



# The Humanitarian Monitor

## occupied Palestinian territory

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### July Overview

Thousands of Palestinian civilians were directly affected by protection incidents, including people killed, injured, arrested, displaced or affected by the closure of institutions providing aid.

In the West Bank, 221 unarmed civilians, including 44 children, were injured by Israeli security forces during military activities, more than half of them in anti-Barrier demonstrations in Ni'lin and Bil'in villages (western Ramallah). One ten-year-old boy was shot at his head and killed by the Israeli Border Police, following the end of one of these demonstrations in Ni'lin. Moreover, this month OCHA recorded 41 incidents involving Israeli settlers targeting Palestinians and their property, the highest monthly total since the last olive harvest season. As a result of these incidents, nine Palestinians were injured. In East Jerusalem, almost 100 people, including 45 children, were displaced following the demolition of their homes due to the lack of building permits. Over 400 Palestinians in the West Bank were reportedly arrested by the Israeli security forces, two-fold more than in June, and 172 by PA security forces, the highest number since last December.

Civilians in the Gaza Strip were affected by a significant increase in Palestinian inter-factional fighting, family feuds and other related incidents, which resulted in the killing of 14 people, including two children, and the injury of 67 others, including seven children. Moreover, over 270 people were detained this month by the security forces of the de facto Hamas government.

Raids and closures of community based institutions continued. In the West Bank, the IDF raided several institutions affiliated with Islamic charities in Nablus district and closed some of them, disrupting services to over 3,000 children, most of them orphans. In the Gaza Strip, Hamas security forces raided and closed down



A four-storey building demolished in Beit Hanina (East Jerusalem) on 28 July. Photo by Richard Bull.

over 184 community-based organisations allegedly connected to Fatah, some of them running programmes supported by UN agencies. These raids and closures disrupted activities involving thousands of beneficiaries.

In Gaza, while the truce continued to hold, one unarmed civilian was killed by the IDF. Overall, despite the significant decrease in casualties, the population of Gaza saw little tangible dividend from the truce. The amount of commodities remained far below actual needs as the level of imports was 46% below the level in May 2007 (one month before the Hamas takeover that triggered the full closure). The restrictions on imports, combined with the total ban on exports, kept 95% of Gaza's local industry closed. Only 990 people succeeded in crossing Rafah (Gaza's border with Egypt), compared to over 18,000 in May 2007. Further, as of the end of the month, one-third of requests for permits to exit Gaza for medical treatment submitted to the Israeli authorities, was either rejected or still being processed.

In the West Bank, movement and access did not improve. Two major checkpoints, Wadi Nar/Container and Jab'a, were further entrenched by new renovations and expansions. There was a 190% increase in flying-random

checkpoints – from 76 to 221/week, mostly in the Hebron area. Movement for UN humanitarian vehicles remained restricted at Jerusalem crossings. About 80% of UNRWA attempts to pass their vehicles through the 'Tunnels' checkpoint without a search, failed, and resulted in a longer and more expensive re-routing.

Water crisis in the West Bank stemming from the ongoing drought deepened due to the increased demand for water during the summer season. Approximately 200 rural communities in the West Bank with an estimated population of 200,000 are struggling to meet their domestic and livestock water needs.

*Please note that the Monitor's format has been modified and shortened. All the tables with monthly figures and indicators for each sector, which appeared in the previous format, will be available in a separate annex to be posted on OCHA's website by the third week of every month. For comments or suggestions on the format or content of the Humanitarian Monitor please contact Mai Yassin (yassinm@un.org).*



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

### Sharp increase in injuries during anti-Barrier protests and inter-factional violence in Gaza

In July, seven Palestinians, including one child, were killed by the IDF or the Border Police, and another 223, including 44 children, were injured. At least two of those killed and 221 of those injured were unarmed civilians. In addition, nine Palestinians were injured by Israeli settlers in the West Bank. Only one of the fatalities and three of the injuries occurred in the Gaza Strip, which continued to experience relative calm without any IDF incursions, following the 19 June truce. In July, three Israeli civilians were killed and 41 others were injured in West Jerusalem in two separate incidents, during which Palestinians from East Jerusalem injured people and damaged vehicles in the street with a bulldozer. Also, one Israeli Border policeman, who was shot in East Jerusalem, died later of his wounds.

