



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
occupied Palestinian territory

## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

26 AUGUST –1 SEPTEMBER 2009

### LATEST DEVELOPMENT SINCE TUESDAY, 1 September 2009

- 2 September: The Israeli authorities removed part of the infrastructure at Ma'ale Efraim checkpoint, one of four staffed checkpoints controlling access to the Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank. According to the Israeli DCL, this checkpoint will no longer be regularly staffed. These measures should allow for freer access for Palestinian-plated vehicles, which will be able to enter the Jordan Valley without the need for a permit.
- 2 September: Israel announced the release of nine Hamas members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), who had served their sentences. The PLC members were arrested shortly after the capture of Gilad Shalit. There are a further 24 PLC members and two-Hamas affiliated ministers currently incarcerated in Israeli prisons.
- 3 September: In an event held in Gaza, humanitarian UN agencies and NGOs expressed deep concern over the ongoing water and sanitation crisis triggered by Israel's blockade and called for an immediate opening of Gaza's crossings.

## West Bank

### One child killed; number of injuries remained low

During the reporting period, Israeli forces shot and killed a 15-year old Palestinian boy and injured another ten Palestinians. Similar to previous weeks, the number of Palestinian injuries this week remains well below the 2009 weekly average of 17.

On 31 August, Israeli soldiers shot and critically injured a 15-year-old Palestinian boy in Al Jalazun refugee camp (Ramallah), allegedly after he threw a Molotov cocktail at an IDF observation tower next to Beit El settlement. The boy was subsequently transferred to an Israeli hospital for treatment, where he died shortly upon arrival. Similar incidents in the same location in October 2008 resulted in the killing of two Palestinians, including one boy. In the aftermath of this week's incident, Israeli forces fired gas canisters and sound bombs to disperse a protest that evolved at the Camp's entrance; one paramedic and an UNRWA worker sustained injuries.

Also this week, in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2), a Palestinian man was shot and critically injured by Israeli forces, after reportedly attempting to stab a soldier. In addition, five Palestinians were wounded during weekly anti-Barrier demonstrations held in Ni'lin, Bil'in and Ma'sara villages.

This week, there was a slight increase in the number of search and arrest operations conducted by Israeli security forces in Palestinian areas, compared to last week (110 vs. 97). Of the total operations, 70 were conducted in the northern West Bank, 18 in the south and 22 in the central region.

## Access developments

Access for Palestinians holding West Bank IDs to East Jerusalem on the first Friday of Ramadan (28 August) was reported to be more orderly than in previous years. According to the Israeli authorities, approximately 60,000 Palestinians entered Jerusalem through the four authorized checkpoints (Qalandia, Gilo, Shufat Camp and Az Zeitun). Access was restricted to men over 50 and women over 45 years of age, who could pass without permits. Men between 45-50 and women between 30-45 years of age were allowed to enter with special permits. Israeli Security Forces and roadblocks were deployed around the Old City for the duration of the Friday prayers.

Since the beginning of Ramadan, a new procedure was implemented by Israeli authorities at the checkpoint controlling access to Azzun Atma village, which is located between the Barrier and the Green Line in the Qalqiliya governorate. Non-residents wishing to visit the village during Ramadan can do so without obtaining a visitors permit, after depositing their ID cards at the checkpoint.

On 27 August, Israeli authorities announced the indefinite closure of three agricultural Barrier gates in the area near Beit Ijza and Biddu villages (Jerusalem), denying farmers access to their land, located behind the Barrier, primarily cultivated with grapes. The decision to close the gates followed the detonation of an explosive device at Beit Izja gate; no injury resulted.

## Thousands of students affected by a shortage of classrooms

As the 2009-2010 school year began this week, thousands of Palestinian children in East Jerusalem and Area C were affected by a significant shortage of adequate educational facilities. According to a joint report released by two Israeli NGOs (the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and Ir Amim), at least 30,000 Palestinian children are forced to pay large sums to attend private schools, due to the shortage of an estimated 1,000 classrooms in the public school system, which is run by the Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Ministry of Education. The report also estimates that over 5,000 Palestinian school-age children are not registered in any school at all. According to the Israeli media, the Jerusalem Municipality rejected the report's findings, claiming that the data is "falsified" and that gaps in the education system in various parts of the city are slowly closing.

