

# Humanitarian Update

1-20 November 2002

## occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)

21 November 2002

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### Overview

There was a lifting of 24-hour curfews in several areas in the West Bank (Ramallah, Al-Bireh, Beituniya, Jenin and Qalqiliya) starting from 7 November. While curfews remained in force in many towns and villages there was a reduction in the number of curfew hours. However, the closure regime continued to prevent the free movement of people and commodities in the West Bank and continued to constrain the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Military incursions into Nablus, Tulkarm and Hebron (H2) were accompanied by strict 24-hour curfews, house-to-house searches and widespread arrests. Scores of men and youth were also arrested in Ramallah, Abu Dis, Burka, Balata refugee camp, adding to the large numbers of Palestinians currently being held in detention centres and prisons, which B'Tselem reports at nearly 5,000.

Reports of Palestinian deaths and injuries are almost a daily occurrence. According to the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), 38 Palestinians were killed, and 175 injured from 1-20 November. The IDF killed 5 Palestinians in Tulkarm on 20 November, including a child, and injured 13 others, when a helicopter gunship opened fire on the home of a Fatah activist. This latest attack was condemned by the UN Secretary-General. The IDF also continued to carry out attacks in Rafah and Khan Younis (8-10 November) and a series of air strikes on Gaza city (11, 12, 14 November) caused a number of casualties. On 18 November, tanks and armoured vehicles entered Gaza city and destroyed part of the headquarters of the Palestinian Preventive Security.

There was one suicide bomb attack, claimed by the Islamic Jihad, in a shopping mall in Kfar Sava (4 November), which killed 2 Israelis and left 69 injured. Five Israelis were killed, including a mother and her two children, when members of the Al-Aqsa Brigades attacked Kibbutz Metzger on 10 November. And 12 Israeli soldiers, Border Police and members of the settler emergency security squad, including the IDF Commander of the Hebron Brigade, were killed in an ambush, claimed by the Islamic Jihad, on 15 November in Hebron.

The head of a delegation from the Qatar Red Crescent Society, Dr. Khaled Diab, was arrested and detained without charges by the Israeli Authorities on 13 November when he

arrived at Ben Gurion airport. Dr. Diab and his team were invited to the oPt, under the auspices of the ICRC, to provide mental health training for PRCS staff, and to set up a scholarship programme for Palestinian physicians. The ICRC reported that, as of 19 November, Dr. Diab had still not been released.

The UN Humanitarian Action Plan for the oPt was launched in Berne, Switzerland (19 November) as part of the UN Consolidated Appeals. Prior to the launch the Plan was discussed with the PA, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, and representatives of the donor community in Ramallah on 11 November and at the annual Inter-Agency Meeting in Jerusalem on 12 November. Following the launch in Berne, an informal meeting on the implementation of International Humanitarian Law in the oPt was convened by the Swiss Foreign Affairs Ministry. Concerned at the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza, the discussion focussed on how IHL can be implemented.