Palestinian injuries increased by 24% in July compared to June (223 vs. 180), which is mainly due to the large number of injuries during anti-Barrier demonstrations held in Ni'lin and Bil'in villages, which constituted 52% of all Palestinian injuries. These demonstrations also resulted in the injury of 13 Israeli and international demonstrators. Another 20 Palestinians were injured by the IDF and Border Police in Ni'lin, after they violated the curfew the IDF imposed on the village for 17 hours to prevent the community from demonstrating. An additional 11 people were injured when the IDF opened fire towards a large number of Palestinians trying to enter the village to participate in the funeral of a ten-year-old boy, who had been shot in the head and killed by the Israeli Border Police following one of the demonstrations. At least five IDF and Border Police officers were injured by stones thrown by demonstrators.

The almost daily protests in Ni'lin began in May 2008 in response to the construction of a Barrier section over the village land and the expected isolation of 2,500 dunums of agricultural land. Most of the demonstrations ended violently, with the IDF and Israeli Border Police firing tear gas, rubber-coated metal bullets, stun grenades, and occasionally live ammunition at the demonstrators, to prevent them from reaching the construction site. Injuries also occurred when protesters were physically assaulted by the IDF and the Border Police. One incident was captured on film on 7 July whereby an IDF soldier shot a blindfolded and handcuffed Palestinian man in his feet with a rubber-coated metal bullet at close range. According to Israeli media reports, the shooting soldier and his commander were indicted for "improper behaviour," a charge which does not lead to a criminal record.

Despite the decrease in casualties in the conflict with Israel, Gaza experienced a sharp increase in casualties in the context of inter-factional violence, family feuds and unclear incidents, which resulted in the killing of 14 people, including two children, and the injury of another 67, including seven children. The total number of injuries in this context in July represents a two-fold increase compared to June. The gravest incident took place in Gaza City on 25 July, when a four-year-old girl and five Hamas members were killed and 17 others injured (including three children and one woman) in an explosion at a beachside restaurant. While no organisation claimed responsibility for the explosion, Hamas authorities have held Fatah insurgents accountable.

### Large-scale raids by Hamas authorities disrupt humanitarian activities in Gaza

On 26 July, a day following the explosions in Gaza City, security forces affiliated to Hamas raided organisations allegedly related to Fatah. By the end of the month, 184 organisations, including 147 local NGOs and CBOs (community-based organisations) and 37 sport clubs were raided and most of them were shut down. Some of the closed organisations were subsequently allowed to reopen. During the raids, no warrants were produced, no inventories of confiscated goods were made, and no handover documents were signed. During the operations, around 270 alleged Fatah-affiliated persons were arrested.

Several programmes by UN agencies have seriously been affected by these measures. For instance, the closure of 51 associations subcontracted through an NGO working with UNRWA on their summer games activities, obliged UNRWA to re-accommodate about 14,000 affected children in other activity centres. Other associations working with UNRWA on job creation and women's projects were also affected. Nine of 23 UNICEF supported centres were closed down in two days affecting 1,700 adolescents, who had been benefiting from recreational, artistic, sports and cultural activities. One women's centre working with the UNDP's Women Empowerment project was raided and closed in Nuseirat. This centre has served 11,000 women and children over the last 10 months. In addition, some international NGOs reported disruptions of their programmes, including kindergartens and women's activities, following the raids. The humanitarian community continues to assess the impact of the closures on its projects.



## New round of IDF raids and closure orders on institutions in Nablus

Between 7 and 9 July, the IDF raided a number of institutions in the Nablus governorate, including eight organisations associated with the Islamic Charitable Society (ICS), three Islamic private schools, 12 mosques, the main building of the Municipality of Nablus, the Waqf and Religious Affairs Directorate, the Sharia Religious Court, the Islamic Bank and the Nablus Mall. Almost all of the raided institutions are located in Nablus City, except for four of the charities, which are located in New 'Askar and Balata Refugee Camps and in Qabalan and 'Aqraba villages.

Most of the raids resulted in damaged doors, furniture and equipment. Some property belonging to the raided institutions was confiscated by the IDF, including computers and files, the mosques' amplifiers and eight busses belonging to Islamic private schools. Members of the institutions were arrested in the course of most raids.

