.

In an attempt to resolve this situation, discussions were held between WHO, the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) and the Israeli Ministry of Health in summer 2009, during which COGAT agreed that special permits should be issued to all hospital staff to enable them to cross any of the checkpoints into East Jerusalem. As a result, the Israeli authorities began issuing new permits to all hospital staff in November 2009, featuring a stamp from COGAT indicating that the holder of the permit was a hospital employee whose passage should be facilitated. However, as of January 2010, these permits are no longer valid and hospital employees, with the exception of physicians, have been prevented from entering East Jerusalem from any checkpoint other than the three specified above.

Also in January 2009, a new visa policy applied to foreign nationals working for international NGOs in the oPt. The policy, which was implemented by GOI in December 2009, involves the issuance of a B2 tourist visa to affected staff, rather than a B1 work visa, which had previously been the case. Although many details of the new policy remain unclear, B2

tourist permit holders are not allowed to work in Israel; in the view of the Israeli authorities, this prohibition would apply to East Jerusalem, which was unilaterally annexed by Israel following the onset of the occupation in 1967. It remains unclear to what extent it will affect INGOs working in Area C of the West Bank, which remains under considerable Israeli control. In addition, INGO staff may experience problems accessing the Gaza Strip, while on a B2 visa.

The Association for International Development Agencies (AIDA) has raised concerns about the precarious legal position staff are placed in by being issuing a B2 visitor visa to a person intending to work. The INGO community has reportedly received widely divergent verbal instruction from various Israel authorities. In the absence of clear written procedures and given conflicting information provided to INGOs, international staff are increasingly vulnerable to arbitrary decision-making and interpretation by various Israeli authorities on issues as serious as their entry to Israel and the oPt and where they are legally allowed to work. There is serious concern that the new constraints may impede the implementation of humanitarian programs, the cost of providing humanitarian assistance and INGO's ability to recruit new staff in the future.

In total during January 2009, UN staff members reported a total of 42 access incidents in the West Bank, one less than in December 2009. As a result of these incidents, the UN lost 197 staff hours or the equivalent of 26 UN staff days, compared to 31 staff work days lost in December 2009. As in past months, the single greatest cause of reported UN access delays or denials, 45 percent, were the result of Israeli forces' demands to perform internal searches of UN vehicles.¹³ A growing percentage of incidents (24 percent) are due to demands for staff to step out of UN vehicles at checkpoint.

Gaza Strip

Palestinian-Israeli conflict casualties

Escalation of Israeli-Palestinian violence results in eight Palestinian fatalities during January.

January was characterized by a significant escalation in Israeli-Palestinian violence during the first half of the month followed by two weeks of relative calm. Seven of this month's eight fatalities fell as a result of Israeli airstrikes; three of them, including a 15-year-old boy, were civilians working in one of the tunnels operating under Gaza's border with Egypt tunnel and killed in one of such airstrikes on 8 January. Israeli military operations during the first two weeks included also a number of ground incursions a few hundred meters into Gaza, during which agricultural land was leveled, as well as several incidents involving Israeli naval forces opening "warning" fire towards Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore. The increase in Israeli military attacks and operations came in parallel, and according to the IDF in response, to a significant increase in rocket and mortar fire by Palestinian armed groups towards southern Israel, which resulted in no injuries or damage.

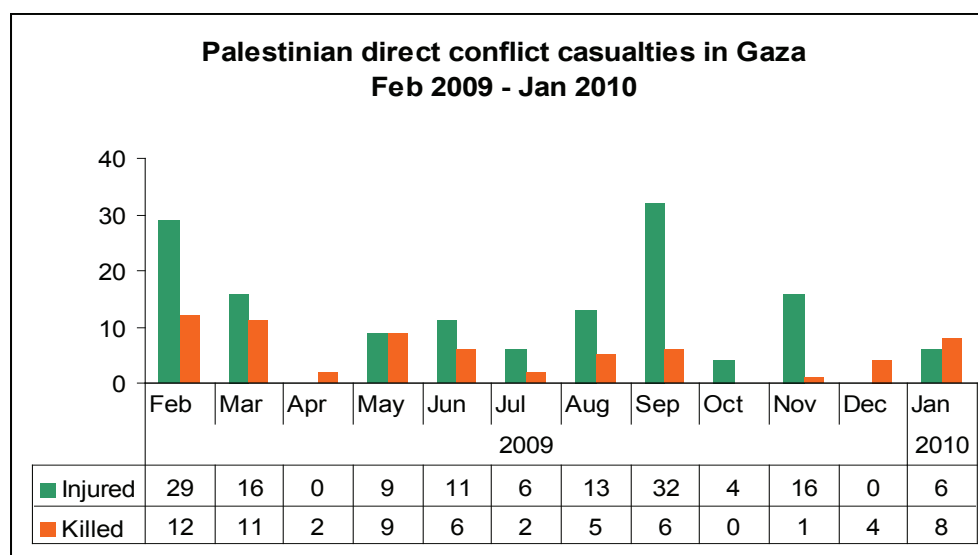
Overall, January registered one of the largest number of Palestinians fatalities in Gaza since the end of the "Cast Lead" offensive, alongside a relatively low number of injuries. From February 2009 until

