



August Overview

In many crisis areas around the world, humanitarian agencies are facing ever greater restrictions on humanitarian access and increasingly serious challenges to their operations. Some of August's developments highlighted the fact that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) fits, to a large extent, within this global trend.

While the easing of the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip since 20 June has resulted in some economic reactivation of the private sector, the ability of humanitarian agencies to address the enormous needs of the population in the area of housing and services remains severely constrained due to the ongoing restrictions on the import of construction materials. UNRWA, for example, is still waiting approval by the Israeli authorities for the entry of materials for the 11 UN projects (schools and clinics) approved in principle in July; these projects constitute less than 1.5 percent of the value of the proposed work programme of



Access restricted area in the vicinity of the perimeter fence around Gaza, east of Khan Younis. On the background: an IDF remotely-controlled weapon station. Photo by: WFP/Shareef Sarhan, July 2010.

the UN in Gaza. Additionally, current monitoring procedures required by the Israeli authorities for the entry of each individual truckload, make large-scale implementation of projects unsustainable.

Effective delivery of aid in the Gaza Strip is also hampered by access restrictions to areas along the perimeter fence around Gaza. A report released this month by OCHA and WFP indicates that since late 2008, the Israeli military has totally or partially prevented access to areas up to 1,500 meters from

ISSUES COVERED THIS MONTH

West Bank: Direct conflict casualties • Area C demolitions: humanitarian assistance to a displaced community destroyed by Israeli authorities • Limited access easings implemented • Despite better functioning of checkpoints, access to Al Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan remained severely restricted •

Gaza Strip: Armed clashes and access restrictions along the fence continue • Tunnels continue to claim lives; three Palestinians killed • Increase in the casualty toll due to internal violence incidents • Economic recovery and reconstruction opportunities in Gaza remain limited • The electricity crisis continues to disrupt functioning of households and services • Medical Referrals from Gaza

Issues across the oPt: Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) approves two water and sanitation projects

the fence, with devastating consequences on the livelihoods of the population and its physical security; in August five civilians working in these areas were shot and injured by the Israeli military. According to the report, these restrictions have impeded the conduct of need assessments, the delivery of aid packages and the monitoring and evaluation of programs by humanitarian staff.

In Area C of the West Bank, during the first two weeks of the month, the Israeli authorities demolished 48 Palestinian structures that lacked building permits, displacing or otherwise affecting over 210 people. In one of the demolitions in the Bedouin community of Al Farisiya in the Jordan Valley, 20 tents and most food parcels distributed in July by humanitarian agencies to previously displaced families, were either destroyed or damaged. With the beginning of the month of Ramadan (11 August- 9 September), the Israeli authorities announced a one-month lull in demolitions.

Also on the occasion of Ramadan, the Israeli authorities implemented a number of 'movement easings' throughout the West Bank, which included the extension of the operational hours at some checkpoints and the opening of three internal routes for Palestinian movement. Yet, access of Palestinians to areas behind the Barrier, including East Jerusalem, to the Jordan Valley, and within the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2) has remained very restricted. Moreover, the expected transferring of responsibility over the checkpoints around East Jerusalem to the Israeli Crossing Points Administration (CPA) is of continuous concern due to the severe procedures implemented by this body at other checkpoints (including into Gaza). As a result, such a transfer may severely undermine

the capacity of humanitarian agencies to continue operating in and from East Jerusalem.

On the eve of a new school year, the needs of children attending 26 Area C schools affected by unsafe or unhygienic facilities, threat of demolition, settler violence and/or access restrictions, have remained unmet. The Humanitarian Country Team is still waiting an official response by the Israeli authorities to an emergency plan targeting these schools, submitted in January 2010.

Civilians in the oPt continues to be affected also by indiscriminate violence. In one of the gravest incidents this month, the armed wing of the Hamas movement shot and killed four Israeli settlers who were travelling on a West Bank road. This incident triggered a wave of arrests by PA security forces as well as access restrictions by Israeli forces (to be covered in the September issue). Also in the West Bank, OCHA recorded a total of 21 incidents perpetrated by Israeli settlers, which resulted in Palestinian injuries or damage to Palestinian property. In one of the latter, Israeli settlers set fire to some 3,000 dunums of cultivated land, thus undermining the livelihoods of some 100 Palestinian families from the Beit Furik village (Nablus). The frequency of this type of settler attacks is on the rise since the beginning of the year. In the Gaza Strip, in addition to shooting incidents along the perimeter fence, civilian lives are threatened by frequent incidents of internal violence, including explosions in residential areas, family feuds and reckless use of weapons; a total of six people were killed in these types of incidents during August and another 91 were injured, more than any other month in 2010.

