



## OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

## HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT

APRIL 2003

**Commitments made by the Government of Israel to Ms Catherine Bertini, Personal Humanitarian Envoy to the Middle East for the Secretary-General**

*The Humanitarian Monitoring Report is issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It is based on the monthly performance matrices provided to the Task Force on Project Implementation (TFPI) that has provided for discussions with the Government of Israel in relation to the commitments that it made to the Bertini mission. The Humanitarian Monitoring Report draws on information from the Access, Closure and Information System (ACIS) among other data sources, that humanitarian agencies have submitted to OCHA on the incident reporting format. This report will be compiled and distributed on a monthly basis and be available on the website ([www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt](http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt)).*

**I) Context**

On August 7 2002, the Secretary-General appointed Ms. Catherine Bertini as his Personal Humanitarian Envoy to address the emerging humanitarian needs arising from the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict since September 2000. Ms. Bertini was requested to assess the nature and scale of the humanitarian crisis, review needs in light of the ongoing situation, identify appropriate action to address these needs while preventing further deterioration, and to clarify the respective responsibilities of all actors with regard to humanitarian needs.

Ms. Bertini visited the region from August 12-19 2002, travelling to both the West Bank and Gaza and meeting with representatives from both the Government of Israel (GoI) and the Palestinian Authority (PA) along with UN agencies, NGOs, the ICRC and donors. The mission concluded that there is a serious humanitarian crisis that is inextricably linked to the ongoing conflict and specifically to the measures implemented by the GoI to safeguard its citizens from Palestinian attacks.

The introduction of associated security measures including curfews, closures and roadblocks has led to a crisis of access and mobility, instigating a near-collapse of the Palestinian economy while also preventing large part of the Palestinian population from accessing basic services such as health and education. Similarly, humanitarian service providers such as UNRWA and PRCS experienced considerable difficulties in reaching their places of work and were unable to provide all assistance and services required to beneficiaries.

*The Bertini Commitments represent a minimum and specific set of humanitarian standards agreed to by the GoI. The Bertini Commitments are not a substitute for compliance with International Humanitarian Law as laid down in the Fourth Geneva Convention. The maximum waiting period of 30 minutes for an ambulance at a checkpoint, while an improvement on the situation in August 2002, for example, falls short of the intent of provisions of International Humanitarian Law.*

## II) Commitments

Ms. Bertini obtained several commitments from the GoI during the period of the mission that were aimed at improving humanitarian access. The commitments were delivered in the context of health, water, immunities commonly enjoyed by international organisations and fishing rights and were accompanied by quantifiable “benchmarks” allowing for the commitments to be monitored. More specifically:

### **Health:**

- 1.1 Ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at checkpoints
- 1.2 Mechanisms will be set in place to ensure patients seeking critical medical services eg. delivery, dialysis, chemotherapy can quickly pass all checkpoints

### **Water:**

- 2.1 Problems relating to water deliveries in Palestinian towns and villages will be addressed to ensure daily provision of adequate volume can be supplied by Palestinian water tankers

### **International Organisations:**

- 3.1 GoI will fully facilitate the activities of international organisations with particular reference to UNRWA
- 3.2 GoI agreed to review and strengthen the liason arrangements between international agencies and the IDF

### **Additional Commitments:**

*On previous occasions, the GoI has made the following commitments, which were confirmed to the mission:*

- 4.1 Improve the situation at checkpoints including the deployment of more experienced IDF personnel
- 4.2 The fishing zone for Palestinian boats off the Gaza coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles
- 4.3 Enabling olive farmers access to their fields
- 4.4 Increase in shipments at Karni crossing
- 4.5 Increase in the number of permits for Palestinian workers in Israel

Please refer to the matrix attached for the monitoring of the month of April.