Palestinians killed in Gaza tunnels from tunnel collapse, accidents, or airstrikes since the end of the 'Cast Lead Operation' – 18 Jan 09

		Died	Injured
2009	Jan	0	4
	Feb	7	13
	Mar	4	5
	Apr	1	
	May	7	7
	Jun	3	6
	Jul	14	28
	Aug	11	11
	Sep	7	31
	Oct	3	8
	Nov	3	6
	Dec	5	1
2010	Jan	6	10
Total		71	130

December 2009, on average, five Palestinians have been killed and twelve Palestinians in Gaza have been injured per month, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In addition to the casualties incurred from the incidents detailed above, there were an additional three Palestinians killed and seven injured due to tunnel collapse. From the onset of the Israeli blockade on Gaza in June 2007, tunnel activity has increased gradually, in spite of the risks posed, in order to compensate for the loss of access to goods that previously entered through the crossings.



The blockade continues; imports decline by 21 percent

In January, a total of 2,062 truckloads of goods entered Gaza, a 21 percent decline compared to the number of truckloads that entered in December 2009 (2,597). This month's imports also constituted only 17 percent of the parallel monthly average that entered during the first five months of 2007 (12,350), before the imposition of the Israeli blockade.

Similar to previous months, food supplies and hygiene materials made up the highest proportion of the total truckloads – 1,642 or 80 percent. The remaining 20 percent included limited shipments of fuel supplies, non-edible consumables, agricultural and medical materials and industrial/electrical appliances. This month, a total of 111 truckloads carrying industrial appliances and household items were allowed into Gaza, including: glass (60 truckloads), which has been allowed entry since 29 December 2009; water coolers (36); and electrical spare parts for GEDCO (Gaza Electricity Distribution company), the Palestinian Telecommunication Company, and UNRWA (15) also entered.

On 21 January an Israeli court held a hearing on a petition filed by the Israeli human rights group, Gisha, under the Freedom of Information Act, after the Israeli authorities failed to produce documents related to its policy on the import of goods to Gaza. The Court ordered the state to submit the requested documents within 30 days or to explain why it refuses to do so.

Despite the ongoing restrictions on exports, this month, 44 truckloads carrying cut flower carnations and strawberries were allowed out of Gaza. These are the largest export shipments recorded in one month since January 2008. The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC) indicated that 300 tonnes of strawberries and 30 million cut

flowers are slated for export during this season, ending on 15 February for strawberries and 20 May 2010 for cut flowers.

Fuel supplies

Cooking gas rationing continues

Following the closure of the Nahal Oz fuel crossing on 1 January, cooking gas has entered exclusively through the pipeline located at the Kerem Shalom Crossing, which has approximately half of the capacity of the Nahal Oz pipeline. As a result of this measure, this month there was a 13 percent decline in the quantities of cooking gas that entered Gaza (2,321 tonnes) compared to the last month (2,653 tonnes) and 19 percent decrease compared to the monthly average during 2009 (2,850 tonnes). This amount represents less than 40 percent of the estimated monthly needs (6,000 tonnes) of gas, as indicated by the Gas Station Owners Association. Since November 2009, the shortfall has led to a gas rationing scheme throughout the Gaza Strip, in which quantities of gas available at the Palestinian General Petroleum Corporation (PPC) are being distributed to bakeries and hospitals first, as a priority. In spite of the reduced quantities, no queues have been observed at the distribution points, possibly due to an increase in the entry of cooking gas jars through the tunnels, under the border with Egypt.

