

HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT ON THE “BERTINI COMMITMENTS” – APRIL 2003

COMMITMENT	BENCHMARKS	ACTUAL STATUS	REMARKS
<p>1. Health:</p> <p>1. 1 Palestinian ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at any checkpoints (Gol to Bertini mission, 12- 19 April 2002)</p> <p>1.2 Effective mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that Palestinians seeking critical medical services (e.g. giving birth, dialysis, chemotherapy, etc.) can quickly pass all checkpoints. (Gol to Bertini mission, 12 – 19 August 2002)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders concerning maximum time for ambulance delay at checkpoints; • PA MOH, PRCS, UNRWA and hospitals no longer report ambulance delays at checkpoints • Mechanisms established and Palestinian public informed; • Explicit instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders • No more instances of Palestinians seeking critical medical services denied passage at checkpoints reported 	<p>Palestinian ambulance operators¹ reported 36 incidents in April 2003². In addition, and contrary to previous practice there were 2 reported occasions on which IDF entered Palestinian hospitals.</p> <p>In 15 cases, ambulances were denied access to persons in need of medical assistance. Incidents³ varied in their gravity and frequency from region to region. The following types of incidents were reported:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. checkpoint delays exceeding 30 minutes⁴; 2. denial of access to ambulances trying to reach patients; 3. access denial to ambulances with patients in critical medical condition aboard; 4. destruction of ambulances/equipment 5. detention and/or removal of patients from ambulances. <p>The IDF on 2 occasions removed patients from ambulances.</p> <p>10 cases of ambulance delays ranging from 35 minutes to 3 hours were reported in the West Bank and Gaza. One patient facing such a delay had third degree burns while another had just experienced a stroke.</p> <p>9 grave security incidents where physical force was used against ambulance personnel and patients were reported in April 2003.</p> <p>Destruction of a PRCS ambulance by a Merkhava tank in front of the Rafah duty station.</p> <p>The situation remains critical in and around Nablus city: Beit Iba, Huwwara, Deir Sharaf, Za'tara, etc. checkpoint now account for 63 percent of all major incidents (up from 50 percent in March).</p>	<p>April notes a relative decline in the overall number of incidents. This decline, however, should be attributed to an increased underreporting, notably by PRCS in Gaza, rather than to an improved respect for the Red Crescent emblem. Specifically, ambulances and medical crews were not granted access to Beit Hanoun, parts of Gaza city and Rafah during 8 major IDF incursions into these areas. PRCS in Gaza admit that delays and access denial have become so routine that staff is no longer reporting such incidents.</p> <p>This is a worrying admission – although – not really surprising – that such incidents have become so “normalised” that they are no longer considered worthy of reporting.</p> <p>Both PRCS and the MOH in Gaza have been contacted by OCHA in writing, to emphasise the need to re-engage in this process to ensure an accurate coverage of such incidents by type and location.</p> <p>Of grave concern is the situation in the Gaza Strip where IDF periodically denies access to first aid during its military incursions.</p> <p>Movement of ambulances to three isolated villages (Azmout, Salim and Deir El-Khatib) in Nablus remains restricted. Patients are required to walk to the now manned checkpoint and be picked up by the ambulance crew after having crossed the checkpoint</p>

¹ PRCS and UNRWA

² A significant number of incidents occurred in the Gaza Strip were unreported

³ In several cases ambulance staff reported incidents that combine two or more of the above features.

⁴ Ambulance operators and ICRC consider the “30-minute” delay excessive for all urgent cases; in PRCS definition any forced delays exceeding 15 minutes at checkpoints, by military patrol, police or border police, etc. constitute incidents