West Bank

Direct conflict casualties

In August, four Israeli settlers were killed, and another eight Israelis (including seven Israeli soldiers and policemen) and 38 Palestinians were injured in the context of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

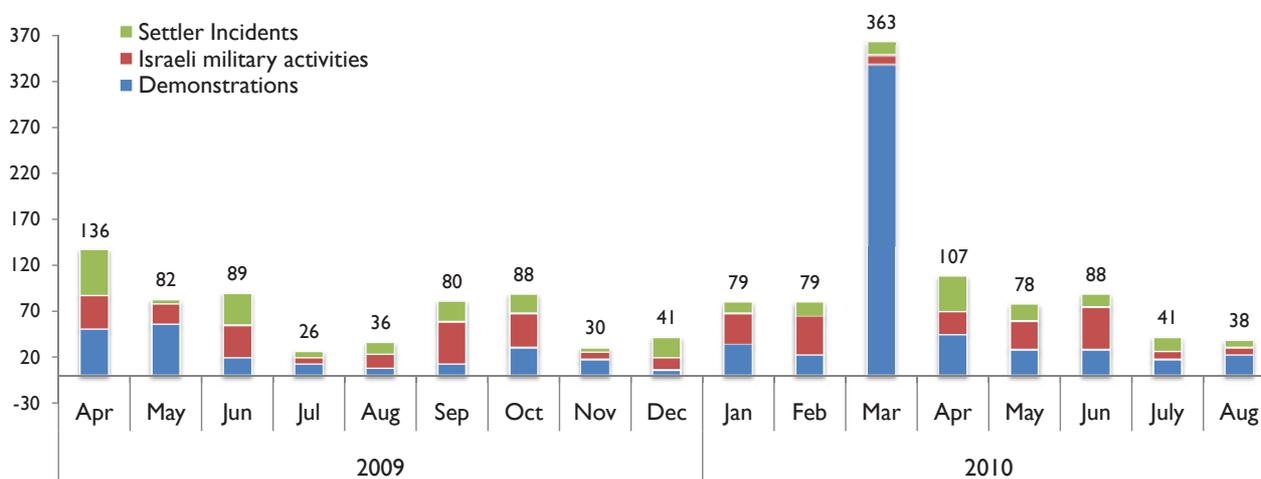
On the 31st of August, in the gravest incident recorded during the month, Palestinian gunmen shot and killed four Israeli settlers, including two women, who were driving on Road 60 near Bani Na'im village in the Hebron governorate. The armed wing of the Hamas movement (the "Izz ad-Din al Qassam Brigades") claimed responsibility for the attack. The last similar attack occurred in December 2009, when one settler was shot and killed while driving on a road in the Tulkarem area; since it began recording casualties in the oPt in January 2005, OCHA has recorded the killing of 15 Israeli settlers in the West Bank by Palestinians. In the aftermath of this month's incident, PA security forces carried out hundreds of arrests among alleged members and sympathizers of Hamas and Israeli forces sealed the entrances to the cities of Hebron and Halhul and to Al Fawar refugee camp, imposed a curfew on Bani Na'im village, and raided the adjacent town of Sa'ir

On the other hand, August saw the lowest number of Palestinian injuries in Israeli-Palestinian violence