Further shortages of industrial fuel deepen electricity crisis

Since the beginning of the year, the fuel delivered to the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) has declined from a weekly average of 2.2 to 1.8 million litres—only 57 percent of the estimated weekly needs of fuel to operate the power plant, due to a lack of available funds. As a result, on 23 January, the GPP had to shut down one of its two operating turbines and reduce its output from 65 to 30 megawatts (MW). The reduction in the electricity output by the GPP has triggered long rolling scheduled blackouts, which reached 10-12 hours, 4-5 days per week in Gaza City, northern Gaza and middle area and 6-8

hours, 3-4 days per week in Khan Younis and Rafah, as indicated by the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO). This development was reversed by the end of the month, when the PA paid for 800,000 litres of fuel, allowing with the operation of two turbines. As a result, the scheduled blackouts were reduced to 6-8 hours per day throughout the Gaza Strip, except for Rafah.

Electricity cuts are directly affecting refrigerated food, water pumping and heating in individual households, as well as the provision of essential services, including water supply, sewage removal and medical treatment. As a result, public institutions are forced to rely extensively on backup generators and other alternative devices, which are extremely vulnerable due to the inconsistent supply of spare parts. WHO warned that the continued power cuts and blackouts not only put the life of hundreds of patients at risk but also may damage hospital equipment.

Gaza flooding and response

Approximately 800 residents of the area were affected to varying degrees; the majority of households are registered refugees, many of whom are Bedouin families living along the banks of the Wadi Gaza stream. Several people were treated for mild injuries. In some areas of Al Mughragha, flood water reached from 50-70 cm inside houses, and in Jhr el Dikh up to two metres, ruining and damaging many household items, including furniture, food stocks, and electrical appliances. Some families were temporarily relocated to houses of relatives or friends to wait for the water to recede. Although most of those who relocated did so for only one night, a few still remain with host families, as houses dry out and are rehabilitated. An estimated 500 sheep and some goats, as well as hundreds of chickens, including those on two poultry farms, perished, and many bee hives were destroyed. Following health concerns, the carcasses of many of these animals were disposed of by the municipality; cleanup and repair to the area continues.

Emergency basic needs were quickly met, with local authorities, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), UNRWA and other agencies and NGO partners, distributing emergency items such as blankets, mattresses, food, clothing, hygiene kits, kitchen sets and emergency cash assistance. While the precise scope of damage to housing and agricultural land, property and livelihoods is still being assessed, it is estimated that longer term assistance will be required for some families.

Overview: A Year after “Cast Lead”: humanitarian need remains high due to ongoing blockade

One year following the end of Israel’s “Cast Lead” offensive and humanitarian need in the Gaza Strip remains high, with most reconstruction activities prevented due to the ongoing Israeli-imposed blockade. Over the course of the past year, humanitarian agencies have carried out a range of activities designed to mitigate the most pressing needs; some 68 percent of the 2009 CAP requirement for Gaza projects was funded.¹⁴ The lifting of the blockade, however, remains the key requirement for the recovery of the Gaza economy, decreases in poverty and unemployment and reduced humanitarian need.

US\$ 57 million in cash assistance distributed to meet shelter needs

Given the ongoing blockade and the lack of reconstruction materials, the primary response by agencies working in the shelter sector has been in the form of cash assistance to all those whose houses were destroyed or suffered major damages, to cover rental fees and other living expenses until reconstruction or repair can take place. UNRWA covered 3,516 refugee families, with a total of US\$ 14.9 million; UNDP covered 2,201 non-refugee families, for a total of US\$ 8.9 million and local Gaza authorities covered 2,509 families with damaged homes and an additional 6,373 affected families for a total of US\$ 32.9 million.

UNRWA BUILDING COMPRESSED EARTH BLOCK HOMES FOR DISPLACED FAMILIES



Photo by UNRWA

UNRWA is constructing shelters made of compressed earth blocks (CEB) to house 200 refugee families displaced in operation Cast Lead.