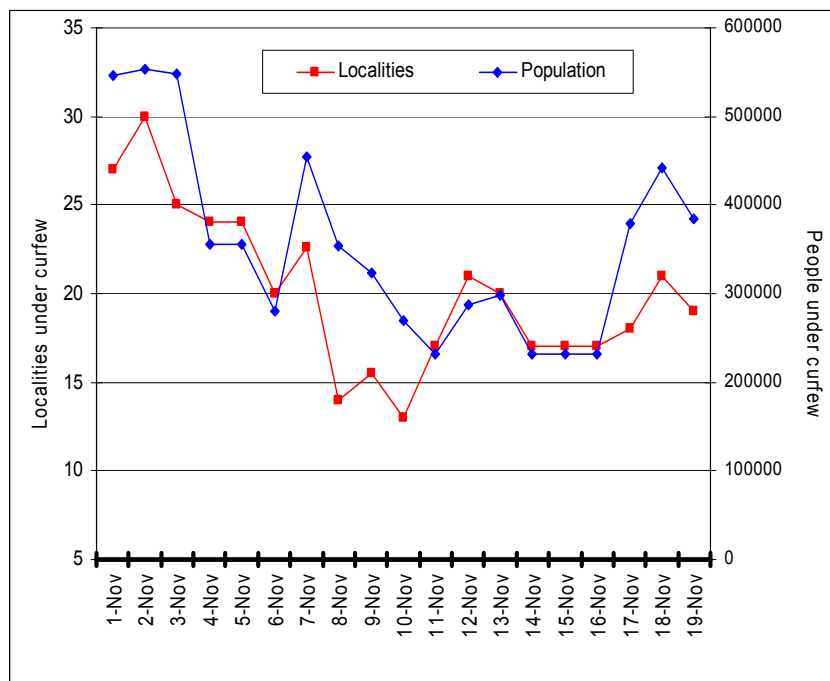
### Curfews

(details of curfews, maps, graphs and searchable database can be found on <http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/curf1.htm>)

The period under review was marked by a reduction of curfew hours throughout the re-occupied Palestinian self-rule areas in the West Bank. The lifting of the curfew regime in some localities – apparently associated with the Holy Muslim month of Ramadan – came as a relative relief to tens of thousands of households after several months of total closures put in place by the IDF. However, despite the currently observed relaxation, curfews continue to be used as the most severe and pervasive form of closure. Their impact on households and the Palestinian economy continues to be debilitating.

Curfews were totally lifted in Ramallah (population 18,000), Al-Bireh (28,000), Al Ama'ari camp (4,050), Beituniya (10,000), Jenin town (26,700) and its refugee camp (9,100) and Qalqiliya (31,800) for two consecutive weeks. For the first time since the inception of the current curfew regime more than five months ago, some 250,000 West Bank residents were granted freedom to move within their towns and camps, which however remain isolated from each other by the dense network of IDF checkpoints and other manned and unmanned physical barriers.

On average 20 large and medium population areas were placed under curfew. The duration of curfews noticeably decreased from an average of 124 hours (out of 164 possible) during the previous reporting period to 73 hours in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of November. On average 355,000 civilians were placed under curfew – down from 430,000 the previous week.



The Tulkarm and Nablus governorates remained the most affected with curfew hours ranging from 162 (Tulkarm town, 2<sup>nd</sup> week November) to 108 hours (Nablus 3<sup>rd</sup> week). Some 19 localities in these two governorates continued to be placed under intermittent curfews. Another 17 localities in Qalqiliya, Hebron and Jenin governorates saw shorter curfews typically enforced by the IDF to enable them to conduct search-and-arrest campaigns.

Areas that continued to be subjected to long curfew hours are: Tulkarm city and its refugee camp; Nablus city and Nur Shams, Balata, Askar, and Ein Beit el Ma camps; and a number of villages along the Green Line – Dhinnaba, Far'un, Iktaba, Irtah, Shuweika, Baqa ash-Sharqiya, Nazlat 'Isa.

On a number of occasions during the reporting period the IDF resorted to using live ammunition to enforce curfews in Jenin, Tulkarm, Anabta, and Nablus injuring an estimated 20 civilians.

### **Olive Harvest**

The Palestinian olive harvest, which runs from early October to the end of November, is critical to the local economy. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the harvest provides between 15-20% of all agricultural outputs in the oPt. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total area under productive olive trees in 1999-2000 was approximately 880,613 dunums with a total production of 153,476 tons of olives. Some 70,500 Palestinian farmers depend on the income generated from olive trees.

Since the start of the olive harvest in early October, 156 communities, mainly in the West Bank, have reported incidents of violence or intimidation, damages to property or theft of the harvest, mainly by armed Israeli settlers, but also security forces, according to UNRWA, despite the IDF's commitment in October to protect Palestinian olive farmers.