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<p>2. Water</p> <p>2.1 Problems related to water deliveries to Palestinian towns and villages will be addressed to ensure that daily water deliveries in proper quantities can be supplied by Palestinian water tankers. (GoI to Bertini Mission, 12-19 August 2002)</p>	<p>2.1.1 Instructions issued to all checkpoints allowing for the easy transfer of water tankers through all checkpoints;</p> <p>2.1.2 The IDF removes barriers that prevent the access by water tankers to villages that rely on tankered water;</p> <p>2.1.3 Absence of any reports on lack of water or delay/stoppage of water tankers at checkpoints.</p>	<p>Emerging reports of insufficient quantities of water being provided by Mekorot, the Israeli state supplier to Palestinian populations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNRWA reported on the reduction in quantity of water provided to Aqba Jaber camp in Jericho; ▪ Daheit Sabah Al Kheir village in Jenin is suffering from a lack of water with Mekorot refusing to respond to requests from the PWA and EWOC to increase the supply; ▪ EWOC reporting of difficulties in east Nablus and Tammoun. 	<p>Close monitoring of the accessibility of Palestinian communities to water supplies will be necessary in the weeks ahead with the onset of Summer and associated shortages that will develop.</p>
<p>3. International Organisations</p> <p>3.1 Israel will fully facilitate the assistance activities of international organisations with particular reference to UNRWA (GoI to Bertini Mission, 12-19 August 2002)</p>	<p>3.1.1 Free access for all international staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and Gaza and at international crossings at all times;</p> <p>3.1.2 Free access for all Palestinian staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and Gaza at all times;</p> <p>3.1.3 No delays/stoppage of international organisations' transport of development and humanitarian goods at any point (i.e. at international borders, borders between Israel and the West Bank or Gaza, within the West Bank or Gaza) at any time;</p> <p>3.1.4 Palestinian drivers (with either Jerusalem or West Bank ID) allowed to drive humanitarian transports for international organisations, in particular UNRWA, WFP and ICRC;</p>	<p>In April the delivery of humanitarian assistance deteriorated markedly, primarily due to an internal closure in Gaza which prevented the staff of international organisations reaching their duty stations. Over 200 UNRWA staff members living in southern Gaza were unable to reach their work for 9 consecutive days meaning there were at least 1800 instances of access denial during this period for Gaza alone.</p> <p>From 16 – 24 April, Gaza was divided into three zones by closures at Abu-Houli/Gush Qatif checkpoint while the Beach Road was blocked adjacent to Netzarim settlement. Combined with this, was the closure of Karni and Sufa commercial crossings thus guaranteeing a major disruption in humanitarian service provision for the second half of April. WFP was only able to access approximately 75,000 of its intended 293,000 beneficiaries. Compared to March, only just a little over 25% of beneficiaries received food assistance.</p> <p>International organisations and NGOs filed 20 access incident reports in the Gaza Strip.</p> <p>There were 106 major access incidents in the West Bank, 13 cases of which involved complete denial while the remainder consisted of delays ranging from an average of one hour up to 6 hours on 11 April at Beit Iba checkpoint.</p> <p>These access incidents affected 376 UNRWA employees. In the West Bank alone restrictions resulted in a loss of 430 working hours for the Agency.</p>	<p>April saw a deterioration in humanitarian access in both personnel and direct supplies. The typology and geography of access incidents remained unchanged:</p> <p>UNRWA – the largest emergency operator continues to be badly affected by restrictions imposed on its national staff. Also there was a noticeable increase in access problems and denials with the involvement of international staff.</p> <p>In terms of geography, the Nablus Governorate and Gaza Strip witnessed the two largest concentrations of access and security incidents. The Huwwara, Beit Iba, Hamra, and Shave Shomron checkpoints (all Nablus) accounted for more than 50 percent of reported incidents.</p> <p>The reporting period also saw a further deterioration of humanitarian access in Gaza as a result of bi-section and tri-section of the Strip and intermittent functioning of the Abu Houli checkpoint.</p>