The administrative offices of one of the most prominent charities raided, At Tadamun Association, were closed for three years by military order issued by the IDF and six of its staff members were arrested. As a result, the association had to suspend financial assistance to over 3,000 orphans, needy students and patients. In contrast, the health clinic that was raided in the same operation and is administered by the same association continued to function normally.

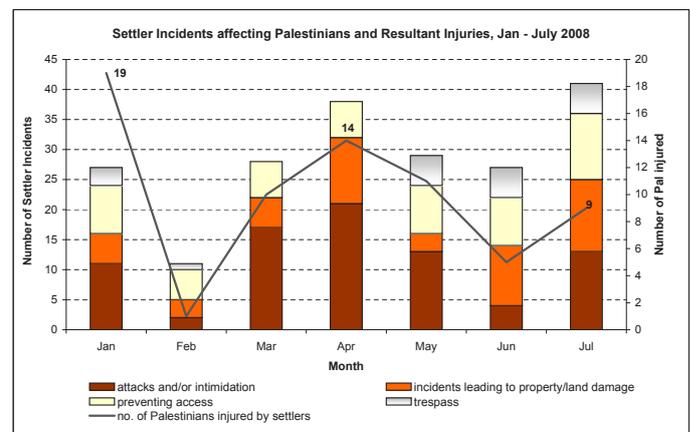
A two-year military closure order, effective from 15 August 2008, was issued against all shops in the Nablus Mall. According to the order, anyone opening a shop after this date could be sentenced up to five years imprisonment.

Negotiations between the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Israeli authorities on the revocation of the three-year closure orders issued by the IDF against the Islamic Charitable Society and the Muslim Youth Association (MYA) in Hebron city during June are still ongoing. While, in principle, the closure orders also apply to the schools and kindergartens supervised by the two institutions, summer activities for children were not interrupted. Approximately 5,800 children are expected to attend these schools and kindergartens in the 2008-2009 academic year. However, given the limited capacity of the PA educational facilities in Hebron, these children could be left without access to a school if the closure orders are indeed implemented. Such an implementation would also affect approximately 3,500 orphans, who are currently receiving meals, clothing, financial and in-kind assistance by the two targeted charities.

## Significant increase in Israeli settler violence

Forty-eight (48) settler incidents were reported in July, 41 of which involved settlers targeting Palestinians and seven involved Palestinians targeting settlers. This is the month with

the highest number of settler attacks on Palestinians and their property since the olive harvest season in October 2007, when 43 settler attacks against Palestinians were reported. Israeli settler attacks this month included inter alia: the injury of nine Palestinian adults and one international; firing improvised rockets and home-made shells towards Burin and Madama villages in the Nablus governorate; setting fire to more than 260 dunums of agricultural land throughout the West Bank; and obstructing farmers' access to their land. Moreover, Israeli settlers from Havat Ma'on settlement harassed (threw stones and insulted) children walking from Tuba hamlet to a summer camp in Tuwani village and injured one international, who was accompanying the children (Hebron).



## Demolitions and displacement in East Jerusalem continue

While no house demolition due to lack of permit was carried out in Area C of the West Bank since April 2008, demolition of Palestinian-owned houses in East Jerusalem continues unabated. During July, the Jerusalem municipality demolished six residential buildings in East Jerusalem, including four in Beit Hanina town and two in Al 'Isawiya village, due to the lack of building permits. Five of these buildings were inhabited and one was still under construction. The demolitions resulted in the displacement of 99 people, including 45 children.

One five-storey building in Beit Hanina was demolished with explosives and a bulldozer. This demolition displaced six Palestinian families of 60 people, including 20 children. Before the demolition, the Border Police, accompanied by trained dogs, injured six people when they forced residents out of the building preventing them from removing any furniture. They also damaged 20 vehicles. Residents also reported to the police that money and jewellery had been stolen from their houses. The demolition was carried out after a building license was revoked due to the excess of the area stipulated by the building permit.



In addition, a Palestinian refugee family of seven, who has lived in the building in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood since 1956, received an eviction order. A petition against the order was rejected by the Israeli High Court of Justice, ruling that the family did not have the right to stay in the house. Another 27 families living in the same area are expected to receive similar orders. As of the end of July, no family had been evicted.

