



May Overview

Latest developments

20 June: The Israeli Security Cabinet declared the easing of the Gaza blockade, particularly pertaining to civilian goods and humanitarian access. Construction materials will be allowed to enter only for projects under the supervision of the PA and International Organizations. The next humanitarian monitor will report on the implementation and on the humanitarian impact of these measures.



155 patients (13%) of those in need of medical treatment abroad were denied permission to exit Gaza. Photo by John Tordai

After three years of blockade, the Gaza Strip continues to suffer from a severe human dignity crisis characterized by high food insecurity rates, high dependency on foreign aid, a 'locked in' civilian population, and 'de-development' of key sectors such as agriculture, health, and education. This month, the impact of the blockade drew broad international attention, as a flotilla carrying humanitarian assistance was intercepted by Israeli forces at sea and nine international activists were killed. The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator

(ERC), John Holmes, condemned the waste of life and called for the flotilla 'disaster to be the occasion for the collective punishment of the people of Gaza to be lifted once and for all.'

Large-scale building and reconstruction, including the expansion and upgrade of houses and public infrastructure remain at a standstill in Gaza. Other effects of the blockade can be seen across multiple sectors: inadequate materials needed for the agricultural and fishing industries, along with

ISSUES COVERED THIS MONTH

The West Bank: Israeli-Palestinian violence -Palestinian casualties decrease in May with an increasing trend in Israeli settler violence • New measures to ease movement • Developments regarding communities isolated by the Barrier • Area C in Focus: Meeting basic shelter needs • Medical students facing difficulties accessing East Jerusalem for training.

Gaza Strip: Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the Israeli-Palestinian violence • Almost 200 people displaced following house demolitions by local authorities • The Gaza crossings activity • Access to health care denied • 114 essential drugs are completely out of stock in Gaza • Impact of the blockade and other access restrictions on agriculture sector.

Issues across the occupied Palestinian territory: The right to education of Palestinian students undermined • Concern over under-funding of humanitarian projects.

access restrictions on much of Gaza's farming and fishing areas, have brought these industries to the brink of collapse. Daily electricity cuts continue for most of Gaza's population, and have been further exacerbated by a six-month decline in imported industrial fuel due to a funding crisis. Access to the outside world remains negligible for the area's 1.4 million inhabitants, as the Rafah and Erez crossings are mostly limited to humanitarian cases, students studying abroad, and foreign-passport holders; this month 13 percent of all medical patients referred to hospitals abroad were denied permits to exit through Erez crossing, a sharp increase from the rate of denial in the previous 11 months (average two percent of the total applicants).

Healthcare in Gaza has been affected by a depletion of essential drugs to the lowest levels seen since June 2007, due to internal coordination difficulties between the authorities in Gaza and Ramallah as well as difficulties getting clearance for items to enter Gaza; the treatment of patients suffering from bleeding disorders, certain types of cancers, kidney failure, and some infant allergies, is expected to be severely affected.

Access and movement restrictions are among the main factors affecting living conditions in many parts of the West Bank. In May, the Israeli authorities announced a number of measures that may ease movement of Palestinian traffic between West Bank towns and cities. In addition, with the completion of the rerouting of a section of the Barrier in the Qalqiliya governorate following a 2005 ruling by the Israeli High Court, the Israeli military removed the infrastructure of the previous Barrier, thereby reconnecting three communities with the rest of the West Bank, and increasing their access to services and livelihoods. However, despite these improvements, close to 8,000 Palestinians still live in closed areas behind the Barrier and must obtain Israeli-issued permits to continue living in their homes; this month, the Israeli authorities refused to renew the permits of twelve members of a community located behind the Barrier in south Hebron, effectively forcing them out of their homes.

Access to education has been undermined for hundreds of thousands of Palestinian students by widespread classroom shortages throughout the oPt. In Gaza, because of restrictions on the entry of construction materials, new schools cannot be built, and there is an acute shortage of classrooms in both UNRWA and government-run schools; UNRWA immediately requires 15 additional schools to accommodate its growing student population. In the West Bank, the classroom shortages are a direct result of inadequate planning afforded to the Palestinian population living in East Jerusalem and in Area C: at least 20 schools are being prevented from expanding their facilities in Area C, and according to the Association for Civil Rights in Israeli (ACRI), the post-elementary dropout rate is 50 percent for Palestinian children enrolled in municipal schools in East Jerusalem.

The protection of civilians, particularly along Gaza's border with Israel and in West Bank areas in the vicinity of Israeli settlements, is of increasing concern. In May, four Palestinians were killed, and 122 Palestinians and 21 Israelis were injured across the oPt. Gaza had the highest Palestinian casualties reported in a single since the end of the 'Cast Lead' offensive. Most of Gaza's casualties were unarmed civilians, including a 75-year-old civilian who was shot and killed by Israeli forces while visiting the grave of his wife, and 38 other civilians were injured, including 31 due to collateral damage from an Israeli airstrike targeting a Hamas training facility. In the West Bank, nearly 40 percent of the Palestinian casualties occurred in incidents involving Israeli settlers, including the killing of a 15-year-old Palestinian boy in the Ramallah district. The number of reported settler-related incidents resulting in either Palestinian casualties or property damage in the first five months of 2010 is more than twice the average of such incidents during equivalent periods in the previous four years.

West Bank

Israeli-Palestinian violence

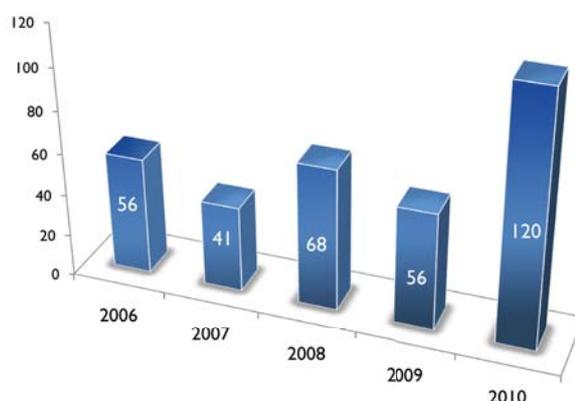
Palestinian casualties decrease in May; with an increasing trend in Israeli settler violence

In May, a Palestinian boy was killed and 78 others were injured in the context of Israeli-Palestinian violence; eleven Israeli military force members and five Israeli settlers were also injured by Palestinians. Casualty figures for the West Bank declined for the second month in a row, and returned to levels recorded before their highest point this past March, largely due to demonstrations around Jerusalem.