During October, Palestinian NGOs and UNRWA recorded incidents of damage to olive groves, violence and intimidation in 111 localities in the West Bank and Gaza. In 84 of the localities, the Palestinian Land Defence General Committee (PALDIS) recorded 999 incidents during the two last weeks of October. During the first week of November, the Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU) reported incidents in 14 localities in the governorates of Nablus, Jenin and Bethlehem.

On 14 November the European Union made a demarche to the Office of Israel's Prime Minister on settler harassment and violence against Palestinian civilians. The EU expressed its deep concerns over the increased level of settler violence against the Palestinian population particularly during the vital olive harvest. The EU demarche called upon the Israeli government to step up its efforts to immediately and effectively protect Palestinian farmers and their property to allow civilians to work and live free from threats against their livelihood and safety.

As a result of the strict closures, Palestinian farmers are facing great difficulties in marketing their olive oil, according to WFP. The price of 1 litre of olive oil has dropped to 10 – 13 NIS from 20 NIS.

### **“Separation Wall”**

According to a new report on the effects of the “separation wall” from the Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ), of the total area (174 Km<sup>2</sup>) of Qalqiliya district, 35.2 Km<sup>2</sup> or 20.2% will be confiscated for the “separation wall”. It is estimated that the agricultural sector will lose 5,441 dunums (5.44 Km<sup>2</sup>), or 7.84 % of the total agricultural land in the district. The Qalqiliya district is located on top of the western groundwater basin, which is renewable and produces more than 250 million cubic meters of water per year. Of the 72 artesian wells in the area, 15

(20.8%), which are mainly used for irrigation, will fall on the western side of the wall and will in effect be annexed by Israel.

One village threatened with losing most of its land and wells is Jayyus. The village, with a population of some 3,000 and 13,000 dunums of land, is situated 2 km from the "Green Line" (1948 border between the oPt and Israel). Jayyus relies on agriculture and the largest crop produced is olives, followed by oranges and lemons. Employment in the agriculture sector has assumed more importance in the last two years. Many of the villagers, who used to work as labourers, turned to working in local agriculture after the closure prohibited them from working inside Israel. Any further loss of land will seriously jeopardise their livelihoods.

Israeli surveyors, accompanied by military personnel, surveyed the area in July 2002, and benchmarks with serial numbers were erected at the northern, southwestern and northeastern parts of the village as well as in Falameh and Asaleh villages.

In September 2002, the Israeli authorities ordered the confiscation of 15,000 dunums of land belonging to Jayyus (8,000 dunums), Falameh (1,000 dunums) and Kafr Sur villages, and on 10 September, 1,000 Dunums from Jayyus were declared confiscated. There has been widespread destruction of olive trees and by September 2002, ARIJ estimates that 22,255 trees have been uprooted in the area since 2000.

#### Land confiscation & destruction, Qalqiliya district

Year	Land confiscated (dunums)	Land threatened (dunums)	Uprooted trees
2000	0	1995	1690
2001	200	1783	17204
October 2002	3,925	21,125	3361
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,125</b>	<b>24,903</b>	<b>22,255</b>

Source: ARIJ -GIS-Database 2002

#### Humanitarian Access

PRCS reported that a number of their ambulances, patients and staff had been delayed, searched or detained at IDF permanent or temporary checkpoints or access had been blocked by tanks during the reporting period. In Tulkarm (7 November) a tank blocked access to an ambulance transporting an injured person and access was only granted when the ICRC intervened. The patient later died. Three ambulances transporting patients to hospital were denied access: one in Tulkarm (1 November), and two in Nablus (3 and 13 November).