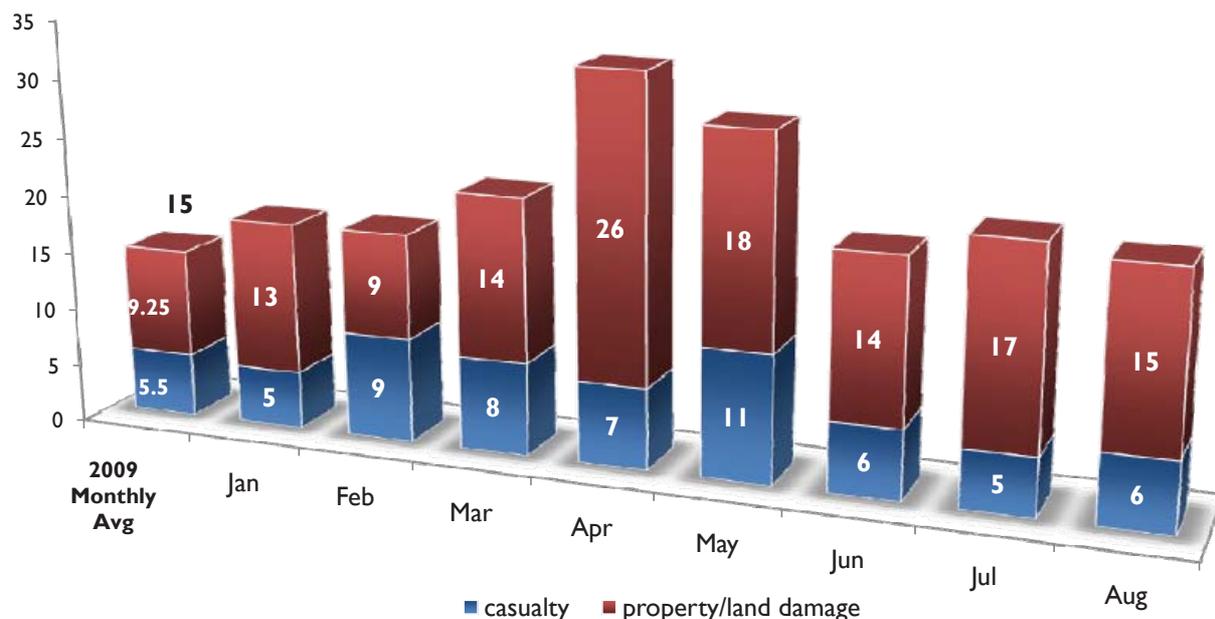
since the beginning of the year (38). Despite rising tensions between Palestinians and Israeli settlers, the majority of Palestinian injuries were inflicted by Israeli forces (30) and primarily occurred within the context of weekly demonstrations against Barrier construction, settlement expansion and settler violence. One Israeli and three foreign activists were also injured in these protests.

The remaining eight Palestinian injuries occurred during violent incidents involving Israeli settlers. Overall, this month OCHA recorded a total of 21 Israeli settler-related incidents resulting in Palestinian casualties (6 incidents) or damage to Palestinian property (15 incidents). This is about the same as the monthly average of incidents since the beginning of the year (22) but significantly higher than the 2009 monthly average of incidents. In one of these incidents, an Israeli settler assaulted and injured a nine year-old boy in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem, following which, clashes between settlers and Palestinian residents took place. The boy is a member of one of the two families evicted from their homes, which were taken over by settlers in August 2009. Since the beginning of the year, Israeli settlers have killed three Palestinians and injured another 189. Most of this month's 15 incidents resulting in property damage affected Palestinian agricultural land. In

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



Setter incidents resulting in Palestinian casualties or property damage



the most serious of these incidents, Israeli settlers from the Itamar settlement (Nablus) set fire to some 3,000 dunums of cultivated land belonging to 100 Palestinian families from the adjacent Beit Furik village.

Area C demolitions: humanitarian assistance to a displaced community destroyed by Israeli authorities

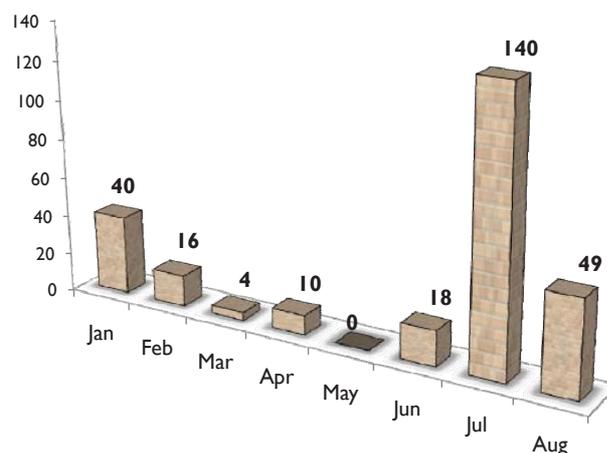
Demolitions by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) in the Bedouin community of Al Farisiya, located in Area C in the northern Jordan Valley, continued during August. Most of these demolitions have been carried out on the grounds that the community is located in an area that was designated by the Israeli army as closed for military training (also called "firing zone").

Following the demolitions that took place last month, which targeted 79 tents and barracks, the ICRC and the PA Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) distributed tents and hygienic kits, and WFP/UNRWA distributed food parcels to the affected families. However, in a new demolition on 5 August, the ICA destroyed 20 of the donated tents and damaged most of the food

parcels. The estimated value of each MoLG tent is USD 2,000, while the damage to food parcels was estimated at approximately USD 6,400. The ICRC and the MoLG distributed additional tents to the affected families; international NGOs, UN agencies and the PA are planning to deliver additional assistance, while Ma'an, a local NGO, already provided some items (school bags with stationary and kitchen kits). Previous damage to humanitarian aid, estimated at USD 17,000, was recorded in the course of the July demolition in Al Farisiya and included agriculture equipment, iron bars and water tanks.