Nearly 40 percent of the Palestinian casualties this month (30) occurred during incidents involving Israeli settlers, including 17 injuries caused directly by settlers and 13 by Israeli security forces. Overall, this was the highest incident category leading to injuries in May. Most of the other injuries (28) occurred during demonstrations against Barrier construction and settlement expansion.

In the gravest incident this month, a 15-year-old Palestinian boy was shot and killed in the hills of Al Mazra'a Ash Sharqiya village in the Ramallah district. Although the identities of the perpetrators remain unknown, according to eye-witness accounts, the assailants were driving an Israeli-plated vehicle along Road 60. Investigations into the incident are

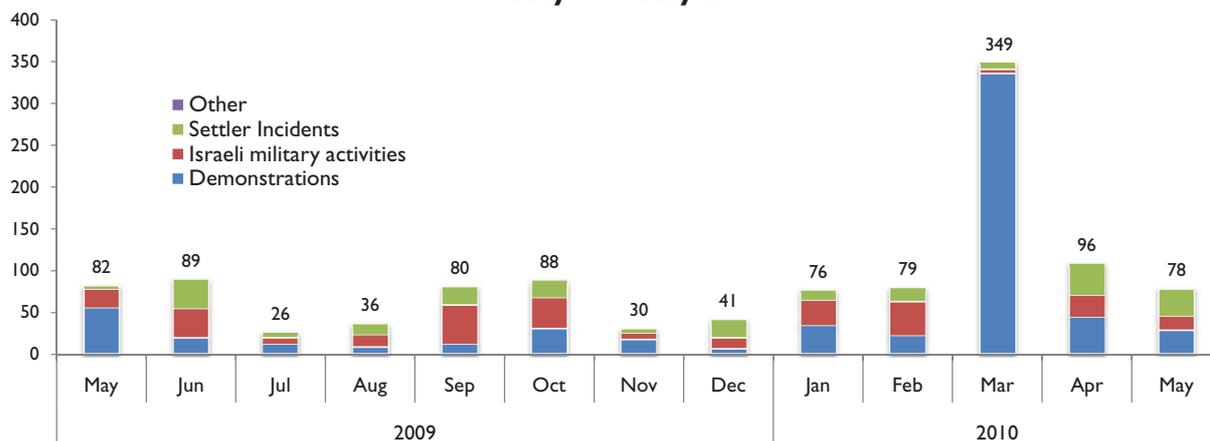
Israeli settler-related incidents resulting in Palestinian casualties or property damage Jan-May(2006-2010)



being conducted by both Palestinian and Israeli authorities.

In addition to incidents involving physical assault and clashes resulting in casualties, this month OCHA recorded 18 settler-related incidents affecting Palestinian property, which included the uprooting or burning of 140 dunums of olive trees, the setting fire to a mosque in the Nablus district, and other acts of theft and vandalism. Several of this month's demonstrations also ended with significant property damage, which included the setting fire to almost 400 dunums of olive trees and/or grazing land in Bil'in village, as a result of tear gas canisters fired by Israeli forces.

Palestinians injured in direct conflict, by month and context West Bank, May 09 - May 10





Olive grove, Beit Iksa, allegedly set on fire by settlers, May 2010. Palestinian casualties/property damage from settler incidents are twice as high as averages from previous years. Photo by OCHA

Israeli citizenship through all West Bank checkpoints.

Implementation of the latter measure began during the last week of May and it continues previous easings adopted over the last year. As a result, the number of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship accessing Palestinian cities in the West Bank with their vehicles, mostly for shopping, is expected to increase, thus positively impacting the level of commercial activity in these cities.

OCHA figures indicate that Israeli settler violence is on the rise: the number of settler incidents resulting in either Palestinian casualties or property damage recorded in the first five months of 2010 is more than twice the average of such incidents during the equivalent period in the previous four years – 120 compared to 54 incidents.

Some of this year's incidents have occurred in the context of the "price tag" tactic, where Israeli settlers exact retribution on Palestinian villagers for Israeli government actions perceived as being hostile to the settler movement. However, while the motivation for many incidents is not always evident, it is clear that a large number of incidents since the beginning of the year were unrelated to specific measures by the Israeli authorities, but rather to "regular" attempts to control certain areas and land resources.

New measures to ease movement

On 24 May, the Israeli authorities announced new measures aimed at easing access restrictions on Palestinians in the West Bank. The main components of this package are the removal of 60 closure obstacles, the opening of a prohibited road east of Jerusalem for Palestinian vehicular traffic, and further easing the access of Palestinians with

By contrast, the opening of prohibited road east of Jerusalem was delayed due to "safety works" carried out by the Israeli authorities.¹ Also, as of the end of the month, OCHA recorded the removal of only eight unstaffed closure obstacles, all in the Hebron area. The most significant was an earthmound located at the entrance of Ad Dahiya town, which was replaced with a road gate that has remained open. As a result, some 50,000 people living in this town and nearby villages now have direct vehicular access to Road 60, the main north-south traffic artery in the area. Although the opening improves movement between Palestinian towns and villages in the area, access of residents to Hebron city, the main economic and service hub in the region, is still impeded because the main entrance to the city from the south remains blocked. The main reason for the closure of the latter is the protection of the Israeli settlement located next to it (Beit Haggai), as well as of Israelis travelling along Road 60.

Also this month, following a decision by the Israeli High Court of Justice from December 2009, the Israeli authorities opened to Palestinian-plated vehicles the West Bank section of Road 443 in the Ramallah governorate. During the past eight years, Road 443 almost exclusively served Israelis traveling between Jerusalem and the coastal area, as well as Israeli settlers commuting to Israel. The

impact of the opening for Palestinians, however, remains limited because access to Ramallah and to East Jerusalem for Palestinians using the road continues to be prohibited. The prohibition is now enforced by a new, permanently staffed checkpoint installed at the eastern end of Road 443, next to the Israeli Ofer prison. In addition, access to the road for Palestinians is allowed only at two points (Beit 'Ur al Fauqa and Beit Sira villages), where two new staffed checkpoints have been installed, requiring Palestinians to pass a security check.