According to UNRWA's latest survey, 200 refugee families are still living in tents or makeshift shelters without proper roofing, windows or doors. In response, UNRWA has launched a project to construct temporary shelters made of compressed earth blocks (CEB). The blocks, made of compressed soil which is plentiful in Gaza and taken from existing quarries, are robust, durable, ecologically friendly and thermally efficient.

With the provision of cash assistance for living expenses and rental assistance, the majority of those displaced, estimated at 3,500 families (20,000 persons), have been able to rent or find alternative housing. As a result of the increased demand in the rental market, which has not been matched by any new construction, rental costs in most areas, particularly in Rafah, have significantly increased, forcing many families to share their already cramped living space with relatives. To better address the needs of the displaced that have not been able to find places to rent, UNRWA has started building transitional shelters using traditional materials (see box). Other agencies are currently seeking funding for projects using the same technology.

As limited amounts of building materials are available, agencies have provided cash assistance for minor repairs to shelters. To date, UNRWA has provided 35,885 families with support and UNDP has provided 6,960 families to make essential repairs to their homes. Various agencies are also distributing plastic sheeting, tarpaulins and other materials to weatherproof the most vulnerable homes. Since 29 December 2009 (up to early February), Israel has allowed the import of limited supplies of glass (66 truckloads carrying 59,009 glass sheets), making glass available for repairs to damaged shelters.

While CEB shelters cannot substitute for the massive reconstruction and re-housing effort that is required in Gaza, the project provides urgently required housing and a much needed injection into the Gazan economy; all materials and labour utilized are sourced in Gaza. ILO estimates that the project's implementation will generate up to 50,000 work days and is supporting the project by providing training for selected contractors. To date, three families have received CEB shelters and plans are in place to construct such shelters for all displaced families who own land.¹⁵

Food assistance remains vital

In the aftermath of "Cast Lead," over 85 percent of the Gaza population received food assistance.¹⁶ Despite the high coverage of assistance, the prevalence of food insecurity remains high due to widespread poverty and lack of purchasing power to buy food and cover other essential needs. In the year since the "Cast Lead" offensive concluded, a variety of agencies carried out food relief activities.¹⁷ Total project requirements reported through the 2009 CAP totaled US\$ 167 million of which US\$ 110 million was funded (65 percent). Until a lifting of the blockade enables improvement of food security levels, food, voucher and cash distributions remain essential and interventions to support safety nets should be expanded. Additionally, continued

support for the local production of fresh foods for local consumption is required in order to improve diet quality.

Watsan reconstruction impeded by import restrictions

The effectiveness of aid provision in the WASH sector has been severely hampered by restrictions on imports. Total project requirements for Watsan, reported through the 2009 CAP, totaled US\$ 22.8 million of which US\$ 13.2 million was funded (58 percent). Key responses in the WASH sector were implemented by the Coastal Municipality Water Utility (CMWU), ICRC, UNICEF, UNDP, GVC, Oxfam GB, Save the Children, ACF, Care, IRD, Islamic Relief, Muslim Hands, PHG and Coopii (Solid Waste). In spite of the restrictions on the entry of needed goods, a number of repairs have been made: eleven wells damaged during the conflict and in need of significant repair or complete reconstruction were repaired, with the exception of generators, and minor repairs were completed at eight additional wells that were also damaged during the conflict. Some 8,700 roof tanks that were damaged have been replaced by distributions of a similar number of polyethylene tanks. Only one water reservoir, at Johr El Deek, has undergone minor repairs and it currently operates at approximately 75 percent of its pre-"Cast Lead" capacity; blockade restrictions on cement have prevented the repair of other water reservoirs. The real costs of reconstructing water tanks was underestimated as damage to the 3000m³ UNRWA water reservoir at Salah El Deen, and the water reservoir in Beit Lahiya were unreported initially. CMWU still needs at least 1,250 tons of cement for reconstruction of water tanks.

Since the Israeli offensive, 32.9 km of water network and 6.0 km of sewer networks have been repaired, as well as repairs to wastewater treatment facilities. However access to the water network, reported at 97% before "Cast Lead" is currently 93% (CMWU): 10,000 people who were cut off by the war are still

without a connection. In areas such as Ezbet Abed Rabu, Zaytun and Al Atatra, lack of reconstruction as a whole has made it unfeasible to investigate rehabilitating water networks.