In communities located in Area C, inadequate structures, including tents, shacks and crude cement structures, are being used as schools, due to the lack of building permits needed to expand existing schools and build new ones, in order to meet growing needs. A number of schools in Area C recently constructed without permits were issued stop work or demolition orders by the Israeli Civil Administration.

## Settler-related incidents

During the week, there were six settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians, nearly the same number of incidents as the weekly average since the beginning of 2009 (7). Incidents included property damage, intimidation and trespassing, with none resulting in injuries. In the northern West Bank, settlers from Avnei Hefetz settlement (Tulkarm) hurled stones towards farmers working their land in the vicinity of the settlement, forcing them to leave the area. Similarly, herders from Yanun village (Nablus) were forced out of a grazing area in the vicinity of the Itamar settlement, when settlers chased them away while shooting in the air. In the South, settlers from Neve Daniel settlement reportedly uprooted a number of olive trees belonging to Palestinian farmers from the town of Al Khader (Bethlehem).

Also this week, there were two reported incidents involving-stone throwing by Palestinians at Israeli vehicles on Road 60, near Sinjil village (Ramallah), causing light damage to the vehicles.

## Gaza Strip

---

### **Sporadic violence continues; one fisherman killed this week**

Israeli patrol boats continued to enforce access restrictions this week on Palestinian fishing areas; on 27 August, Israeli naval forces targeted and killed a Palestinian fisherman and injured another, while they were fishing from the shore of northern Gaza. This is the first fisherman killed since 18 January 2009. On four other incidents, Israeli patrol boats opened warning fire towards Palestinian fishing boats, west of Beit Lahia, forcing the boats to return to shore. In January this year, the Israeli military reduced the Palestinian fishing zone from six to three nautical miles, affecting the fishing catch and undermining the livelihood of 3,000 fishermen and their dependents. Similar restrictions are implemented on access for farmers to areas within 300 meters near the Gaza-Israel border. On one occasion during the reporting period, Israeli forces entered a few hundred metres into Gaza, east of Al Bureij Camp, conducted land leveling and forced Palestinian farmers to leave their land.

Also this week, two Hamas-affiliated militants were killed in a blast of unconfirmed origin, near the border, east of Jabalia; according to Israeli media, Israeli military forces denied carrying out an attack. In addition, a Palestinian militant was wounded by an Israeli airstrike that targeted a group of militants east of Gaza City.

During the week, Palestinian factions continued to fire sporadic rounds of rudimentary rockets and mortar shells towards Israeli military bases located at the border. Since the implementation of ceasefires on 18 January 2009, a total of 39 Palestinians and one Israeli have been killed and 89 Palestinians and six Israelis were injured in the context of the Israeli - Palestinian conflict in Gaza and southern Israel.

### **Three killed in tunnel-related incidents**

This week, three Palestinians were killed and another one injured when a tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border collapsed. Since 18 January 2009, 44 Palestinians have been killed in various tunnel-related incidents.

### **IDF to look into eight complaints of alleged abuse of detainees and violence during “Cast Lead”**

According to Israeli media, the IDF has directed the Military Police's investigative unit to look into eight complaints of alleged abuse of detainees and violence toward Gazans, during the “Cast Lead” offensive. Four of the cases under investigation were filed by the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI), of which one complaint was filed in January and the other three in April. The first complaint was submitted on behalf of 19 of the 40 Gazans that were arrested during the course of the Israeli offensive. According to Israeli military law, a soldier who hits or somehow abuses either a lower-ranking soldier or a person in custody, for whom the soldier is responsible, will be sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

### **Blockade affects the new school year**

As the 2009/2010 school year began, access to schools in Gaza was impeded by a combined problem of lack of building materials to reconstruct and repair damaged schools and a shortage of educational materials.