Following the installation of the new checkpoint next to Ofer prison, the Israeli authorities ceased the permanent staffing of three checkpoints located further south on routes leading into East Jerusalem (Ramot, Atarot and Qawasmi checkpoints), transforming them into partial checkpoints. The latter changes, however, do not affect in any way current restrictions on Palestinian access into East Jerusalem.

Since early 2008, the Israeli authorities have implemented measures that significantly reduce travel time between many cities and towns, as well as the level of friction between Palestinians and Israeli forces at checkpoints. However, access of Palestinians to areas behind the Barrier, including East Jerusalem, as well as to land and rural communities in the Jordan Valley, remained severely limited. Moreover, during that period no significant improvement has taken place regarding the ability of Palestinians to use and develop land resources in these areas, as well as in other areas designated as Area C.

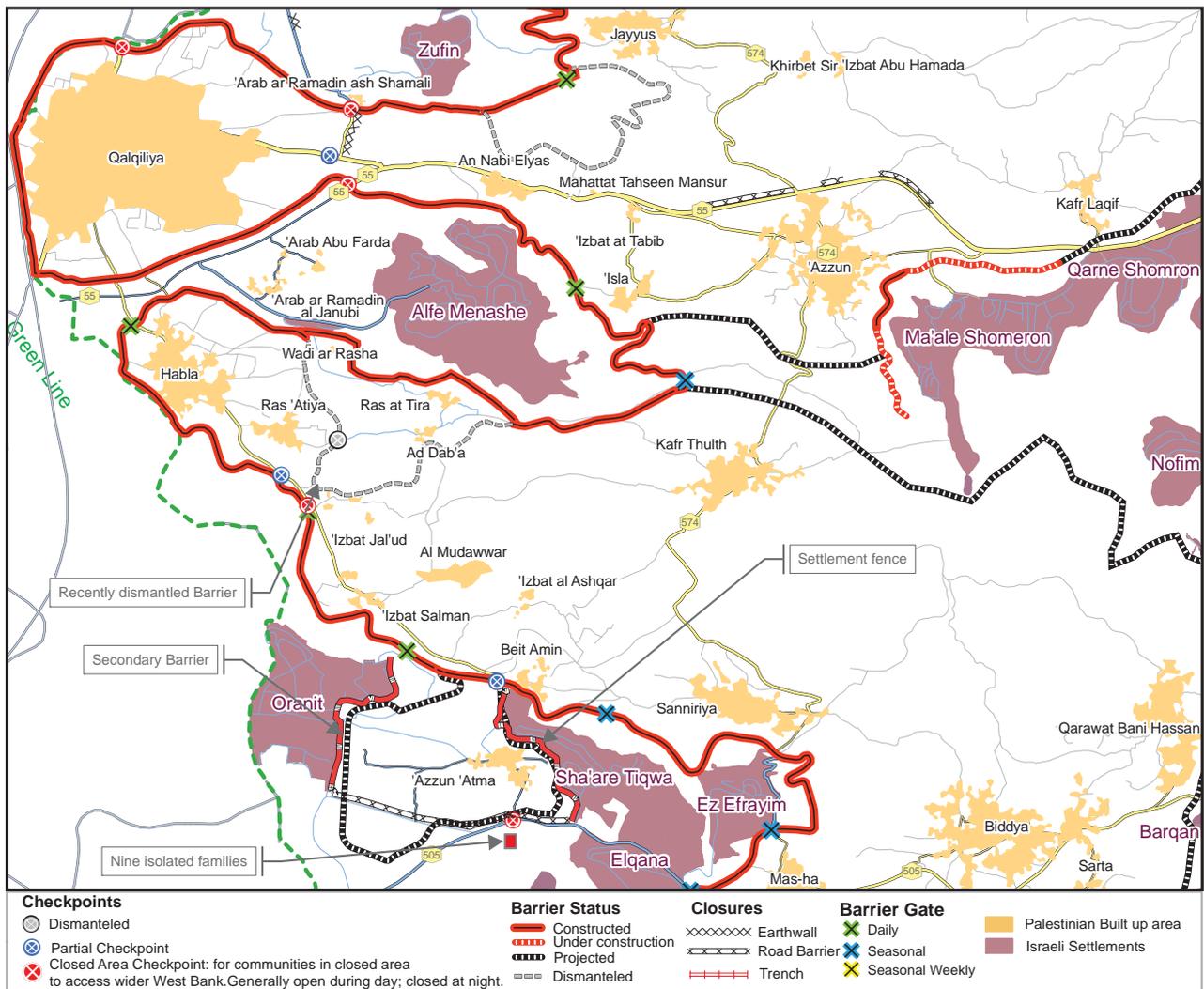
Developments regarding communities isolated by the Barrier

The Israeli military completed the rerouting of the Barrier around the Alfe Menashe settlement in the Qalqiliya governorate, and removed most of the infrastructure along the original route, including one checkpoint controlling movement through

the Barrier (the Ras 'Atyia checkpoint).² Three communities previously behind the Barrier - Ad Dab'a, Wadi Ar Rasha and Ras at Tira (nearly 900 people) - were as a result "reconnected" with the rest of the West Bank, thus facilitating their access to services and livelihoods. However, valuable agricultural lands owned by these communities remain in the closed area. In 2003, this area was declared closed for military reasons (also known as the "Seam Zone") and their residents had to obtain "residents' permits" to continue living in their homes, while other Palestinians had to apply for "visitors' permits" to access the enclave. This leaves two other communities, with a population of some 350 ('Arab ar Ramadin al Janubi and 'Arab Abu Farda), isolated in the closed area. The Israeli High Court had in 2005 ruled that the original route of the Barrier enclosing the Alfe Menashe settlement enclave 'creates a chokehold around the villages [and] severely injures the entire fabric of life.'

In the previous month, a checkpoint located within the same governorate controlling access to another village behind the Barrier ('Azzun 'Atma, 2,000 residents) was transformed into a "partial checkpoint", and is now staffed on an ad-hoc basis. While this has improved most residents' access to services, nine families are still isolated from the rest of the village by a second Barrier. Movement through this Barrier is controlled by a checkpoint, which closes between 22:00 and 05:00, and access to emergency medical care is impeded during these hours. This second Barrier also restricts access to some 3000 dunums of agricultural land belonging to five Palestinian communities.

Currently, the total number of Palestinians living in closed areas behind the Barrier is approximately 7,700, down from 10,600 previously. While the removal of checkpoints and permit requirements are welcome steps, the re-routings in Qalqiliya area remain in contradiction to the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July



2004, which stated that the sections of the Barrier constructed, beyond the green line and within the West Bank are illegal.

