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HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT – February 2004

The Humanitarian Monitoring Report is produced monthly by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It draws on information from the Access, Closure and Information System (ACIS), among other data sources that humanitarian agencies have submitted to OCHA. The report is provided to the Task Force on Project Implementation (TFPI) as a basis for discussions with the Government of Israel. It is available on the website (www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt).

I) Context

The report monitors the humanitarian commitments made by the Government of Israel (GOI) to the Bertini mission in August 2002. The UN Secretary-General appointed Ms. Catherine Bertini as his Personal Humanitarian Envoy to address the 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 needs, and to clarify the respective responsibilities of all actors with regard to humanitarian needs.

Her visit to the region from August 12-19 2002, concluded that there were serious humanitarian problems linked to the ongoing conflict and specifically to the measures implemented by the GoI to safeguard its citizens from Palestinian attacks.

These security measures, including curfews, closures and roadblocks, led to a crisis of access and mobility, instigating a drastic decline in the Palestinian economy. A large part of the Palestinian population has difficulty accessing basic services such as health and education. Similarly, humanitarian service providers such as UN agencies, NGOs and Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and Palestinian Ministry of Health ambulances have experienced providing assistance and services to beneficiaries.

II) Commitments**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

Water¹:

- 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 Organizations:

- 3.1 GoI will fully facilitate the activities of international organizations with particular reference to UNRWA
- 3.2 GoI agreed to review and strengthen the liaison 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:

- The fishing zone for Palestinian boats off the Gaza coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles
- Enabling olive farmers access to their fields
- Increase in shipments at Karni crossing
- Increase in the number of permits for Palestinian workers in Israel.

¹ No available data on access of water tankers and maintenance teams during February

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>	<p>1.1. 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.</p> <p>Mechanisms established and Palestinian public informed; Explicit instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders.</p> <p>1.2.1 No more instances of Palestinians seeking critical medical services denied passage at checkpoints reported</p>	<p>West Bank & Gaza: 40 incidents Palestinian ambulance operators reported a total of 40 humanitarian access incidents (compared to 44 incidents in January 2004), in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF.</p> <p>Ambulance Access Denials: Of the 40 incidents reported, 8 included humanitarian access denials. Some of these incidents are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In one incident a young boy is reported to have died after his parents were unable to obtain timely medical attention at the Qalqilya Hospital due to the closure of the Ras Attiya gate which prolonged their journey to the hospital by one hour. <p>Ambulance Delays: 21 documented incidents included delays considerably in excess of the 30-minute limit, up to 4.5 hours.</p> <p>Shooting/Harassment of Ambulance Crews: In February, in 11 incidents crews came under IDF attacks (firing and physically abusing paramedics).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PRCS crews came under fire during their mission to rescue casualties. In Al-Shaout area, one of the PCRS ambulances was subjected to direct gunfire while transporting one of the injuries, causing a second injury to the already injured person, and damaged to the ambulance. - Nablus, 12 February: The EMS station in Nablus was informed by IDF to pick up a sick person at the Shavi Shamron checkpoint. The PRCS ambulance was stopped at the Beit Eba checkpoint gate despite prior coordination. As the ambulance was approaching the gate, the soldiers started stoning it and as the driver got out of the ambulance several soldiers threw eggs towards the ambulance, and threatened the driver with a knife. The ambulance was delayed for 30 minutes before it was finally allowed access to Shafi Shamron checkpoint. 	<p>Most of the incidents happened at the checkpoints around Nablus, and at Abu Houli and at Toffah checkpoints in the Gaza Strip. In addition, numerous flying checkpoints hindered the access of ambulances and medical teams during this month.</p> <p>During IDF military operations in Gaza in Rafah and al Shuja'ia neighbourhood there were a number of instances where ambulances were denied access.</p> <p>Since 17 January, on account of the suicide bombing at Erez in which four IDF soldiers were killed, Israeli authorities have imposed additional restrictions on the MOH ambulances transporting Gaza patients to Israeli and West Bank hospitals. Since that date, all patients have to use the worker's tunnel as well as the accompanying medical crews in order to proceed to the Israeli side and no longer use the VIP track.</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>3.2 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 Israel will improve the situation at checkpoints, including the deployment of more experienced IDF personnel.</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</p>	<p>International relief agencies filed some 87 incident reports² in February 2004 in which the delivery of humanitarian aid and/or movement of relief personnel were obstructed by the IDF and the Israeli Border Police. The majority of reported incidents included delays and disrespect by the IDF of international organisations' mandates, privileges and immunities. In 9 cases (compared to 22 in January) humanitarian access was denied.</p> <p>UNRWA - the largest humanitarian organisations in the oPt – reported 74 incidents³ of delay or denial of passage at IDF checkpoints (compared to 63 incidents reported in January): 64 incidents of delay and 7 incidents in which staff members were denied access. In 2 separate incidents staff members were detained for a short period; in one of these incidents the staff member was handcuffed and beaten. In 1 incident a staff member was fined for travelling in Israel without a Jerusalem ID. The majority of access problems continued at IDF and Border Police checkpoints around Jerusalem, particularly at Gilo checkpoint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 23 February: A number of UNRWA vehicles were denied access to Jerusalem from the Bethlehem area, after the IDF declared Bethlehem a closed military area. - 27 February: At Gilo Checkpoint, Border Police held an UNRWA bus for 90 minutes, threatened to confiscate it and detained a staff member who did not have a permit to be in Jerusalem. The police accused the bus driver of illegally transporting a West Banker with no permit and threatened to arrest him as well. After intervention by UN officials, the staff members and the bus were released. <p>UNRWA operations within Gaza continued to experience several delays and interruptions due to restrictions on movement. These restrictions were enhanced following two suicide attacks, one on 14 February 2004 at the Erez workers crossing and another on the 26 February at the Erez Industrial zone.</p> <p><u>Al Mawasi:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Between 16 and 28 February: UNRWA teachers, health staff and GTC students reported lengthy delays at the Abu Houli junction of between 1 and 1/2 to three hours. The number of field staff and students delayed at the checkpoint in the reported incidents varied from 290 to 480 students 	<p>The most problematic checkpoints were around Jerusalem and in Gaza.</p> <p>The number of denials declined from January.</p> <p>UN staff members continued reporting about IDF not recognizing the UN IDs with insistence of showing the national passports/IDs, or recognizing the liaison done by Liaison Offices in the Districts.</p>
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² These figures apply only to the humanitarian aid organisations that reported incidents at checkpoints to OCHA.