The 5 August demolitions also targeted 10 additional structures in another area of Al Farisiya (including

Number of structures demolished in East Jerusalem and Area C 2010



three residential tents, three kitchens, three toilets and one animal barracks) displacing 22 people, half of them children. Following the receipt of additional eviction orders in the area in mid-August, three families also self-demolished four residential tents and three other structures.

In other parts of the West Bank, the ICA demolished 11 structures elsewhere in Area C due to the lack of building permits, including residential tents, water wells and other agricultural structures. Two additional structures were demolished by their owners following receipt of demolition orders. Overall, during August a total of 49 Palestinian-owned structures located in Area C were demolished, displacing or otherwise affecting over 210 people. All August's demolitions took place in the first half of the month. While Israeli authorities informed OCHA that no demolitions will be carried out during the month of Ramadan, issuance of demolition and evacuation orders continued.

Limited access easings implemented

On the occasion of the month of Ramadan (add dates), the Israeli authorities announced a package

of easing measures, which include the extension of the operational hours of some checkpoints along the Barrier and the opening of three routes for Palestinian movement:

- an earth mound next to Sarra village (Nablus), which blocked movement along a main route between Nablus and Qalqiliya governorates, was replaced with a partial checkpoint staffed sporadically, thus reducing the travel time between the two areas;
- in the Ramallah governorate, a 1.5 km-segment of the former path of Road 60 was opened for Palestinian use following the removal of four obstacles. The impact of this opening is limited, as access to the main segment of this road remains blocked;
- a roadblock on the southern entrance to Sa'ir village (Hebron) was removed; the significance of this opening is limited as the adjacent route leading to Hebron City remains closed

The first two openings were originally announced by the Israeli authorities on 25 May, as part of a

THE IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT ON ACCESS TO EDUCATION

With a new academic year due to begin in public schools on September 15th, displaced families will face significant challenges in preparing their children for school and many are at risk of disruption to their schooling. More children are beginning the new school year faced with the threat of having their homes demolished as the Israeli authorities have signaled that demolitions will continue in the period following the month of Ramadan. Displacement has been found to result in significant disruption to education services with negative repercussions on both access to education and the quality of learning environments.² For example, Save the Children UK's research on forced displacement in the OPT indicated that 20 percent of displaced families reported that the availability of education services was worse following displacement.³ Further research by Save the Children showed that economic hardships resulting from displacement also increased pressures on families to take their children out of school. A recent UNESCO-commissioned survey conducted in Gaza showed that students who had been displaced, including those who had been forced to move to another school as a result, had greater difficulties learning and performing in school and strained relationships with their teachers.⁴

Access to education for many children living in Area C is also undermined by other factors. Twenty-six (26) schools have been assessed by humanitarian organizations as in need of a swift humanitarian response⁵. Concerns include unsafe or unhygienic facilities, schools facing the threat of demolition, attacks on students, and restrictions on access to and from school. An emergency response plan submitted by the Humanitarian Country Team to the ICA in January 2010 to address the situation affecting these schools is yet to be answered.

separate package of easings to be implemented 'immediately'.⁶ According to that announcement, however, the old path of Road 60 along the Ramallah governorate would be opened in its entirety (rather than a 1.5 km section); additional measures announced in May are yet to be implemented, including the removal of specific roadblocks and the opening of a key route east of Jerusalem (the 'Kedar' road) for Palestinian use.⁷

As of the end of the month, there were some 500 closure obstacles throughout the West Bank, 70 fewer than at the beginning of the year. Overall, the removal of obstacles, along with the lifting of some access restrictions over the past two years, has improved Palestinian movement between the main urban centers in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem).

By contrast, access of Palestinians to areas behind the Barrier, including East Jerusalem, to land and rural communities in the Jordan Valley, and within the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2) has remained very restricted. Israeli settlements and their continuous expansion have the single largest impact on the configuration of the system of access restrictions applied to the Palestinian population.

Movement restrictions affect not only the ability of vulnerable sectors of the population to access livelihoods and services, but also the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. A growing concern regarding the latter is the expected transferring of responsibility over the checkpoints controlling access to East Jerusalem from the IDF and Israeli Police to the Crossing Points Administration (CPA) of the Ministry of Defence. The CPA is currently responsible for some of the checkpoints along the Barrier as well as into Gaza. At these checkpoints, UN national staff are required to leave their vehicles undergo a body search and walk through the checkpoint; and CPA personnel demand searching the UN vehicles, in violation of the UN Convention on Privileges and Immunities, unless the driver is an international staff holding an Ministry of Foreign Affairs card. If implemented,

this change will severely undermine the capacity of humanitarian agencies to continue operating from East Jerusalem, and entrench the isolation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank.