Several ambulances experienced long delays at checkpoints. One on its way to Nablus (12 November) to pick up dialysis patients was held up at a checkpoint in Tulkarm and a patient with a heart problem was arrested. The same ambulance was then held up at a second checkpoint for 50 minutes, and on its return with the dialysis patients it was held up for a further 30 minutes. In Qalqiliya (9 November) an ambulance was held for 7 hours and soldiers confiscated the driver's ID. In Tulkarm (5 November), one ambulance was delayed one hour and twenty minutes at a checkpoint. An Israeli army jeep stopped an ambulance carrying two people who had been injured by live fire in Balata camp in Nablus (14 November). The soldiers held up the ambulance for 20 minutes apparently because the wounded were not carrying their IDs. Two ambulances were attacked: one was fired on while the medics were trying to rescue an injured person in Tulkarm (11 November) and soldiers threw objects at an ambulance at Tal'at Al Ghabz, Jenin (2 November), causing damage to the windshield. A tank stopped a bus transporting disabled persons in Nablus (10 November) and the driver was ordered out of the bus at gunpoint and acted as a human shield for the soldiers for more than 30 minutes, according to PRCS.

The ICRC assisted 125 people to return to their homes in the Mwasi area near Rafah (south Gaza) at the beginning of November. The IDF had prevented some 200 men, women and children, who had left the closed-off area for business or personal reasons, from returning home, and they were stranded outside Mwasi for several days. 125 people appealed to the ICRC who coordinated their return home with the Israeli authorities.

### **Food Security**

WFP reports that in the West Bank most of the basic food commodities are available in the markets, despite the curfews and closures. However, while prices are remaining stable, including for fresh produce and meat, the prices of milk powder, fresh and frozen meat and vegetables are too expensive for the vulnerable groups who receive WFP's food aid.

The Emergency Food and Nutrition Group met on 6 November to discuss the on-going assistance efforts. An issue of concern to Agencies and international NGOs is whether the continued provision of humanitarian assistance to areas under strict curfews and closure, such as Jenin, could be perceived as "helping" the occupation and not addressing the cause of the problem, only the symptoms. An issue that needs to be collectively addressed is the disparities in food baskets being distributed by various providers to different beneficiary groups in the same area.

In order to help Palestinian olive farmers, ECHO has approved the local purchase of olive oil, along with soya oil, as part of the supplementary feeding programme WFP is implementing with Terre des Homme in Gaza. The locally produced olive oil will make up 25% of the total oil allocation for this programme. WFP is committed to purchasing this oil solely from poor farmers to give them much needed incomes, and is currently investigating mechanisms for its purchase and quality control.

UNRWA plans to include chick peas and olive oil in future food baskets, depending on donor funding, and its wheat flour will be fortified with iron and folic acid to help combat the deteriorating nutritional status of vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and young children.

### *Relief Efforts*

#### **Emergency Employment**

The Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) met in November and, among other issues, discussed progress on plans to establish a Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection, geared towards technical cooperation programmes to boost employment for young Palestinian workers in the oPt. According to the ILO (7 November), a number of donors have already expressed an interest in the Fund and it is hoped that multilateral and Arab development funds will be pledged at a forthcoming donors' meeting in December 2002. The ILO's planned Fund has already been presented to the "quartet" (United Nations, European Union, Russian Federation and United States).

#### **Health**

The Italian Cooperation, ICRC, WFP and UNRWA, successfully distributed 14 trucks and vans of essential medicines, supplies and insecticides from the Ministry of Health Central Stores in Ramallah to hospitals in Nablus, Hebron, Beit Jala, Tulkarm, Jericho, Jenin and Bethlehem. The MoH had been unable to distribute the supplies due to the closures and there was an urgent need to move kidney dialysis solutions, medicines for chronic diseases and other medical needs to the districts. In response to an urgent appeal from the Ministry of Health in October, Health Inforum coordinated this distribution.

Closures and curfews have severely hampered the vaccination campaign in a number of areas. The Italian Cooperation assisted in a four-day vaccination campaign (11-15 November) in 8 villages in the Bethlehem area.