## Children continue to be affected by lack of adequate protection

In one of the gravest incidents in July, a ten-year-old Palestinian boy was shot in the head and killed by the Border Police following an anti-barrier demonstration in Ni'lin village. Another 44 children were injured this month, all but one in the West Bank, with a majority of them injured during anti-barrier demonstrations. Two children were killed and seven injured in Palestinian internal fighting in the Gaza Strip in July. One of the two fatalities was a four-year-old girl, who was killed on 25 July in Gaza City, when she was hit by an explosion at a beachside restaurant. All these incidents brings the number of child fatalities to 95 Palestinians and four Israelis, while the number of child injuries has reached 386 for Palestinians and eight for Israelis since the beginning of the year.

As of the end of July, 313 Palestinian children, including six girls, were held in custody in Israeli Prison Service (IPS) facilities. Almost 90% of them were 16 and 17 years old while the remaining 10% were 12-15 years old. In addition, another 11 children were held by the IDF at different interrogation and detention centres. Thirteen of all children in custody, including two girls, were under administrative detention that is incarceration without charges or trial.

Moreover, 45 children were displaced following the demolition of six houses by the Municipality of Jerusalem in East Jerusalem, due to the lack of building permits. In addition, the raids and subsequent closures of some charity organisations in the Nablus governorate led to the suspension of assistance to at least 3,000 orphans and needy school students.

## ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

### Commodities allowed into Gaza: far below actual needs

During July, the population of Gaza saw little tangible dividend from the truce implemented on 19 June, as the amount of commodities allowed into the Gaza Strip remained far below the actual needs. The flow of commodities remained restricted to certain selected essential humanitarian items and is still far below the market needs. Imports in July were only 37% of the December 2005 level (one month before the Palestinian elections) and 46% compared to

May 2007 (one month before the Hamas takeover that triggered the closure). Gravel accounted for 42% of the month's imports, and food supplies 33%. The Palestinian Businessmen's Association reported that 1,970 containers of goods destined for Gaza are still stranded in Israel and the West Bank since the Hamas takeover. The total ban on exports continues. As a result of the continued lack of raw materials and export opportunities, an approximate 95% of Gaza's local industry remains closed.

The flow of construction materials that is vital for housing, water, waste water and infrastructure work continues to be restricted. In July, 5,448 tonnes of cement was allowed in (less than 10% of the approximate monthly needs) compared to 57,291 tonnes received in December 2005, and 39,203 in May 2007. While a relatively large amount of gravel entered the Strip, much of it cannot be used unless a proportionate amount of cement and other related products are also allowed entry. If adequate construction material had been allowed into the Gaza Strip, UNRWA would have been able to construct or repair shelters for nearly 38,000 people living in inadequate conditions. The \$213 million worth of vital construction projects, including new hospital wards, schools and roads on hold since June 2007, would also have been started or completed. Due to the continued lack of raw materials, 3,000 dunums of greenhouses are still abandoned.

Fuel imports remained restricted. Only 18% of petrol, 51% of diesel, 55% of cooking gas and 77% of industrial gas estimated daily needs were imported. Authorities continued with the coupon rationing system that has been enforced since April 2008, which limits to a minimum the quantity of fuel each Gaza family can receive, while prioritising industries and public services, including hospitals. Only 20-30 petrol stations out of 210 are operating; and irregularly when fuel is received from Israel. An estimated 600 tonnes of rubbish continued to accumulate in the streets every day creating a health hazard. Gaza farmers are unable to secure enough fuel to run 70% of their agricultural water wells to water their farms. Thus agricultural produce, particularly vegetables, has decreased in quantity and increased in price. *(For further analysis of the impact of fuel shortage, see health and water and sanitation sections).*

Since the beginning of July, Gaza's power plant has increased its output from 55 to 65MW. Despite the improvement, this output is still below its 80MW full capacity, which cannot be reached due the restriction on the import of industrial fuel. Accordingly, power cuts continued during July for at least four to five hours a day. Hospitals, water pumps, sewage treatment plants and other facilities hence relied on back-up diesel-run generators, also facing fuel shortages. Intermittent power supplies jeopardised health care in Gaza, resulting in hospitals rescheduling some non-emergency surgery.