Despite better functioning of checkpoints, access to Al Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan remained severely restricted

During the month of Ramadan, as in past years, the majority of the Muslim population in the oPt has been prevented from exercising its right to freedom of worship. Due to the restrictions on access to East Jerusalem, all of Gaza's population and over 40 percent of the West Bank population were denied access to the Friday prayers at Al Aqsa Mosque. Except for those holding Jerusalem IDs, only men above 50 and women above 45 years of age, and boys and girls under 12, were allowed to pass without permits; men between the ages of 45 and 50, and women between 30 and 45 were eligible for special permits that needed to be requested in advance.

As is the case since the completion of the Barrier around the city, access is allowed only through four of the 15 checkpoints installed along the Barrier (Qalandia, Gilo, Shufat Camp and Az Zaytoun), which can be crossed only on foot and entail multiple security checks. However, the functioning of these checkpoints has been more orderly than in the past, due to the logistic arrangements put in place by the ICA, along with the involvement of the Palestinian police and of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

The former included the installation of large fans that sprinkle water and shades for people were queuing in line and the operation of two humanitarian lanes at Qalandiya checkpoint. In some cases, however, such as Gilo checkpoint, humanitarian lanes were poorly managed and their use was restricted to a very limited number of emergency cases. The deployment of Palestinian policemen, who regulated traffic and facilitated the movement of people towards the checkpoints, also contributed to the better organization of the crossing. According to the Israeli authorities, during the first three Fridays of Ramadan, approximately 54,000, 77,000,

and 117,000 Palestinians respectively accessed East Jerusalem through the Barrier checkpoints. The Directorate of Jerusalem Waqf reported that the

total number of worshippers that accessed Al Aqsa Mosque increased from 100,000 in the first two Fridays to 200,000 in the third one.

Gaza Strip

Armed clashes and access restrictions along the fence continue

Armed confrontations between Palestinian armed groups and the Israeli military, as well as shooting incidents affecting civilians working in the vicinity of the perimeter fence surrounding Gaza, continued during August. As a result, two Palestinian militants were killed, and eight other Palestinians (including five civilians) and three Israeli soldiers were injured.

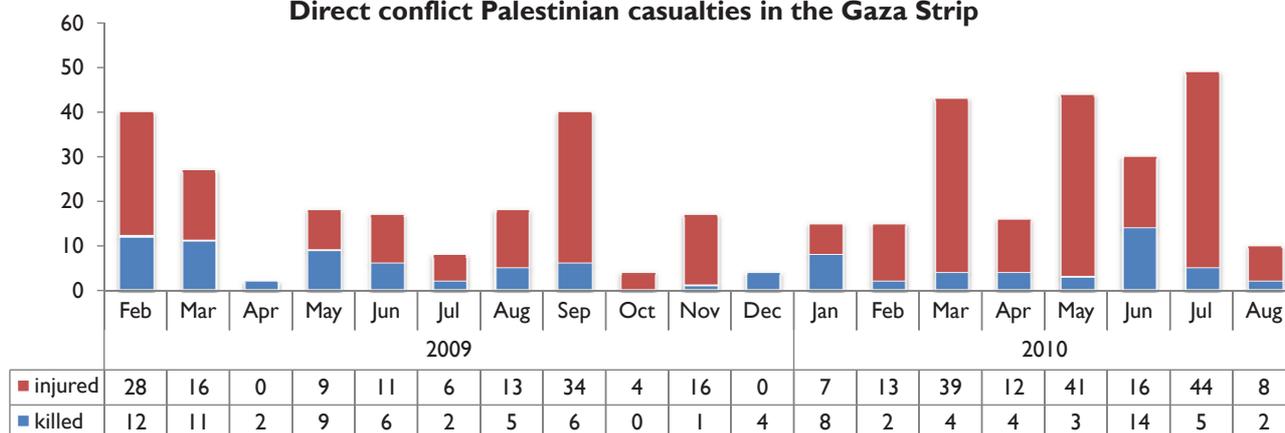
In two separate incidents that occurred east of Khan Yunis, Israeli forces killed two members of Palestinian armed groups and injured another two; one Israeli soldier was also injured. According to the Israeli sources, the clashes erupted in both cases after Israeli forces deployed along the border spotted armed militants about to fire mortar shells. Firing of rudimentary rockets and mortar shells by Palestinian factions towards southern Israel was reported on a number of occasions throughout the month, one of which (on 17 August), resulted in the injury of two Israeli soldiers. Following that incident, the Israeli Air Force launched a series of air strikes targeting a Hamas military base in Khan Yunis, tunnels beneath the Gaza-Egypt border, and an open area in central Gaza; no injuries were reported.