## Education

Around 68,000 Palestinian children (6.8%) were still being denied access to schooling in the first half of November, according to UNICEF, and 1,832 teachers (7%) were still unable to reach their workplaces. As of 15 November, 45 schools remained closed in Tulkarm (19), Jenin (16), and Qaliliya (10). This is, however, a marked improvement on the previous month when 22.6% of school children and 36% of teachers were unable to attend school due to curfews and closures. This denial of education prompted UNICEF to issue a media release (2 October) calling on the Government of Israel to meet its obligations to ensure that education is accessible to every Palestinian child, in accordance with the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). UNICEF, concerned that all Palestinian children and teachers have safe and unfettered access to education, will continue its important advocacy work and will assess the situation mid-school year.

While the violence and checkpoints are stopping many children from going to school, rising poverty is also affecting children's attendance. UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, is organizing a "Back-to School" campaign to mobilize children, parents, civil society and international stakeholders active in the oPt to ensure children get back to school and stay in school. The campaign's key message is that the education of Palestinian children is a right rather than a choice or a privilege and that despite the considerable economic and security impediments there are long-term benefits of continued enrollment in school. Advertisements were placed in local newspapers and plans are underway to produce posters and erect billboards promoting the campaign's message. As part of the campaign, UNICEF has also provided 14,000 school uniforms, school bags and school stationary and equipment to children in the most affected areas. An additional 70,000 children will benefit from the distribution of school stationary and equipment in the coming weeks, and indirectly the almost 1 million Palestinian children of school age in the oPt will also benefit.

## Emergency Assistance

ICRC 4-10 November	Assistance	Area	Beneficiaries
ICRC's <i>Rural Relief Programme</i> (in cooperation with WFP)	160 MT of flour, rice & sugar plus 1,080 sports kits and 36 school kits	14 villages in Tulkarm, Nablus & Ramallah districts	1,376 families
ICRC's <i>assistance to families particularly affected by long curfews</i>	Food parcels	Old City of Hebron (H2)	800 families
ICRC's <i>assistance following house destruction</i>	Tents, blankets, basic household goods, other emergency supplies	Rafah, Khan Younis, Deir el-Balah	100 families
	7 sets of household equipment & food parcels	Ramallah district	Bedouin families (whose 7 tents completely destroyed with all household property)
	Emergency assistance	Nablus	12 families whose houses were destroyed in October
ICRC <i>water deliveries</i>	Water deliveries by trucks	Villages in Yatta & Doura areas (Hebron governorate) & villages in Salfit area (Nablus governorate)	Isolated villages not connected to water networks and who suffer from serious water shortages

WFP 1-8 November	Food Assistance in Metric Tons	Area	Beneficiaries
	6 MT vegetable oil	Gaza city	
	301.75 MT wheat flour	Beit Hanoun	
	13.6 MT wheat flour	Deir el-Balah	
	1.049 MT vegetable oil 22.5 MT wheat flour 6.75 MT rice	Jerusalem	
	46 MT vegetable oil 194.95 MT wheat flour	Nablus	
	1.399 MT vegetable oil 30 MT wheat flour 9 MT rice	Salfeet	
	0.699 MT vegetable oil 15 MT wheat flour 4.500 MT rice	Tubas	
	1.38 MT vegetable oil 30 MT wheat flour 9 MT rice	Tulkarm	
	36.15 MT wheat flour	Jenin	
	<b>Total 729.727 MT</b>		

In the same week, WFP also transferred 3,250 MT of wheat flour from the Port of Ashdod to its warehouse in Gaza.

#### UNRWA Emergency Food Parcels

Total distributed = 9,732

Quantity	Location
3,207	Qalqiliya
10	Beit Awwa
1,000	Tulkarm
1145	Beit Inan
32	Tulkarm Camp
30	Balata Warehouse
13	Fawwar Camp
4	Deir Amar Camp
531	Biddu
551	Jenin Camp
20	Jalazone Camp
8	Silwad
14	Arroub
715	Abu Dis
408	Jaba
207	Sur Baher
1837	Jerusalem