## **Almost no movement of people in and out of Gaza**

During the reporting month, Rafah Crossing was partially open only on four days, allowing 989 Palestinians to cross in both directions (431 leaving and 558 entering), compared to 34,458, who crossed in December 2005 and 18,535 in May 2007. The crossing has been officially closed since mid June 2007 and has partially opened on 23 days only for a limited number of medical and humanitarian cases since then.

An estimated number of 600 students in Gaza are presently awaiting exit permits to take up scholarships and study places abroad, many in the USA and Europe. Some of the students are post-graduates already enrolled at foreign academic institutions trying to complete their studies. Many may lose their scholarships and other financial support if they do not take up their places this academic year.

Around 651 patients referred to medical treatment in hospitals outside Gaza (mainly in the West Bank, Israel and Jordan) and some 250 merchants and senior Palestinian businessmen (Businessmen card holders), who were granted permits by the Israeli authorities, were allowed to leave Gaza through Erez. Of the 976 patients who applied for such permits in July, 24 (2.5%) had their applications denied, about two-thirds (652) were granted permits, and the rest (300) were, as of the end of July, still waiting for an answer. Since the beginning of 2008, only 58% of the applications for permits submitted by patients have been approved, compared to an average of 90% in 2007 and 2006.

Some of the patients are reportedly requested by the Israeli authorities to be "interviewed" by the Israeli General Security Service (GSS) in order to have their applications processed. In a recent report, the Israeli NGO "Physicians for Human Rights" claimed that the GSS uses this procedure to target patients as potential collaborators, making acceptance to collaborate a pre-condition for exiting Gaza. According to this report, since July 2007, the NGO has received 32 testimonies from sick patients in Gaza, who were not allowed to leave after refusing to collaborate with the GSS.

## **Deterioration of freedom of movement in some areas of the West Bank**

The freedom of movement of Palestinians in some areas of the West Bank, particularly in the Hebron district, deteriorated during July, while the total number of internal obstacles deployed by the IDF reached 610, compared to 602 in June.

The situation in Hebron was critically affected by the fact that the partial (only occasionally staffed) checkpoints

placed on two major junctions in the district, Al Fawwar and Halhul Bridge, were staffed by the IDF throughout the month, leading to a significant slow down in vehicular movement. Al Fawwar junction constitutes the only access point to Hebron City for around 150,000 people living in 50 communities. Halhul Bridge is the main junction leading from Hebron City to Bethlehem and is also used by the residents of 25 communities located in the north of Hebron City to reach their workplaces and service centres in the city. In addition, some physical obstacles along Road 60, which were removed by the IDF in June, were reinstalled during July. Moreover, Al Fahs junction at the entrance of the Industrial Zone in the H2 area of Hebron City, which was opened for Palestinian traffic in April 2008, was blocked by the IDF during several hours on four days in July.

The negative effect of these restrictions was exacerbated by a 190% increase in the number of flying checkpoints deployed by the IDF throughout the district, compared to June (from 76 to 221). These checkpoints disrupted the provision of services to several areas, including the supply of tankered water to communities unconnected to the water network, due to the fact that non-licensed trucks preferred to avoid the risk of being caught at one of these checkpoint and having their vehicles confiscated or fined. In addition, incidents of mistreatment and humiliation at flying checkpoints were occasionally reported.

In the central West Bank, the Israeli authorities have begun the process of "upgrading" and "rehabilitating" several staffed checkpoints, including the Wadi Nar (Container) checkpoint. This checkpoint is located east of Jerusalem on the only road connecting the southern and northern parts of the West Bank. When completed, the Wadi Nar checkpoint will have permanent infrastructure, with one pedestrian lane and three lanes for vehicles. The infrastructure of Jaba' checkpoint, which controls access to Ramallah city from the south, was also upgraded. Following the end of works during July, regular delays of an hour were reported at this checkpoint for vehicles entering Ramallah.

During July, the IDF completed the construction of a "Fabric of Life" tunnel under highway 443 connecting the village of At Tira to Beit Ur al Fauqa and to Ramallah. Since the IDF prohibited Palestinians from travelling on highway 443 in 2002, residents of At Tira had been able to leave their village only in a limited number of taxis that were granted special permits to travel on that highway. Following the opening of the tunnel, those special permits were not renewed.