The Israeli army continued enforcing access restrictions to areas up to 1,000-1,500 meters from the perimeter fence by opening 'warning' fire towards people approaching or present in these areas. This month, five Palestinian civilians were injured while collecting scrap metal and rubble in the former industrial area next to the Erez crossing and in the area of former Israeli settlements in northern Gaza in four separate incidents. The demand for building supplies to rehabilitate and reconstruct damaged and destroyed buildings, combined with ongoing restrictions on the import of construction materials as part of the blockade, has led to the rise of a lucrative but dangerous market based on recovering and recycling building material. Most commonly, chunks of concrete rubble are unearthed and ground down, and then remixed to make poor grade bricks.

Access restrictions to areas along the fence are also enforced through the leveling of agricultural land and destruction of structures; this month, the Israeli military conducted 14 'leveling incursions' into these areas.

The opening of 'warning fire' is used also on a daily basis by the Israeli Navy to enforce access restrictions to fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the shore. In one such incident this month, one fisherman was injured.

Direct conflict Palestinian casualties in the Gaza Strip



NEW REPORT ON THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF ACCESS RESTRICTIONS RELEASED

OCHA and WFP released a new report documenting the access regime implemented by the Israeli army in areas along the perimeter fence and the sea coast of Gaza, and its humanitarian impact.⁸ The report indicates that since late 2008, Palestinians are totally or partially prevented from accessing 17 percent of the total land mass of the Gaza Strip, which comprises 35 percent of its agricultural land. At sea, fishermen are totally prevented from accessing some 85 percent of the maritime areas they are entitled to access according to the Oslo Agreements. An estimated 178,000 people - 12 percent of the population of the Gaza Strip - are directly affected by this regime. The value of agricultural and other property destroyed in the past five years in the land restricted area is conservatively estimated at USD 308 million (replacement cost). It has been further estimated that access restrictions and the related destruction of agricultural assets results in a yearly loss of approximately 75,000 metric tons of potential produce. The market value of this produce is conservatively estimated at USD 50.2 million a year. The erosion of livelihoods has forced affected families to develop a variety of coping mechanisms, some of which have raised significant concerns. The report also points out that restrictions on the access of humanitarian workers to beneficiaries and affected areas have significantly undermined the efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Tunnels continue to claim lives; three Palestinians killed

This month, three Palestinian workers were killed in two separate incidents when tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border collapsed while they were inside. Since the beginning of 2010, 36 Palestinians, including two children, have been killed and another 62 Palestinians have been injured in tunnel-related incidents, including air strikes, tunnel collapses, electrocution and the explosion of gas cylinders. Although as a result of the easing of the blockade since June 2010 the volume of goods entering Gaza from Egypt through the tunnels has been gradually declining, tunnel activity continued. This activity is concentrated on goods that are still restricted through the crossings (mainly construction material) or regarding which there is demand due to their lower prices (including fuel).

Increase in the casualty toll due to internal violence incidents

During August, six people were killed throughout the Gaza Strip, including two children, and 91 others were injured, 14 of whom were children, in a variety of violent internal incidents, including explosions in residential areas, family feuds and reckless use of weapons. Additionally, there were

two cases where dead bodies were found in unclear circumstances. The number of injuries recorded in these types of incidents was the largest since August 2008. Overall, since the beginning of 2010, OCHA recorded 60 fatalities and 244 injuries in the context of internal violence.

In one of the gravest of this month's incidents, on 2 August, a powerful explosion occurred inside the house of an alleged member of a Palestinian armed faction in Deir El Balah city, resulting in the injury of 58 people, including 13 children and nine women; seven houses were destroyed and approximately 30 others were damaged. According to Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, most of the injuries were caused by flying debris from the destroyed buildings. No organization claimed responsibility for the explosion. In another incident on 17 August, a group of masked gunmen travelling in a car shot and killed a 62 year old woman who was sitting in front of her house in Gaza City and injured her husband; while the local police opened an investigation, the circumstances of the incident remain unclear.

One of the leading Palestinian human rights organizations in Gaza has expressed deep concern about what it called "the state of security chaos

and misuse of weapons” reflected in some of the abovementioned incidents.⁹

Economic recovery and reconstruction opportunities in Gaza remain limited

Despite the recent increase in the volume of imports, reconstruction and revival of the private sector continue to be limited by Israeli restrictions on both construction material imports, as well as exports.