Agriculture sector unable to recover

Heavy restrictions on agricultural and reconstruction materials, adverse weather conditions, along with the lack of access to agricultural and fishing areas prevents the agriculture sector in the Gaza Strip from recovering.¹⁸ According to the Agriculture Projects Information System (APIS), only US\$ 4.5 million was allocated towards humanitarian and early recovery agricultural interventions from 2009 to-date.¹⁹ Total requirements for agriculture projects in Gaza, reported through the 2009 CAP, totaled US\$ 31.1 million of which US\$ 15.5 million was funded (50 percent).²⁰

High demand for scarce agricultural materials, particularly fertilizers, plastic sheeting for insulation or water collection, steel and wood for constructing greenhouses and animal shelters, and pipes for irrigation, force farmers to buy products at high costs and/or from the Rafah-Egypt tunnels. As 'tunnel goods' are not subject to control and regulations, there is concern over the quality of items especially with regards to livestock and veterinary medicines. While positive, recent and ongoing exports of strawberries and cut flowers represent only a small portion of the agriculture sector; a full restart of the agriculture calendar depends on the opening of the borders to provide commercial access to materials and access to important agricultural land and fishing zones.

Update on Influenza A (H1N1) in Gaza in late 2009
In its latest epidemiological bulletin on the Gaza Strip issued on 21 January, UNRWA reported that the number of Influenza A (H1N1) confirmed cases in Gaza reached 174; nine other cases died of H1N1 in the same period. As of the end of 2009, watery

diarrhea and acute bloody diarrhea have remained the major causes of morbidity among the refugee population of the Gaza Strip. However, the morbidity trend of the latter showed a declining trend, while former has shown fluctuations. Similarly, acute hepatitis and typhoid fever manifested a decreasing trend.

Medical referral abroad update

On 7 January, a two-year-old child died from a congenital heart failure that could not be treated in Gaza. His death occurred while he waited to the day of his appointment at the Wolfson Medical Center in Israel, which was set up to 19 January, after being previously postponed.

During the month of January, the Israeli District Liaison Office (DCO) processed 1,081 permit applications for patients referred to medical treatment outside of the Gaza Strip. Of these applications, 78 percent were approved, 19 percent were delayed, and two percent were denied. When the application is delayed, the appointment to the relevant medical facility is lost and the patient must seek a new appointment and subsequently submit an entirely new application. The rate of approval in January is 16 percent higher than the monthly average rate of approval in 2009 (67 percent). In addition, 173 people were referred to medical facilities in Egypt. Rafah border crossing opened for a period of four days between 3 and 6 January, allowing 623 patients, including many referred in previous months, to leave Gaza in order to access Egyptian healthcare facilities.

Israel releases report addressing Goldstone findings

Pursuant to a resolution by the UN General Assembly, calling on both Israel and the Palestinian side to undertake investigations on the findings of the UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (also known as the “Goldstone Report”), on 29 January, Israel released a report, providing information on investigations and legal proceedings conducted in relation to allegations of serious human rights and humanitarian law violations. In its report, Israel states that it has launched investigations into 150 separate incidents, including 36 criminal investigations opened thus far. More broadly, six special command investigations initiated by the IDF addressed more general concerns that arose in the course of the fighting. In addition, the report outlines Israel’s investigative procedures, and describes the various mechanisms involved, including those operating within the military system as well as

civilian oversight provided by the Attorney General and the Supreme Court.

On the same background, in a press statement issued on 27 January, Hamas stated it had formed a special committee to follow-up on the recommendations of the Goldstone Report. The committee has prepared a 52 page report, soon to be released. On 25 January, the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, announced the establishment of a panel that would focus on human rights violations allegedly carried out by PA security forces during the “Cast Lead” offensive. The panel would comprise eight members and is to be headed by former Palestinian supreme court president, Isa Abu Sharar. The PA reportedly submitted an initial report to the UN explaining how the panel would carry out investigations into alleged Palestinian war crimes. However, the contents of this report have not been made public.