In contrast to the developments in Qalqiliya area, access to another community behind the Barrier in the southern Hebron Governorate, next to the Mezadot Yehuda settlement, continued to deteriorate. Since February 2010, residents of this community, which comprises 110 people belonging to the Abu Qbeita family, must obtain permits to continue living in their homes. This month, the permits of 12 of the community's residents expired and the Israeli DCL refused to renew them, arguing that their holders reside in the enclave on a seasonal basis, and therefore are not entitled to a "permanent resident" permit. In addition to the potential risk of displacement for all the residents, in the immediate

term this development may affect water supply to the community, as one of the residents denied permit is the owner of a tractor who served as the sole water transporter to the enclave.

Procedures at the Beit Yatir check point, which controls access to the Abu Qbeita enclave, have turned movement in and out of the enclave into a tiring and humiliating experience for its residents. Entry of goods to the enclave, including foodstuffs, has been denied on a number of cases, after the checkpoint personnel considered the quantities to be "commercial", instead of for personal use. Children crossing the checkpoint are frequently delayed due to their failure to produce a copy of their birth certificates, resulting in late arrival to schools on the other side of the Barrier.

Area C in Focus: Meeting basic shelter needs

Area C, which comprises 60 percent of the West Bank, has been identified as a priority area for humanitarian assistance, due to a high level of need stemming from years of neglect and isolation. However, humanitarian organizations have faced considerable challenges meeting the needs of vulnerable Area C communities, due to continued Israeli control of the area, primarily due to restrictive permit requirements. As a result, in January 2010, the Humanitarian Country Team endorsed a response plan designed to address the most urgent needs of vulnerable communities in the areas of water, education and shelter.

Regarding shelter, the plan calls for a moratorium on the demolition of Area C houses lacking building permits, as well as for the recognition of the right to weatherproof shelters without a permit. Four months following submission of the plan, the UN and its partners are still expecting an official response from the Israeli authorities.

The shelter crisis faced by Palestinians living, or owning land in Area C, emanates primarily from zoning and planning restrictions imposed there by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA). As a rule, Palestinian construction is only allowed within the boundaries of the detailed plans issued by the ICA, which together cover less than one percent of Area C, much of which is already built-up. Such plans have been approved for only a minority of Area C villages and these fail to meet the needs of Palestinian communities. Some 70 percent of Area C and is not available for Palestinian planning or permit application as it has been allocated over the years to the Israeli military use or to Israeli settlements.

In herding communities throughout Area C, increased poverty and the threat of demolitions has made it increasingly difficult for families, to improve their dwellings, or to properly maintain

them and keep them weatherproof. Many live in caves, which are poorly ventilated and often have mould on the walls and ceilings. Overcrowding is common and many families are exposed to rain and frost in winter and to very high temperatures in summer, creating health concerns, particularly for the most vulnerable - children and the elderly.

Although the Israel Civil Administration did not carry out any demolition in Area C in May, it continued to issue stop-work and demolition orders to structures lacking building permits. Since the beginning of 2010, the Israeli authorities have demolished a total of 65 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C, displacing 125 Palestinians. Pending demolitions orders issued in the past decade, including those issued on tent dwellings, have put thousands of families at risk of displacement and chronic uncertainty.

Medical students facing difficulties accessing East Jerusalem for training

About 150 students in the fourth, fifth and sixth year of studies at Al Quds medical school are trained at East Jerusalem hospitals in medical specialities such as paediatrics, neonatology, cardiology and internal medicine. Medical training in many of these specialities is not available at the same level elsewhere in the oPt.

As some 90 percent of these students hold West Bank ID cards they must obtain Israeli-issued permits to access East Jerusalem. According to Maqassed hospital, which handles permits for medical personnel at all six East Jerusalem hospitals, four students were refused permits in May 2010, three new applicants and one renewal.

According to Al Quds medical school, so far in 2010, there have been eleven students who have been unable to continue their training in East Jerusalem because of the non-renewal of their the Israeli authorities have refused to renew their permits.

CASE STUDY OF A MEDICAL SCHOOL STUDENT: "I WAS ASKED TO SPY IF I WANTED TO STUDY"

A student at Al Quds medical school told WHO that he cannot continue his medical training at an East Jerusalem hospital as his permit was confiscated by the Israeli military.

"As part of my studies at Al Quds medical school in Abu Dis, I have been doing my training at an East Jerusalem hospital in the last two years. Being a Palestinian from the West Bank, I need a permit to enter Jerusalem. I never had any problems getting a permit. This spring, however, a soldier confiscated my permit at a checkpoint. I was told that I had to see the General Security Service, if I wanted to get it back.

When I finally got an appointment a few weeks later, the Shin Bet officer told me: "If you help us, we will help you". They asked me to inform them on my colleagues' activities, in particular any travels abroad. In other words, I was asked to spy if I wanted to study. I refused and as a result, I did not get my permit back.

While I can do my training in Hebron, for example, this has severe implications on the quality of my studies. The East Jerusalem hospital I worked at had half a dozen professors in my specialization. In Hebron there is only one. There is also much less interaction between students, because there are far fewer students per hospital in the West Bank.

When I finish my undergraduate studies at Al Quds medical school in a bit over a year, I want to go to the US for my specialization. My diploma is recognized in the US, UK, the Arab world and many other countries. Israel, however, refuses to recognize our qualifications."

Gaza Strip

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the Israeli-Palestinian violence

At least 40 percent of Palestinians killed and 83 percent of those injured since the end of 'Cast Lead' are civilians

May witnessed a significant increase in Palestinian casualties in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, compared to the previous month, largely due to a single incident resulting in multiple injuries. A total of three Palestinians were killed throughout the month and 41 others were injured, constituting the highest number of casualties (death and injuries combined) since the end of the 'Cast Lead' offensive. Although there was an increase in the frequency of Palestinian firing at Israel towards the end of the month, this resulted in no Israeli casualties or damage.

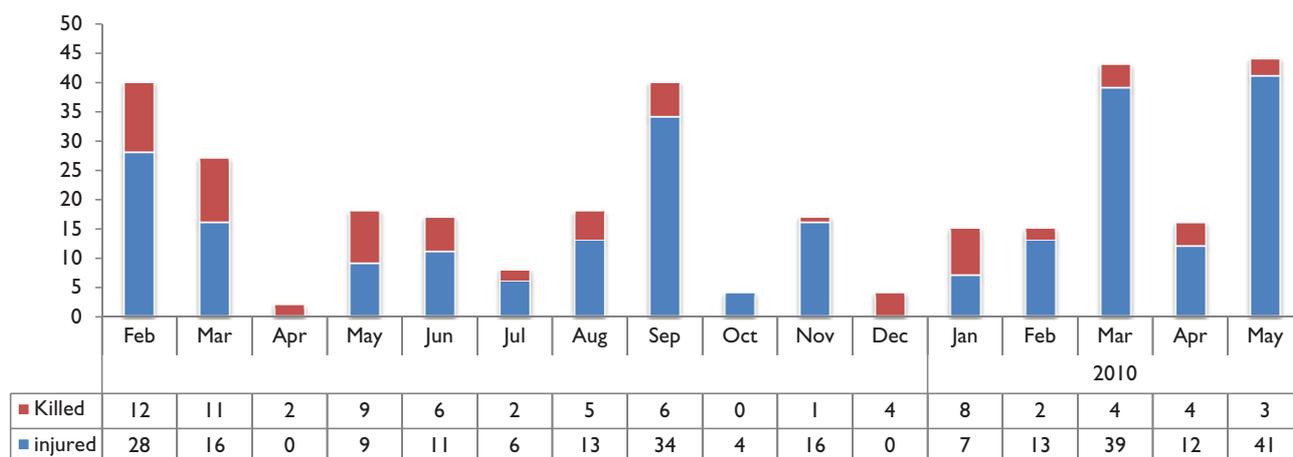
All of this month's casualties fell in areas within approximately one kilometre from Gaza's border with Israel. The Israel military continues to restrict

Palestinian access in these areas, often with "warning fire" at people entering, while Palestinian armed factions continue to carry out military activities.

In one incident, Israeli forces positioned at the border shot and killed a 75-year-old Palestinian man visiting the grave of his wife at a cemetery in Jabalia; the circumstances behind the killing remain unclear. The other two fatalities this month were armed members of a Palestinian faction, shot and killed by Israeli troops, allegedly while attempting to plant an explosive device near the border fence east of Khan Younis.

Most injuries during the month occurred on 26 May, when at approximately 1 AM, the Israeli Air Force attacked a Hamas training facility north of Beit Hanoun; 31 civilians, including seven children and six women, living in the vicinity of the targeted facility were injured. The facility was completely destroyed and 26 surrounding homes were severely

Palestinians killed and injured in the Gaza Strip, Feb 09 - May 10



damaged. The attack followed the firing of home-made rockets by Palestinian factions towards Israel from this area, resulting in no injuries or damage.

Also this month, there were five reported incidents where Israeli forces opened fire towards groups of Palestinians collecting scrap metal near the border, injuring six civilians. The risks faced by Palestinians involved in scrap material collection and rubble removal in areas in the vicinity of the border is of rising concern. Recycling and rubble removal activities in the Gaza Strip have increased due to high demand for material needed to repair damaged homes or other infrastructure, high unemployment and generally depressed economic conditions. So far in 2010, nine civilians, including one child, have been injured while collecting scrap metal.

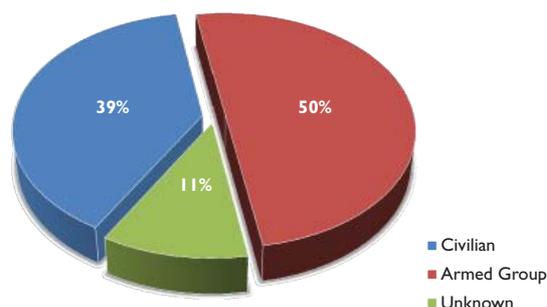
OCHA casualty data indicates that since the end of the 'Cast Lead' offensive, the civilian population

of Gaza has been bearing the brunt of Israeli-Palestinian violence; at least 40 percent of those Palestinians killed since February 2009 and at least 83 percent of those injured were civilians.

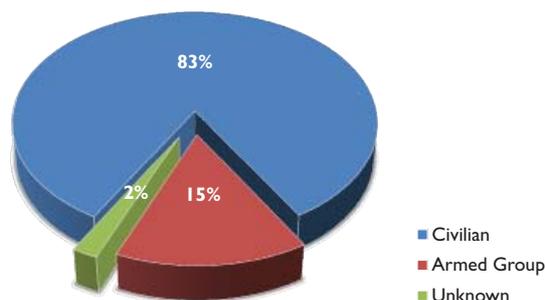
Almost 200 people displaced following house demolitions by local authorities

On 16 May, officers of the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Land Authority (PLA), accompanied by police forces, forcibly evacuated and demolished 12 residential structures in the Tal-Al Sultan area of Rafah governorate, displacing 190 people, the majority of them children. Four of the demolished structures, which the PLA alleges were illegally constructed, were made of concrete, six were roofed with asbestos and two were made of mud. Additionally, the PLA demolished three green houses. The majority of the displaced families set up tents made of flour sacks on the debris of the demolished houses.

Palestinians killed in Gaza since Cast Lead, by status



Palestinians injured in Gaza since Cast Lead, by status



The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) estimates that in the Tal-Al Sultan area alone, there are some 200 additional structures slated for demolition, of which 180 are residential, putting approximately 1,200 people at risk of displacement. The local authorities stated that these demolitions are part of a larger campaign planned to restore government control over public lands, which they allege had been illegally seized by individuals. According to statistics provided by the Palestinian Land Authority, approximately 30 percent of the Gaza Strip is defined as public land, of which nearly one third (12,000 dunums) is currently being illegally used by individuals, the large majority (some 93 percent) for agricultural purposes, and a small minority (7 percent) for housing.

The Gaza crossings activity

More building materials for specific projects; Khan Younis UNRWA housing project resume; 24 other UN projects still on hold

While Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip continued, May saw an increase in the quantity of construction materials allowed entry. Most materials were designated for three specific projects that had gained prior approval from the Israeli authorities: the repair of Al Quds hospital in Gaza City (severely damaged during the Israeli offensive 'Cast Lead'), the upgrading of a sewage pumping station in the Tel El Sultan area (southern Gaza), and the resumption of an UNRWA housing project (151 units) in Khan Younis. Of the construction material allowed passage in May, most was delivered to the UNRWA

housing project. This included 30 truckloads of gravel, 19 of cement, and one of reinforced steel. Collectively these quantities represent about 13 percent of required amounts for this project.