A total of 5,177 truckloads of goods entered the Gaza Strip in August, representing only 42 percent of the monthly average of truckloads that entered in the first five months of 2007, prior to the imposition of the blockade. Despite an overall increase in the volume of nonfood items, and the entry of new raw materials, food items (including animal feed) continue to make up the majority of imported goods - 60 percent - compared to about 20 percent before June 2007.

The capacity of the Kerem Shalom commercial crossing, which is controlled by Israel, has slightly improved. While since the beginning of the month, the processing capacity at this crossing was increased to approximately 250 truckloads a day (up from 100 previously), only 220 a day were processed this month on average, mainly due to a reduction in the operating hours of the crossing during the month of Ramadan. In the meantime, the Karni crossing, which is equipped to process over 750 truckloads a day, remains closed due to security concerns, with only a single conveyor belt, allowing the entry of grain and gravel currently used.

The policy change implemented by the Israeli authorities since 20 June has triggered an increase in the level of economic activity and allowed some reactivation of the private sector. The entry of raw materials for some local industries allowed the resumption of operations in some establishments, particularly in the area of garment manufacturing,

furniture and food processing. The Palestine Trade Centre (Paltrade) estimates that during June-July 2010, 1,365 industrial establishments operated in the Gaza Strip, a significant increase compared to the average of 117 during 2008, but only 35 percent of the parallel figure prior to the blockade (3,900). The scope of activities for currently operating establishments, however, varies between 20 to 60 percent of their full capacity. Given the small size of the local market and the low purchasing power of the population, a more extensive reactivation of the private sector is heavily dependant on a lifting of the restrictions on exports to the West Bank, Israel and the rest of the world.

The ability to address the enormous needs of the population in the area of housing, services and utilities remains severely constrained due to the ongoing restrictions on the import of construction materials. These items are considered under the new measures as ‘dual use’ items, and are only allowed in for projects approved by the Palestinian Authority and supervised by international organizations. While deliveries for the two UN reconstruction projects that commenced prior to the Israeli decision (including the Khan Yunis housing project and the Tel el Sultan sewage pumping station) are complete, materials for 11 UN projects that were approved recently have not yet started to enter. These include eight new schools, and classroom additions at two existing schools, and two health clinics. The value of these projects (USD 15 million) is only 1.4 percent of the total value of the proposed work programme of the UN in Gaza (USD 1.05 billion). The entry of materials for approved projects remains subject to a meticulous monitoring and verification procedure by Israeli authorities for each individual truckload. This procedure has resulted in a significant increase in administrative and operational costs, and has slowed down project implementation. Under the current procedures, the implementation of a large number of projects is not sustainable.

The electricity crisis continues to disrupt functioning of households and services

During August, imports of the industrial fuel required to operate the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) slightly increased compared to the previous month (5.5 vs. 4.7 million litres); however, this constitutes less than 60 percent of the equivalent figure during November 2009, prior to the beginning of the current funding crisis. The quantities imported throughout the month fluctuated between 0.8 and 1.6 million litres a week. The latter figure, recorded during the last week, was the highest since February 2010; it occurred after the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah paid for an additional amount of fuel, after the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) in Gaza transferred a larger amount of revenues from electricity bills. Overall, the amount of fuel imported during August is slightly above 40 percent of the estimated amount needed to run the power plant at full capacity.

Due to the electricity shortage, the majority of the population in Gaza experienced power cuts of 8 up to 12 hours per day. On 7 August, after the fuel reserves were exhausted, the GPP shut down for two days, triggering power cuts of up to 16 hours per day throughout central Gaza. In the last week of the month, however, following an increase in imports, power cuts were reduced to 6-8 hours.

The prolonged outages affect all aspects of daily life throughout the Gaza Strip, including the disruption of normal household functioning and the provision of essential public services such as water supply, sewage treatment and removal, and the functioning of health services, thus affecting the quality of medical treatment. The recurrent power outages force both public service and private institutions to rely extensively on backup generators and other alternative devices, which are vulnerable to breakdown due to overuse and inconsistent supply of spare parts leading to irregular and inadequate maintenance.

The civilian population is also forced to rely on portable generators for household use; the extensive use of these appliances often results in generator-related accidents. In an accident this month, one woman was killed and two members of her family were injured. Local sources indicate that more than 30 people have died and approximately 40 have been injured in similar accidents in 2010.

The Gaza electricity crisis was initially triggered by the Israeli bombardment of the GPP in 2006, deepened following the Israeli restriction of fuel imports (since December 2008) and is further compounded by the ongoing funding crisis (since December 2009).¹¹ If enough fuel is supplied in order to operate the GPP at full capacity (80 MW), the electricity deficit could be reduced to some 25 percent.