## Four years from the ICJ advisory opinion - construction of the Barrier continues

On 9 July 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The opinion found that the sections of the Barrier running inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, together with the associated gate and permit regime, violated Israel's obligations under international law. Accordingly, the ICJ called on Israel to cease construction, to dismantle the sections already completed and revoke the permit and gate regime. As of the end of July 2008, four years on, Barrier construction continues and the permit and gates regime is gradually tightening and expanding over additional areas.

To date, approximately 57% of the Barrier's final route has been completed and 9% are under construction. The majority of the route, approximately 87%, runs inside the West Bank, rather than along the Green Line. When complete, the Barrier will isolate 9.8% of West Bank territory and leave approximately 35,000 Palestinians between the Barrier and the Green Line, in addition to the majority of the 250,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. Another 151,000 Palestinians will be surrounded on three or four sides by the Barrier.

In the northern West Bank, approximately 10,000 Palestinians currently live in enclaves located between the Barrier and the Green Line, which were declared closed by military order. The majority require 'permanent resident' permits from the Israeli military to continue to live in their own homes. Children, patients and workers have to pass through gates to reach schools, medical facilities and workplaces and to maintain family and social relations.

A far greater number of Palestinians living east of the Barrier have been isolated from farms, grazing lands and water resources located on the west side. In the northern West Bank, these Palestinians need 'visitor' permits to cross the Barrier to reach their farms and wells located in the closed area, while in the central areas 'prior coordination' with the Israeli authorities is required. According to a UNOCHA-UNRWA survey, less than 20% of those, who used to farm their lands in these areas before completion of the Barrier, are now granted permits. Even if granted, permits are not always issued to the most appropriate person. Moreover, the irregular placement of the gates and the restrictive opening times severely curtail the time available for farming with negative impact on rural livelihoods.

The Government of Israel stated in numerous occasions that the purpose of the Barrier is to prevent attacks on Israeli civilians and that its route is dictated exclusively by security considerations. However, according to recent Israeli media reports, the IDF Chief of Staff, Gabi Ashkenazi, said that "the route is a political issue and therefore it must be determined by the government".

## Restrictions on UN movement at West Bank checkpoints

Israeli security staff at checkpoints demanding to search UN vehicles (buses in particular) continues to cause UN staff attempting to enter East Jerusalem from the southern West Bank to experience delays and engage in protracted negotiations. For example, during the first three weeks of July, about 80% of UNRWA's attempts not to have their vehicles searched at the Tunnels checkpoint failed and the buses had to be rerouted. UN staff members faced similar problems while trying to access Palestinian communities in the northern West Bank, located in the closed military areas between the Barrier and the Green Line.

UN national staff entering East Jerusalem from the south at 'Gilo' checkpoint, and from the north at 'Jalameh' checkpoint, were increasingly asked to leave their vehicles and walk across. The separation of staff members from their vehicles is not only a security concern for the UN but can also have an operational impact as the pedestrian checking process is likely to lead to long delays.

The Israeli authorities have notified the UN that a new procedure regarding UN supplies will soon be strictly enforced, reducing the number of Barrier crossings through which UN contracted trucks can enter the West Bank from 12 to six (the UN was first notified of this procedure last year, but its implementation has been delayed until now). In addition to the increased time and fuel costs that will have to be borne by UN agencies, 'back-to-back' transfers of goods, from one truck to another, are in place for all local commercial traffic at these crossings. There is additional concern that these crossings do not have the capacity to handle the total expected traffic load.

These new practices are hindering the ability of humanitarian agencies to efficiently deliver aid and services to those in need and undermine UN privileges and immunities. While the UN - at all levels - has repeatedly voiced its concerns to a range of Israeli interlocutors the situation continues.

## WATER AND SANITATION

### Water crisis in the West Bank continues: communities depending on water trucks are most affected

The water crisis in the West Bank further deepened during July, due to the combined effect of a drought (55% of the annual average rainfall during the last winter) and the increased demand for water in the summer season. The drought, which has caused a premature exhaustion of traditional water sources (cisterns and springs), left around 200 rural communities in the West Bank with an estimated population exceeding 200,000 struggling to meet their basic water needs.