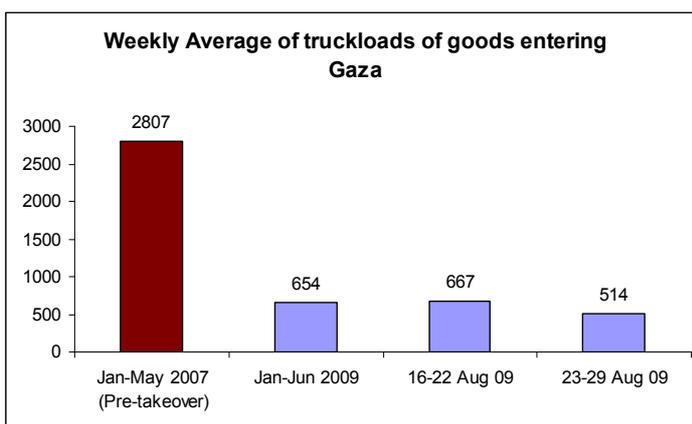
At least 280 schools incurred minor and severe damage during the “Cast Lead” offensive, including 18 schools that were destroyed. None of the schools have been rebuilt or repaired to date, due to continued restrictions on the entry of construction materials. The relocation of affected students to other schools creates further overcrowding.

Also, a severe shortage of notebooks is reported in the local market, due to continued restrictions on the entry of goods into Gaza, including the prolonged delay in the clearing process of shipments of educational materials. As a result, nearly 240,000 students registered in governmental schools are affected. While notebooks are being rationed, the Ministry of Education in Gaza reports that governmental schools are lacking other educational materials, including printing paper, chalk, spare parts for photocopiers, etc.

Since the beginning of 2009, Israel has allowed the entry of only 174 truckloads of educational materials. Of these, only two carrying stationery entered during July and August, compared to 157 and 30 truckloads that entered during the same months of 2007 and 2008 respectively. According to Paltrade and local suppliers, there are nearly 120 truckloads of stationery awaiting clearance to enter Gaza.

### Weekly average of imported truckloads remains below needs (23-29 August)

This week, Gaza imports declined by 23% compared to last week (514 truckloads compared to 667). This week's figure constitutes around 18% of the weekly average of truckloads that entered Gaza during the first five months of 2007, before the Hamas takeover. Similar to previous weeks, food and hygiene items made up the majority of imported goods (464 truckloads or 91% of total imports). The remaining 9% included limited shipments of agricultural materials, packaging materials, medical supply and non-edible consumables.



Imports of cooking gas declined by around 27% this week, compared to the previous week (601 tonnes vs. 819 tonnes). While this amount represents only 34% of the weekly needs, as estimated by the Gas Stations Owners Association, cooking gas is still available on the open market with limited shortages. No Israeli petrol and diesel has entered during the week, however, Egyptian petrol and diesel, which is transferred through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border, remain available on the open market.

The entry of other major essential goods, including materials for reconstruction (cement, steel bars, glass, wood and others), spare parts for water and sanitation projects, packaging material, industrial and electrical materials, livestock, IT equipment and vehicles remain either restricted to limited quantities, or barred from entry. No exports were allowed this week; Gaza's last shipment of exports was on 27 April 2009.

## **Gaza population continues to experience frequent power cuts**

Around 2.2 million litres of industrial fuel were delivered again this week to the Gaza Power Plant, representing approximately 70% of the amount of fuel needed to operate the plant at full capacity. As a result, Gaza's electricity company continued to implement scheduled blackouts lasting 6-8 hours a day, five days a week, affecting the functioning of public services, including water and wastewater pumping and management and health services at hospitals. According to the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, power cuts have limited the regular supply of running water throughout the Gaza Strip to 6-8 hours, one to four times a week. In addition, approximately 80 million liters of almost partially treated sewage are being discharged into the environment, due to the high frequency of power cuts, lack of diesel and spare parts.