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<p>3.2 Israel agreed to review and strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the IDF to facilitate assistance activities (GOI to Bertini Mission, 12-19 August 2002)</p>	<p>3.2.1 Procedures established that provide direct access by international organisations to operational and command structures within the IDF</p>	<p>The following types of incidents were reported to OCHA in April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access denial or unnecessary delays of humanitarian trucks; UNRWA truck carrying food for emergency distribution at Aida Camp was denied access at Gilo checkpoint on 17 April; ▪ Access to national staff at checkpoints; Head Teacher of UNRWA Yabad School ordered home by IDF foot patrol in Arane on 7 April ▪ Access denial to international staff at checkpoints; OSO team member threatened at gunpoint at Beit Iba on 27 April ▪ Aggression towards UNRWA staff members; Three hour detention of staff at Ein Qainya/Dolev ▪ Prohibition to the use certain roads e.g. road 60 in Hebron area; ▪ Cumbersome ID checking procedures and non-recognition of NGO ID cards; ▪ Occupation of UNRWA Tulkarm Camp Girl's School, 2-4 April. <p>Coordination arrangements with the IDF/COGAT Liaison officers in the West Bank functioned ordinarily. The Liaison Officers (LO) have been generally available and often expeditiously arrived to checkpoints upon receiving phone calls from aid agencies. The interventions of LO with the army personnel, however, has not always been efficient.</p> <p>In Gaza Strip, despite prior clearances issued by the Liaison Office, IDF personnel at checkpoints (e.g. Tuffah, Seafa) continued to deny humanitarian access to project sites. On several occasions the Erez Liaison Office refused to issue clearances to humanitarian organisations travelling to Al-Mawasi.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Al-Mawasi</p> <p>In April, UNRWA vehicles – with the exception of food trucks – were granted access to Al Mawasi, although under certain restrictions (e.g., searches by the IDF with no permission forthcoming to bring insecticides into the area).</p> <p>UNRWA's requests to allow food trucks into the area distribution to the local populations have so far not been responded to.</p> <p>International NGOs were reporting from 26 April that delays were occurring at Erez with this being attributed to "technical problems" on the part of the IDF.</p>
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<p>4. Additional Commitments⁵</p> <p>4.1 The fishing zone for Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles</p>	<p>4.1.1 Extension of fishing zone fully implemented;</p> <p>4.1.2 No arrests or confiscation of fishing boats within the 12 nautical mile zone;</p>	<p>The commitment to allow a 12 nautical mile fishing zone was not implemented in April. A deterioration in fishing rights took place when compared to March with a complete suspension of all anchorages in Gaza between April 16-23. In all cases where fishing is permitted, the Fishermen’s Association reports their members being limited to 3-4 nautical miles thus falling far short of the 12 nautical mile limit.</p>	<p>Continuing failure to honour this obligation on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>4.2 An increase in shipments at Karni crossing</p>	<p>4.2.1 Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing;</p>	<p>The Karni crossing was closed from 15 April to 2 May following a shooting incident at the crossing. The Sufa crossing was closed from 16 to 24 April. Humanitarian agencies were unable to bring relief supplies into Gaza. Starting 27 April, UNRWA was authorised to bring in commodities – this authorisation, however, was limited to wheat flour only. Such restrictions had a major impact on humanitarian service delivery as noted with regard to WFP in 3.0 above.</p> <p>The entry of commercial goods into the Gaza Strip were also interrupted during the closures of the Karni cargo terminal from 16 April.</p>	<p>While recognising the need on the part of the GOI to secure its borders, an alternative access route to UNRWA and WFP should have been made available between 16-24 April given the high dependency on such supplies among a predominantly refugee population.</p>
<p>4.3 Increase in the number of work permits for workers in Israel</p>	<p>4.3.1 Quantifiable increase in the number of work permits being made available for workers in the West Bank and Gaza to work inside Israel;</p> <p>4.3.2 On average, permits are available for 14,000 workers from Gaza and 11,000 workers from the West Bank to enter Israel on a daily basis;</p>	<p>Since April 16, no workers have been permitted to enter Israel from Gaza thus denying employment to over 10,000 individuals in agriculture, industry and services. Erez industrial zone was similarly affected by the closure from the second half of April directly affecting over 4500 persons to whom permits are issued on a daily basis.</p> <p>Workers in the West Bank faced similar but not as extended restrictions, on account of the holidays in Israel in April, when the West Bank was “sealed off”.</p>	<p>The extended closure in Gaza on account of the attack at Karni and the concern for security over a holiday period, had a significant impact on up to 15,000 workers, their direct families and immediate communities as a result of the loss of income.</p>

⁵ These pledges were made by the Government of Israel to humanitarian community prior to the Bertini mission and were reconfirmed to Ms. Bertini in August 2002