Many of the unconnected communities suffer from the lack of "filling points" in their vicinity while access to existing filling points is hindered by hundreds of physical obstacles (earthmounds, concrete blocks, checkpoints), which oblige water tankers to make long detours and raise the prices of tankered water. Access difficulties were particularly grave in the Hebron district where, in addition to the 226 physical obstacles, a dramatic increase in the number of 'flying checkpoints' was observed during July.

Some of the worst affected communities are spending as much as 30-40% of their income on tankered water to meet domestic and livestock needs. This is far above the international affordability standard (3-5% of monthly income). As a result, around 10% of West Bank communities are consuming less than ten liters per person per day. This is well below WHO guidelines, which stipulate 50-100 litres per person per day to ensure good health and safe hygiene practices.

Lack of economic and physical access to safe water is increasingly leading poor families to consume water from unprotected sources, such as agricultural wells, posing serious concerns about water quality and potential public health effects. The current water shortage is also increasing the levels of food insecurity among rural communities, herders in particular, raising the risk of displacement.

A coordinated effort by humanitarian international and UN agencies is taking place in response to the current water crisis and the ensuing drought. Most assistance was given to affected communities located in the Jordan Valley and southern Hebron. Projects for fodder distribution and water supply for both domestic and livestock use are being implemented. Furthermore, needs assessments on the most affected communities in the southern West Bank was conducted. The Water and Sanitation sector requested an amount of around \$4 million to finance emergency projects related to water distribution by trucks, increase the capacity of household water storage through digging wells and provide them with water cistern. Furthermore filling points should be improved and opened and the water network, springs, community cisterns, etc should be rehabilitated. Only 25% of the requested amount is currently funded.

## **Gaza sewage continues to pollute the Sea**

During July, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) in Gaza was allocated around 50,000 litres of diesel, which constituted about 40% of its monthly requirement of fuel. The fuel shortage and the lack of spare parts required to upgrade Gaza's three wastewater treatment plants are preventing the functioning of the plants at their full capacities. This has forced the CMWU to continue dumping approximately 84,000 m<sup>3</sup> of raw and partially treated sewage into the Mediterranean Sea each day. Resumption of the upgrading works on the treatment plants financed by

the German Development Bank, which were suspended in June 2007 due to lack of construction materials, would lead to less sewage being dumped into the sea.

In June, seawater samples from 30 different areas in the Gaza Strip underwent microbiological testing. Human fecal, animal fecal and *Pseudomonas Aeruginosa* were detected. The results of the analysis and investigations of the technical committee showed that a total of 11 areas were contaminated.

The principal health concern stemming from sea pollution is associated with the consumption of contaminated seafood. The WHO has advised the population to refrain from consuming raw fish and shellfish, as well as bivalve mollusks (e.g. mussels and oysters), which are highly sensitive to microbiological pollutants. There is also a risk of illness or infection from swimming in polluted sea water. The WHO's advice is to avoid swimming in the affected areas. Warning notices have already been erected on the relevant beaches.

## **HEALTH**

### **Medical consumables in Ramallah central store destroyed by fire**

On 20 July, the Ministry of Health's (MoH) central store for medical consumables in Ramallah City was destroyed by fire. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH), supplies amounting to around NIS3 million (or \$850,000) were lost. According to MoH reports, district and hospital pharmacies have sufficient stock for immediate needs; however, they bring forward deliveries of additional consumables, which have been purchased in the recent procurement exercise. The MoH has also requested Care International to cover certain shortages. Investigations concerning the cause of fire and further assessments of estimated losses and their implications are still in process.

### **Impact of fuel shortage on health-related services in the Gaza Strip remains unchanged**

The health sector in the Gaza Strip remains impacted by fuel shortages. Services at the health facilities are affected by periodic power cuts caused by restrictions on fuel, which is also needed to operate emergency generators and vehicles. Out of the 56 MoH clinics operating in the five districts, only 26 have back-up generators, three are out of order due to the lack of spare parts, and eight have no fuel most of the time. The rest of them operate with less than a third of their fuel capacity. In addition, at least eight out of the 44 MoH ambulances were reported not functioning in the period between June throughout mid-July, compared to ten during April and May. On average, all five districts experienced daily electricity cuts of five hours, during which some services such as x-ray, certain laboratory examinations and dental health



services stopped. Hospital laundries and kitchens were also affected and ceased to operate periodically. Other hospital services were disrupted by shortages of spare parts and non-functioning equipment.