In addition to a larger and more reliable supply of fuel, according to Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO), the urgent provision of new equipment is needed (additional transformers) to increase the GPP productive capacity to nearly 140MW (the potential capacity prior to the June 2006 bombardment). In the longer term, shifting GPP functioning to a natural gas will effectively increase capacity and reduce costs. Other measures include network rehabilitation, as well as the completion of a 66 KW transmission line from Israel.

Medical Referrals from Gaza

The Referral Abroad Department (RAD) of the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) processes requests by Palestinian patients for specialized medical treatment unavailable in public hospitals in Gaza and bears the costs for the treatment of the approved cases.¹² Throughout August, the RAD approved 1,393 such referrals. For some 20 percent of the approved applications (285 cases) the necessary treatment could be found at NGO and private hospitals within the Gaza Strip. The remaining cases were referred to hospitals outside Gaza as follows: Egypt (30.7 percent), East Jerusalem (33 percent),

elsewhere in the West Bank (13.5 percent), Israel (21.3 percent), and Jordan (1.2 percent).

Since last June, the proportion of referrals to Egyptian hospitals remains significantly higher than in the past, due to the uninterrupted opening of the Rafah Crossing for humanitarian cases. Patients referred elsewhere outside Gaza must apply to the Israeli District Liaison Office (DCO) for permits to leave the strip through the Erez Crossing. Of the 919 applications submitted to the DCO during August, 83.8 percent were approved, 9.4 percent were rejected and the remainder (6.8 percent) delayed. The latter means that no reply was received by the

time of the medical appointment and therefore the patient must make a new appointment and submit a new application for a permit.

The rate of approvals by the Israeli DCO slightly increased compared to July and is the highest recorded since the imposition of the blockade in June 2007. Along with the gradual increase in approvals since May 2010, the percentage of applications delayed decreased from a monthly average of 21 percent in January-April 2010 to a monthly average of 9 percent in May-August; at the same time the rate of rejections increased between both periods from 2.7 to 11.1 percent respectively.

Issues across the oPt

Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) approves two water and sanitation projects

In August, funding for two new projects in the area water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) were approved by the HRF. Action against Hunger (Spain) received USD 144,000 to address the water needs of some 5,000 people in vulnerable communities in the southern Hebron hills, who lack access to adequate water supply. The project will identify needs, organize the cleaning of cisterns and supply potable water and chlorine tablets, among other activities.

In the Gaza Strip, the Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH) received approval for a five month

project worth approximately USD 200,000 to be implemented in the Jabalia City, which will result in the repair of a section of the wastewater collection and discharge system which is currently flooding onto the streets.

Since the beginning of 2010, the HRF has positively responded to the application of four WASH projects, three in Gaza and one in the West Bank. One of the Gaza projects involved the provision of water pumps to mitigate the impact of winter floods; while the project was approved in early January 2010, actual entry of the pumps occurred only at the end of this month, after prolonged delays by the Israeli authorities.

Endnotes

1. The demolished structures included 26 residential tents, 12 toilets, 8 ovens, 9 kitchens and 24 animal barracks.
2. Quality education must be affordable, accessible, gender-sensitive and responds to diversity. It includes activities providing an emphasis on recreation, play, sport and creative activities in addition to areas such as literacy, numeracy and life skills.
3. Save the Children UK, *Life on the Edge: The Struggle to Survive and the Impact of Forced Displacement in High Risk Areas of the occupied Palestinian territory*, Research Report, October 2009.
4. The Columbia Group for Children in Adversity: *The psychosocial impact of the Israeli military attacks and blockade on the Palestinian education system in Gaza*, a UNESCO commissioned report, September 2010.
5. See OCHA, *Area C Humanitarian Response Plan*, August 2010.
6. The Israeli Civil Administration, *Easing Measures implemented in the West Bank*, May 2010.
7. While the according to the announcement the measures include the removal of 60 roadblocks, only nine were specified, of which five were so far removed.
8. OCHA-WFP, *Between the Fence and the Hard Place - The humanitarian impact of Israeli-imposed restrictions on access to land and sea in the Gaza Strip*, August 2010, available at: www.ochaopt.org
9. Palestinian Center for Human Rights, "Bomb Detonated in Beit Lahia Police Station", 18 August 2010.
10. Palestine Trade Center, *Gaza Crossings Bi-Monthly Monitoring Report*, June-July 2010.
11. For further details see OCHA, *Fact Sheet: Gaza's Electricity Crisis*, May 2010.
12. Find the detailed WHO report on referrals from Gaza and back issues at <http://issuu.com/who-opt>

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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