Issues throughout occupied Palestinian territory

Child Protection	December 2009	January 2010
Palestinian children killed	0	1
Israeli children killed	0	0
Palestinian children injured	9	11
Israeli children injured	0	1
Palestinian children displaced from home demolitions	0	37
Palestinian children in Israeli prisons	305	305

Challenges to the implementation of the right to education in the oPt

The right to education is a fundamental right that is universally recognized and enshrined in various international conventions and treaties.²¹ In the oPt, the right to education is undermined as a result of armed conflict, the ongoing blockade of Gaza, and policies that undermine investments in the expansion and upgrade of educational facilities, namely building restrictions imposed on Area C of the West. Several events this month underscored the challenges Palestinian children and young adults face in realizing their right to education.

In Area C of the West Bank, the right to education of Palestinian children continued to be undermined by demolitions and demolition orders. On 10 January, Israeli authorities demolished the primary school in the Palestinian community of Khirbet Tana (see displacement section); this school had been previously demolished in 2005 and subsequently rebuilt. Also this month, the ICA issued renewed demolition orders against the school serving the Al Ka'abneh Bedouin community in Jericho district, due to the lack of building permits. The school, which provides basic education from grades one through seven for 60 children is comprised of five classrooms, including two cement structures, one tent, and two zinc extensions. Due to acute shortages of classroom space, the Palestinian Ministry of Education purchased two caravans, which could not



Children from the Bedouin Community of Ka'abneh attending classes in a school slated for demolition. Photo by Jo Kelcey, UNESCO

be installed since early 2009 due to the ICA's refusal to issue the required permit, citing an existing plan to relocate the entire community, including the school, to another area (see also section on access restrictions on Ka'abneh in the Jordan Valley).

Access of Gazan students to higher education outside Gaza, is severely impeded due to ongoing closure of the crossings with Egypt and Israel. This month, however, as a result of an exceptional five day opening of Rafah crossing, 481 Palestinian students who had been accepted to universities abroad were able to leave the Gaza Strip via Egypt in early January; an additional 319 students are still waiting to exit Gaza. Moreover, as a result of the ban on the entry of Palestinian residents registered the Gaza Strip into the West Bank, in force since 2003, university demographics have changed significantly.

For example, in the year 2000, the University of Birzeit (Ramallah) had 350 Gazan students, but by 2005 it had 35 students; today there are none.²² A similar situation exists in Bethlehem University. Of note this month, 22-year-old Bethlehem University student Berlanty Azzam was awarded her degree after completing her studies by telephone and email. This followed a ruling by the Israeli High Court of Justice the previous month upholding a decision to deport her to Gaza on the grounds she was “staying in the West Bank illegally” (see December 2009 Humanitarian Monitor).

In contrast to these developments across the oPt, in January, the Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak announced that he would formally recognize a five-year old government decision to upgrade the status of the college in the settlement of Ariel, in Area C of the West Bank (Salfit), to that of “university center,” which is a precursor toward recognition as a full-fledged university. This may increase the institution’s funding as well as expand its activities and number of students.²³ Although the settlement freeze was announced in November 2009, the building and expansion of schools remains exempt from the freeze after the Israeli government recognized the importance of adequate educational infrastructure.

Humanitarian Funding

Humanitarian projects listed under the 2010 Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) received approximately USD 13 million, or 2 percent of the CAP’s total requested funding (USD 664 million). Fifty six percent of the appeal is designated for projects in Gaza (USD 372 million). Food remains the largest sector of the CAP, with USD 248 million financial requirement, or 37 percent of the total requested funds. This sector is followed by the Economic Recovery sector (29 percent of total funds), Health, Agriculture (7 percent), Water and Sanitation (6 percent), Coordination and Support services (5 percent), Education (4 percent), Protection (3 percent) and Shelter (2 percent).

In January, the HRF funded one project by a Polish humanitarian organization for the provision of emergency mobile water pumps to deal with flooding in public and residential areas in Gaza. The project will address a need identified in the Gaza Winter Response Plan by providing six water pumps to CMWU to help deal with increased flooding during the winter season. The funding amounts to USD 200,000. The need for these water pumps was identified as a top priority by the WASH cluster.