³ These figures apply only to reported incidents involving UNRWA staff traveling in Agency vehicles, which is only a small fraction of UNRWA staff in the West Bank. Most of the staff members use their private or public transportation to report to duty.

	<p>transports for international organisations, in particular UNRWA, WFP and ICRC.</p> <p>3.2.1 Procedures established that provide direct access by international organisations to operational and command structures within the IDF</p>	<p>and the number of vehicles involved at any given time was between 7 and 16 buses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15 - 21 February: On 18 February, Operations Support Officers (OSOs) were unable to facilitate access for UNRWA waste removal truck into Al Mawasi despite prior coordination. <p>Seafa: The Palestinian area continued to be partially open 0700-0900 hours and from 1430-1700 hours for the passage of residents. The area has remained under curfew and partial closure since 09 July 2001.</p> <p>Other UN agencies filed 1 incident in which a staff members were denied access after being harassed by Israeli Border Police.</p> <p>The international NGO humanitarian aid community reported 7 access incidents were staff members were delayed for approximately 45 minutes.</p>	
<p>4. Additional Commitments</p> <p>4.1. The fishing zone for Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles</p>	<p>Extension of fishing zone fully implemented.</p> <p>No arrests or confiscation of fishing boats within the 12 nautical mile zone.</p>	<p>Four separate incidents were reported towards the end of February involving the detention of Palestinian fishermen, and the targeting of fishing boats by IDF gun boats. These incidents occurred in the seas off Deir El Balah and Beit Lahia.</p> <p>Fishing is still not permitted throughout the length of Al Mawasi on the basis of a 6 month exclusion order imposed in October 2003.</p>	<p>The Israeli government is not meeting its commitment to a 12 nm fishing zone.</p>
<p>4.2. An increase in shipments at Karni crossing</p>	<p>Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing.</p>	<p>Karni was closed between 1 and 4 February to coincide with Eid El Adha and then for a further two days on the 9 and 11 February. This compares to January when Karni was open throughout the month, and is reflected in a reduction in imports entering Gaza for February. A total of 4,738 containers were imported for February as compared to 6,826 for January, while in December there were 8,096 containers.</p> <p>The number of containers for export was also noticeably reduced on account of the closure for part of the month. In February, only 1,258 containers departed Gaza for the West Bank, Israel and overseas while the monthly totals for January and December were both in excess of 1,800 units.</p>	<p>February marked the third successive month in which there were marked declines in both imports and exports of commercial goods. A reduction in the volume of imports by nearly one half, and exports by nearly one third between December and February, will detrimentally affect the local economy.</p>
<p>4.3. Increase in the number of work permits for workers in Israel</p>	<p>Quantifiable increase in the number of work permits being made available for workers</p>	<p>In the wake of the suicide attack at Erez on 14 January, security screening was intensified which led to a sharp reduction in the number of workers entering Israel for the latter part of the month. Throughout February the crossing was only closed on 17 February and there was a noticeable increase in the number of workers entering Israel over the course of the month. On 29 February, 10,066 workers</p>	<p>Over the course of February, the number of workers entering Israel and Erez Industrial Estate progressively increased,</p>

	<p>in the West Bank and Gaza to work inside Israel</p>	<p>entered Israel compared to 2,580 on 3 February.</p> <p>Erez Industrial Estate was also closed on 17 February and then in the wake of an attack near the Estate on 26 February remained closed for the rest of the month. A similar pattern was reflected as to the movement of Palestinian workers into Israel, with the numbers increasing on a daily basis from the second half of the month prior to the closure of the Estate from 26 February. On 3 February 1,075 workers entered the Estate compared to 3,321 on 25 February.</p> <p>The number of daily permits issued to workers inside Israel for February was 11,788 compared to 11,943 in January. The number of permits for the Industrial Estate in February was 5,003 compared to 5,022 for January.</p>	<p>following a reduction in numbers in the first half of the month. While the number of workers crossing in February was greater than January, the figure remains well below the numbers crossing daily in December.</p> <p>In the event of continuing attacks against Israeli positions at Erez, it is clear that periods of partial and full closure can be anticipated.</p>
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