Other construction materials which began entering Gaza for commercial usage during the past few months, continued to enter in May. They include wood (61 truckloads), aluminum (26 truckloads), and glass (13 truckloads). Previously, these materials had entered the Gaza market only by way of smuggling tunnels, making them highly priced, and generally of low quality.

Overall, in the first five months of 2010, a total of 388 truckloads of construction material have entered Gaza through the Kerem Shalom Crossing, compared to only five during the equivalent period in 2009. Despite the improvement, these quantities remained minimal compared to the volume of imports before the imposition of the blockade, as well as compared to the actual needs. For example, during the first five months of 2007, an average of 7,400 truckloads of construction material entered Gaza every month; while the resumption of the UNRWA housing project Khan Younis is welcome, an additional 24 UNRWA construction and infrastructure projects, worth 109 million USD, remain frozen due to the blockade.

Imports of clothing and shoes, which began last month, also continue; a total of 218 truckloads of clothes and 120 of shoes have crossed into Gaza

HAMAS LAUNCHES A 1,000 HOUSING-UNIT PROJECT

While most UN building and rehabilitation projects remain frozen due to the blockade, this month, the Gaza Ministry of Public Works and Housing announced an ambitious project aimed at building 1,000 housing units over a nine month period. On 10 May, the first unit was handed over to one of the beneficiaries in Jabalia. Implementation of this project is expected to rely on materials smuggled through the tunnels operating under the border with Egypt, including plumbing materials, electric supplies and aluminum, as well as locally produced materials such as crushed rubble. The size of each housing unit will be approximately 80 m² and it will include two rooms, a bathroom and a kitchen, and is pre-designed to be extended upwards and outwards; the estimated cost of each unit is 33,000 USD.

Latest developments

At the beginning of June, the Israeli authorities have approved the entry of 11 new food and hygiene items into Gaza including jam, halva, soda juice, canned fruits, razor blades and paste.

since 4 April 2010. Furthermore, for the first time since the imposition of the blockade, 13 minibuses, three ambulances were imported for UNRWA use.

Overall, May witnessed a nine percent increase in Gaza imports compared to last month (2,794.5 vs. 2,558.5 truckloads). This month's figure however remains far below the monthly average of truckloads that entered Gaza in the first five months of 2007 (12,350). Similar to previous months, food and hygiene items made up the majority of imports (67 percent).

The prohibition on Gaza exports largely remains in place. With the end of the cut flowers season, no truckload of exported goods left Gaza in May; the last truckload of cut flowers exited Gaza on 18 April. Between December 2009 and April 2010, a total of 118 truckloads of exports, including cut flowers (85 truckloads) and strawberries (33 truckloads) left Gaza, significantly below the monthly average

of 1,090 truckloads exported during the first five months of 2007. Prior to this, there had been no exports from Gaza for over seven months (since 27 April 2009). The continued ban on exports since June 2007 has been one of the key reason for the collapse of the Gaza private sector.

Shortages of industrial fuel and cooking gas continue

The electricity situation remains precarious due to shortages of industrial fuel and spare parts to fully operate the Gaza Power Plant (GPP). Imports of industrial fuel declined for the sixth consecutive month; approximately 4.5 million liters of fuel entered in May compared to a monthly average of 6.1 million litres since the beginning of 2010. The drop in fuel quantities follows the expiration of the European Union's commitment to fund fuel for the GPP in November 2009. Some 97 materials essential for maintaining the GPP, including spare parts and lubricants, have continued to be denied entry since June 2007. On average, in May the GPP operated at 23 percent of its full capacity, leaving the majority of Gaza's population with power cuts of 8 to 12 hours per day.

Although the quantities of cooking gas allowed entry through the crossings this month (3,537 tonnes) increased by eight percent compared to

SHIP CARRYING CARGO INTERCEPTED BY ISRAELI FORCES; NINE CIVILIAN ACTIVISTS KILLED

In the early morning of 31 May, Israeli naval commando forces intercepted six ships carrying hundreds of international activists and tonnes of aid to Gaza, while sailing in international waters. While the full details of events remain unclear, at least nine activists were killed and many others injured when Israeli military units attempted to take over one of the ships; ten Israeli soldiers were also injured. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon expressed shock at the killings and injuries and called for a full investigation of the incident; the call was echoed in a UN Security Council presidential statement.

After holding hundreds of activists in detention for up to four days, all the activists have been deported to their countries of origin.

Goods carried by the flotilla included cement, generators, wheelchairs, medicine, clothes and blankets, and toys. While the Israeli authorities declared their intention to transfer the goods to Gaza, the coordination needed for transferring these goods has not yet taken place and none of them had actually entered Gaza as of the end of the reporting period.

last month (3261 tonnes), it is still only 47 percent of the average monthly need, as estimated by the Gas Stations Owners Association. As shortfalls continue, the rationing of cooking gas, introduced in November 2009, remains in place.

Access to health care denied

Sharp increase in the number of medical patients referred abroad denied exit through Erez

Gaza's sick are particularly vulnerable to the effects of the blockade, which restricts many needed medical supplies, spare parts and replacements for equipment, from entering Gaza. Furthermore, travel restrictions have made it virtually impossible for medical professionals to travel outside of Gaza for training, or for technicians to enter Gaza to service advanced medical equipment such as CT scanners or MRI. Partly because of this, many patients are required to seek medical treatment outside of Gaza.

Most patients who need specialized treatment outside of Gaza are referred to institutions in the West Bank, Israel or Jordan, and must obtain a permit from the Israeli authorities to leave Gaza through the Erez Crossing. Of 1225 patient applications submitted to the Israeli authorities to cross Erez in May, 155 patients, or 13 percent of total applicants, were denied permission to cross the Erez crossing. This is a significant increase from previous months: the monthly average since January 2008 was roughly 20 denials per month, or roughly 2 percent of total

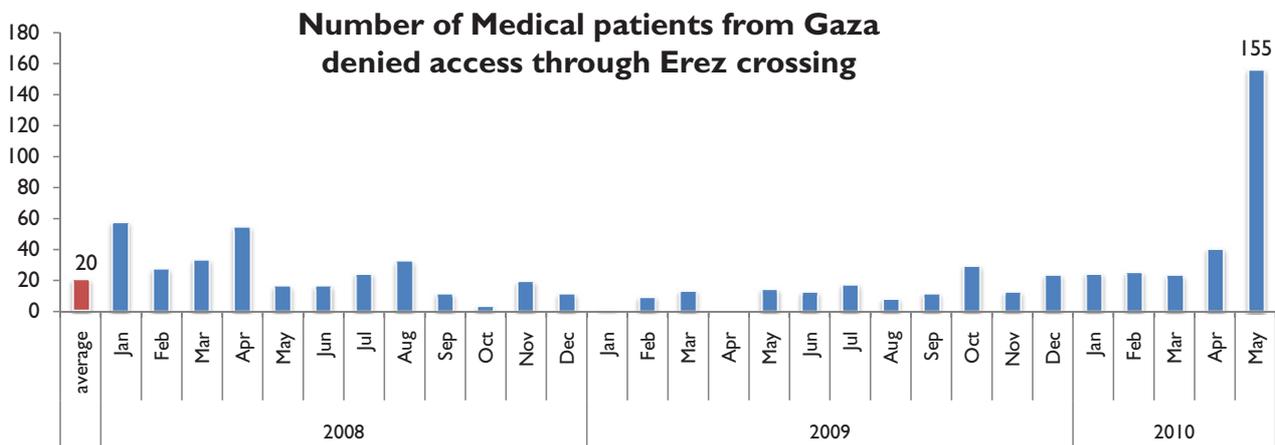
applicants. However, fewer patients had their permits delayed in May and the combined figure for patients whose permits were denied or delayed, is only slightly above the average for the first four months of 2010 (27% compared to 23.75%).

In a 14 June news release, The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) released a stated that "the state of the health-care system in Gaza has never been worse." The ICRC also stated that "under international humanitarian law, Israel must ensure that the basic needs of Gazans, including adequate health care, are met." Furthermore, "the closure constitutes a collective punishment imposed in clear violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law."⁵

114 essential drugs are completely out of stock in Gaza

More drugs are out of stock at Gaza's Central Drug Store than at any point since the beginning of the blockade in 2007.

As of the end of May, 114 out of 480 essential drugs are completely out of stock. The list includes antibiotics, drugs for chronic disease management, emergencies and mentally ill patients, as well as milk formulas for babies with special conditions. As a result a wide range of medical conditions cannot be treated, including bleeding disorders, some cancers, some types of mental health disorders, kidney failure, and infant allergies to milk products.⁶





Three-year-old cancer patient from Gaza being treated in Jerusalem. Many patients have to wait 2 to 6 weeks to exit, even for life-threatening medical conditions that require immediate care. Photo by John Tordai

In May, OCHA conducted a series of interviews with medical patients from Gaza who were receiving cancer treatment at the Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem. Most of the interviewees and their companions complained of long and confusing referral and permit approval processes, which may take anywhere from two to six weeks. If multiple treatment sessions are required, the patient must undergo the same process again. The interviewees also complained of difficult, and in some case traumatic conditions at Erez crossing. The body scanners at this crossing require people to stand upright with upraised arms, and this is difficult for the many patients suffering from bouts of dizziness; because of this, many of the patients have to be undressed by their companions. Some of the children undergoing treatment had relatives other than their parents with them, as their parents were not granted permits to exit Gaza.

Once a given patient exits Erez and reaches Jerusalem, the hospital is required to apply for an extension of the permit for the needed period of time. However, according to the hospital, because the Israeli authorities have not granted extensions to the permits since March, patients have to stay either within its premises or the residence granting accommodation to the Gaza patients.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) in Ramallah is responsible for supplying drugs and disposables to Gaza, but internal coordination difficulties between the authorities in Gaza and Ramallah as well as difficulties getting clearance for items to enter Gaza have disrupted routine deliveries. At the end of May, 200 pallets of essential drugs (200 pallets) was delivered by the MoH this year, the only delivery this year.

Impact of the blockade and other access restrictions on agriculture sector

The blockade, as well as Israeli restrictions on the “buffer zone” and fishing zone have severely impacted the agricultural sector, and have directly contributed to rising food insecurity. Approximately 60 percent of the population work in agriculture, and over 40 percent of Gaza’s arable land is inaccessible or out of production, either because of damage to agricultural areas during “Cast Lead” and its reconstruction hindered due to the restriction on access of construction material, or due to its location in the restricted area in vicinity of the border with Israel. Fishermen also face access restrictions to fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the coastline because of restrictions by the Israeli military. As a result, the catch has been reduced by 47 percent between 2008 and 2009, thus reducing the ability of fishermen to make sustainable profits.

In a press event held on 25 May in Gaza, Humanitarian aid agencies called upon the Government of Israel to lift access limitations imposed on the entry and exit of materials necessary for the revival of the agriculture and fishing sectors, and to allow safe and unrestricted access to farm land and fishing areas.

The farming, fishing and herding sectors can be revitalized to produce better yields and can potentially offer practical solutions to support the income of the population and its accessibility to fresh food if the blockade is lifted.

Over 5,500 Palestinians cross into Egypt

Rafah Crossing was exceptionally opened for a period of six days, between 15 and 20 May, for the third time since the beginning of 2010. During the opening, a total of 5,507 Palestinians left the Gaza Strip and another 1,046 were allowed to return. Similar to previous openings, access via the crossing has been limited to humanitarian cases, including patients and their accompaniers, and other Palestinians, including students enrolled in universities abroad, businessmen and foreign passport holders. An additional 614 Palestinians who had registered their names with the local authorities to leave the Gaza Strip were denied exit by the Egyptian authorities. In June 2006, following the capture of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, Rafah Crossing began operating on an irregular basis and in June 2007 it officially closed. The crossing has since been opened on scheduled, but irregular, openings on two to three days each month to allow the limited passage of certain people. In the first five months of 2006, an average of 650 people crossed per day each way. The uncertainty and unpredictability of the opening times, along with vague criteria for approving passage and overcrowding at the crossing, create difficulties for Palestinian travelers passing through Rafah Crossing.

Issues across the occupied Palestinian territory

Child Protection	April 2010	May 2010
Palestinian children killed	2	1
Israeli children killed	0	0
Palestinian children injured	42	25
Israeli children injured	0	0
Palestinian children displaced from home demolitions	0	0
Palestinian children in Israeli prisons	335	305

The right to education of Palestinian students undermined

Classroom shortages throughout the oPt; hundreds of thousands of Palestinian students affected

As the 2010 – 2011 academic year approaches, tens of thousands of Palestinian students throughout the oPt face a significant shortage of schools and classrooms due to the blockade of Gaza, restrictive access and building permit systems in Area C, and insufficient and discriminatory urban planning policies in East Jerusalem.

There are almost 440,000 students currently enrolled in UNRWA and government-run schools in the Gaza Strip, and their numbers are growing rapidly. The number of students enrolled at UNRWA schools alone is increasing by an average of approximately 7,500 every year and is anticipated to reach 212,000 by the start of the 2010-2011 academic year. The Gaza Ministry of Education (MEHE) is also experiencing classroom shortages due to general student population growth, and because it needs to accommodate students leaving UNRWA schools to enter the tenth grade.⁷ Although there were shortages in classrooms in Gaza even before June 2007, the blockade has compounded the problem. The ongoing ban on the entry of construction material has prevented construction, rehabilitation or expansion of schools, and the number of classrooms has not matched the growth in the student population.⁸

Today, most UNRWA as well as government-run schools have been forced to adopt alternative strategies to accommodate the rapidly growing student population, at the expense of the quality of education provided. Most schools in Gaza are run on a double-shift basis, a measure that has forced schools to reduce class time by almost one third, as well as eliminate some extra-curricular activities. In addition, many classrooms are overcrowded, with certain grade levels accommodating as many as 50 students per classroom, resulting in limited personal attention given to each individual student. Although comparative figures with previous years are unavailable, these measures may have contributed to a general decline in academic performance in Gaza: for example, only 46 percent and 50 percent of students have passed their grade 4 unified Arabic exams and Math exams, respectively.

To properly accommodate the growing student population, UNRWA requires 100 additional schools within the next five academic years, of which 15 are needed immediately. In addition, the Gaza Ministry of Education estimates that it needs 10-14 new schools to address the needs of the student population in the coming year.

Classroom shortages are also prevalent in some areas of the West Bank, primarily in Area C and East Jerusalem. Many education facilities located in communities in Area C are substandard in terms of safety and hygiene, and others face the threat of demolition due to the lack of building permit. There are at least 20 schools in Area C currently prevented from expanding their facilities, or have carried out construction without a permit and have subsequently been served stop-construction or demolition orders by the Israeli Civil Authorities (ICA). Access to education is further undermined by restrictions on Palestinian movement, as well

as by on-going Israeli settler violence. The UN and the humanitarian community have developed a response plan addressing the most urgent needs regarding access to education in Area C communities. (See also section on Area C)

In East Jerusalem, the Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Ministry of Education are responsible for providing public education. A report released in May by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)⁹ indicates that while the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem has grown by more than four times what it was in 1967, investments in school facilities have not kept pace with growing student needs. Currently, there is a shortage of over 1000 classrooms in East Jerusalem, and many of existing structures are substandard and do not meet basic educational and health standards.¹⁰ As a result, the post-elementary dropout rate is as high as 50 percent among Palestinian children enrolled in municipal schools in East Jerusalem.

Under international humanitarian and human rights law, Israel is obliged to provide and administer basic services, including education, for the civilian population living under occupation, or at minimum, should not obstruct its provision.¹¹ The right to education is central to every child's ability to realize his or her potential, and by extension, that of society in which they live. As safe havens, schools are unparalleled in importance in providing much needed stability, and restoring a sense of normalcy and hope for children and their families, particularly in the context of protracted conflict and military occupation.

Concern over under-funding of humanitarian projects

The oPt 2010 CAP is among the most under-funded humanitarian appeals, with current funding meeting only 38 percent of total original requirements.¹² The humanitarian community in the oPt originally

appealed for \$664.4 million for 236 humanitarian projects, including early recovery projects. As of 21 June 2010, \$250 million has been received. While key projects such as food distribution and cash for work have been maintained by using carry-over funds from 2009, others have had to cease due to lack of funding. As an example, a mobile health clinic has had to stop servicing 25 communities in the West Bank because of budget cuts. At the mid-year point, requirements have been revised to \$599m due to the merging or removal of certain projects due to lack of funds as well as some revision of figures as a result of projects receiving funds half way through the year. In the absence of additional funding many more activities will be scaled back or suspended during the second half of the year.

Three projects were approved for HRF funding during May for a total of \$190,000. Rabbis for Human Rights received funding support for the preparation and submission of zoning and land survey plans in support of three communities in the West Bank as part of their efforts to prevent the communities being evicted and displaced from their lands.

A fire in the North Jordan Valley destroyed 3,000 dunums of grazing land, directly affecting the livelihoods of forty families. ACTED and NEF received HRF funding to jointly respond to the needs of the affected families, by providing fodder and seeds to sustain the herds over a four month period.

The HRF balance at the end of May was \$7.1 million.

Endnotes

1. This road provides a direct link between the Wadi Nar checkpoint and the main road leading to the Ramallah area. Due to the fact that it passes next to the entrance of the settlement of Qedar, the road has been closed for Palestinian use since 2001.
2. This rerouting was implemented in compliance with a decision issued by the Israeli High Court of Justice in 2005.
3. This is the second in a series of pieces to be included in the Humanitarian Monitor drawing attention to the humanitarian issues facing Area C residents and providing updates on responses to these needs by the humanitarian community and the Israeli authorities.
4. See, OCHA oPt, "Restricting Space: the Planning Regime Applied by Israel in Area C of the West Bank," December 2009
5. Gaza closure: not another year!, ICRC press statement, 14 June 2010 (outside of reporting period)
6. Factor VIII and Factor IX, Tacrolimus, Haloperidol, Erythropoetin, Pregestimil milk formula, are completely out of stock
7. UNRWA schools have classes only up to the ninth grade.
8. During the last year the number of UNRWA schools increased from 221 to 228, using existing facilities rented from the PA.
9. Human Rights in East Jerusalem, Facts and Figures, May 2010, ACRI
10. 10 ACRI & Ir Amim, Status report. The Arab-Palestinian School System in East Jerusalem as the 2009-2010 school year begins, September 2009.
11. Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 50, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26.
12. Only two appeals, Uganda and West Africa, have received less funding at the time of writing. This does not include pledges for which no MoU has been signed, although some organisations have received promises from donors that funding is in the pipeline.

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, ACP, ACAD, and members of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM).

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