Endnotes

1. In addition, a total of five Palestinians were injured by Israeli security forces during incidents related to Israeli settlers
2. It is estimated that some 475 Palestinians are at risk of forced eviction, dispossession and displacement due to settler plans in Sheikh Jarrah.
3. For more details, see OCHA oPt, "Restricting Israeli Settler Violence and the Evacuation of Outposts," November 2009.
4. See Akiva Eldar, "Mayor defies court order to evacuate Jews from East Jerusalem home," *Ha'aretz*, 22 January 2010.
5. At the end of 2009, OCHA oPt carried out a review of its data concerning demolitions in East Jerusalem for the year 2009 and reconciled it with a number of other organizations recording demolitions in East Jerusalem. After cross-checking and verifying a number of incident reports, OCHA has revised its total demolition figure upwards to 80 demolitions.
6. It is estimated that at least 28% of Palestinian homes have been built in violation of Israeli zoning requirements, which could place at least 60,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem at risk of having their homes demolished.
7. These areas have been closed under the authorities provided to the Israeli military commander by Military Order No. 378, Order Regarding Defense Regulations, originally promulgated in 1970 and revised multiple times since then. Under the order, the Israeli military commander may issue an order declaring any area closed. Persons entering or present in the closed area without permission of the military commander, unless otherwise exempted, may be removed from the area. The authority to remove a person present in a closed zone without permission does not apply to a person who is a "permanent resident of the closed area." See Order Regarding Defense Regulations (Judea and Samaria) (No. 378), 5730-1970, sec. 90(C).
8. For example, for details on the difficulties faced by residents of South Hebron to be accorded 'permanent resident' status, see B'Tselem, pgs. Expulsion of Residents from the South Mt. Hebron Area, February 2000, pgs. 12 – 16.
9. For more details, see OCHA oPt, "Restricting Space: The Planning Regime Applied by Israel in Area C of the West Bank," December 2009.
10. The division of the West Bank into Areas A, B and C did not correspond to the built-up area of Palestinian communities. There are over 400 Palestinian villages that have some part of their built up area in Area C. Of these, approximately 150 are entirely located in Area C.
11. For additional information, see OCHA oPt, "Restricting Space: The Planning Regime Applied by Israel in Area C of the West Bank," December 2009.
12. This figure does not include 84 of the 93 closure obstacles within the Israeli controlled section of Hebron city, as well as 63 "Barrier gates", which control Palestinian movement into agricultural areas isolated by the Barrier.
13. While outside visual inspections are regularly conducted by Israeli forces staffing checkpoints, Israeli checkpoint personnel often insist on invasive car searches, unless a diplomat is present in the vehicle. According to the United Nations Convention on Privileges and Immunities (1946), UN property and assets are immune from search and, as such, UN staff are instructed not to allow vehicle searches.
14. Total requirements for projects in Gaza, reported through the 2009 CAP, totaled US\$ 589.7 million of which US\$ 402.3 million was funded (68 percent). There was an additional US\$ 44.2 million in joint West Bank – Gaza Strip project requests, of which US\$ 28.9 million (65 percent) was funded.
15. All families who receive CEB shelters from UNRWA will remain eligible for re-housing once reconstruction begins.

16. Food insecurity affects 60.5 percent of households in the Gaza Strip, while an additional 16.2 percent are considered vulnerable to food insecurity.
17. Such agencies include UNRWA, WFP, CHF, IRW, Care, Oxfam GB, ACS, PCOA, Premiere Urgence and PARC.
18. UN, MoA, and Partners Rapid Needs Assessment published in Agriculture Sector Report: Impact of Gaza Crisis, March 2009. For additional details on factors preventing the recovery of the Agricultural sector, along with damages sustained during the "Cast Lead" offensive, please see the December 2009 Humanitarian Monitor.
19. Data extracted on 1 February 2010.
20. There was an additional US\$ 6.1 million in joint West Bank – Gaza Strip project requests, of which US\$ 1.7 million (28 percent) was funded.
21. Convention on the Rights of the Child; Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 26; The International Covenant on Economic, Social And Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966)
22. Right to Education campaign
23. According to Israeli media, the decision to rename the college to university centre is being challenged by the Israeli planning and budgetary committee, which has stated that despite the name change, the educational institution's funding will not change; the committee also recommended a legal inquiry to define the conditions by which educational institutions may use the title "university".

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for

Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), Al Haq, Badil, Save the Children (UK), Defence for Children International – Palestine Section (DCI-PS), Oxfam GB, Palestine Hydrology Group (PHG), Campaign for the Right to Enter, ACF-E, AAA, ACPP, ACAD, and members of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM).

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