## Availability of drugs and medical supplies in the Gaza Strip

There was no tangible change in the availability of drugs at the central drug stores in the Gaza Strip. As of the end of July, the number of drug items at zero level declined to 45 out of 416 essential drug items, compared to 49 items in June, in addition to another 50 drug items with less than three months stock. On the other hand, the number of medical supply items at zero stock increased to 102 in July, compared to 91 in June. The essential medical supply list contains 596 items. Also at the end of July, the number of medical supply items with less than three months stock increased to 157 items compared with 130 items in June.

## FOOD SECURITY

### Availability and prices of basic commodities

Combined with the global increase of prices and the restrictions on movement of people and goods in the oPt, which raises the cost of transportation, prices of food recorded a significant increase in the first semester of 2008: 15% in the Gaza Strip and 9% in the West Bank. The steady increase in prices of food commodities is further threatening the economic resilience of poor households and hence, their ability to meet an adequate and nutritious diet. The market in the Gaza Strip was reported to remain functioning despite sluggish economic resilience. Traders and retailers reported a stagnation in the volume of sales especially in the second half of July, as cash from salaries is being exhausted.

During July, all basic food commodities were available on the market in the oPt. Despite the decrease in the price of wheat flour in July compared to June (from 127 to 122 NIS/50kg), since the beginning of 2008 this price has recorded a remarkable increase of 18% in the Gaza Strip and 12% in the West Bank. Also during July, the prices of rice and milk powder increased by 7.5% and 6% respectively in the Gaza Strip and by 8.3% and 3.4% in the West Bank. There is a shortage of milk powder in some places on the markets of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The high season of sardines in the Gaza Strip ended in July. In this season, two main constraints were faced by fishermen: the prolonged restriction on fishing and the continuous discharge of sewage in the sea. While the sardine catch takes place beyond 12 miles, fishermen were prohibited from venturing out more than six nautical miles from the shore. This restriction has led to fishing young sardines,

leading to a detrimental impact on the marine life cycle. Moreover, the continuous discharge of partially treated and untreated sewage into the sea is affecting the safety of fish consumption, and representing a threat on the ability of providing an alternative and more affordable source of animal protein, compared to high meat prices, to the Gazan population.

## FUNDING

The 2008 Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) Mid-Year Review (MYR) was launched in July 2008. The MYR resulted in a reduction of \$14 million in the total financial requirement compared to the original requirement – from \$462 to \$448 million. The most significant decrease is due to economic recovery and the water and sanitation sectors, which decreased their financial requirements by \$44 million. In contrast, the food sector was revised upward, from \$158 to \$198 million, which is mainly due to the global increase in the food prices contributing to the deterioration in the food security situation in the oPt. The revised CAP is currently 50% funded.

### End Notes

1. Ha'aretz, 8 August 2008.
2. Physicians for Human Rights, Holding Health to Ransom: GSS Interrogation and Extortion of Palestinian Patients at Erez Crossing, August 2008, available at: <http://www.phr.org.il/phr/article.asp?articleid=603&catid=55&pcat=-1&lang=ENG>
3. Ha'aretz, 28 July 2008.
4. In an effort to enhance the system of monitoring access restrictions affecting mobile clinics and health staff providing services in the Seam Zone, especially emergency paramedics (other than the Palestine Red Crescent Society), WHO in cooperation with UNRWA, OCHA and some other local NGOs and INGOs has developed a reporting form to be filled by the relevant staff. The reporting procedure complements the 'Access Incident Tracking Report (ACIS)' used by OCHA.
5. The UN will not use the Bisan Crossing as it is in the far North of the WB. The Mazmouria Crossing has not yet been built. So in practical terms, there are four useable crossings, not six.
6. Faecal Coliform.
7. Faecal Streptococcus
8. The MoH emergency generators were filled with around one third of their fuel capacity.
9. Items at zero level mean a stock of 0-1 month, which is below the security level.

The following UN Agencies, local and international NGOs and organisations participate in sector working groups and regularly provide information to the Humanitarian Monitor: 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), ACF-E, AAA, ACPP, ACAD, and members of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM).