



## OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

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## Protection of Civilians Weekly Report - 288

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### Latest Developments since Tuesday, 2 December:

**Gaza Strip:** Nahal Oz fuel line, Kerem Shalom crossing and the Karni conveyor opened today (4 December) after being closed for the previous six days. The opening of these crossings is a positive step although it will have little impact unless they remain open on a regular daily basis. Equally important, in order to prevent a further deterioration of the situation, the list of imports into Gaza must immediately be expanded to include vital spare parts for maintenance and operation of the power plant, water and sanitation utilities and other critical infrastructure and basic services for the civilian population.

**Hebron City:** At the time of going to press, the Israeli security forces began evacuating the Al Rajabi Building settlement in the Israeli-controlled area of the city (H2). Preliminary information indicates that clashes between the Israeli forces and the Israeli settlers are taking place, with injuries. There are reports of attacks in Hebron by groups of Israeli settlers against Palestinian residents and their property.

### Military activity affecting civilians

Israeli military incursions and Palestinian rocket and mortar fire continued throughout the week in the Gaza Strip. During the course of four IDF incursions into the Gaza Strip, two Palestinian boys were killed and six others were injured. The two boys were killed when an IAF aircraft fired a missile towards a group of children. Eight IDF soldiers were injured from Palestinian mortar shelling on the Kissufim and Nahal Oz IDF military bases and Kerem Shalom crossing. Six Qassam rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel.

In the West Bank, 67 IDF search operations were reported with 95 Palestinians arrested. In one notable incident, on 1 December, a 28-year-old Palestinian man, from Balata refugee camp, was ambushed and killed during an Israeli army undercover operation. The man, an Al Aqsa Brigades member, had partial amnesty (under Israeli-PA agreement granted limited freedom of movement within the area) and was unarmed at the time of the shooting (Nablus governorate). In two other incidents in the central West Bank areas, a 60-year-old Palestinian woman from Qalandiya Refugee Camp (Jerusalem) died of stroke during an overnight IDF raid of her house to arrest her two sons. In clashes following her funeral, a 17-year-old boy from Beit Surik in Ramallah was critically injured when shot with live bullets by the IDF at the Qalandiya Checkpoint.

### Sharp increase in Israeli settler violence in the West Bank—Muslim religious sites desecrated

During the reporting period, tension in the H2 area of Hebron further increased in the aftermath of the Israeli High Court decision on 16 November to vacate the settlement of Al Rajabi Building. During the week, an estimated 1400

settler supporters streamed into the H2 area of the city of Hebron. A series of attacks were carried out by the Israeli settlers resulting in the injury of 27 Palestinians, including thirteen children, and a 16-year-old Israeli settler, the burning of two Palestinian cars, extensive damage to Palestinian property and desecration of religious sites.

The north also witnessed a sharp increase in settler violence. Seven incidents of settler violence were reported near Huwwara checkpoint, Burin, Qabalan, Yatma, and As Sawiya villages (Nablus governorate) and Deir Istiya village (Salfit governorate). Extensive damage to Palestinian property and at least 24 vehicles, including a PRC ambulance and three buses, and the burning of nine tonnes of hay were reported. Israeli settlers spray-painted the mosque in As Sawiya village (Nablus governorate) with profane sentences against the Muslim prophet Mohammed.

In the central area of the West Bank, at least five incidents of settler violence and vandalism were reported. Israeli settlers threw stones at Palestinian vehicles, slashed tires of parked Palestinian vehicles, destroyed tens of olive trees, and blocked the main road connecting Jerusalem and Jericho. Two mosques in the Ramallah governorate were vandalized with anti-Islamic graffiti.

**Palestinian attacked in West Jerusalem:** A 31-year-old Palestinian man sustained critical injuries after being stabbed by Israeli youths near the Ultra Orthodox Mea' Sha'arim neighbourhood.

### **Gaza Strip: 1.5 million people continue experiencing electricity cuts**

Despite receiving 437,420 litres of industrial fuel on 26 November, Gaza's power plant was shut down on 30 November for the third time since 5 November for lack of fuel. As local electricity production has come to a halt, the only remaining supplies of electricity in Gaza are coming from Egypt and Israel. Consequently, the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) has stated that most areas of the Gaza strip will see power outage durations of 4 - 12 hours per day. At any given time during the rolling black-outs, more than 65,000 people are completely without electricity.

### **Gaza Crossings: Humanitarian aid and commercial imports severely curtailed- 11 Trucks/day average**

The decline in the number of humanitarian and commercial truckloads allowed into Gaza continued throughout the week. Only 66 truckloads (of which 24 trucks were from humanitarian agencies) were allowed entry into Gaza, constituting an average of only 11 truckloads per day—down from a daily average of 123 trucks per day in October 2008 and 475 per day in May 2007 (before the Hamas takeover of Gaza).

**Depletion of wheat grain in the Gaza Strip:** Due to the closure of the crossings, five of the six Gaza mills have shut down for lack of wheat grain. According to WFP, the average daily needs in Gaza of wheat flour are 450 metric tonnes per day. As of 2 December, the total stock of wheat grain available in the Gaza mills is less than 1,000 Metric tonnes.

**Cooking gas shortage – 30 bread bakeries non-operational:** For the first time since the resumption of violence on 4 November, 130 tonnes of cooking gas were allowed into Gaza on 26 November. This quantity represents less than 2% of Gaza's monthly needs. Hospitals, bakeries and households have resorted to using alternate sources of energy such as Egyptian diesel. Reports of people using flammable objects such as wood and paper for meal preparation are common. More than 30 bread bakeries, mainly in Gaza city and Rafah remain non-operational, and all cooking gas stations/outlets in the Gaza Strip remain closed.

Cooking gas canisters coming through the Rafah tunnels from Egypt are available on the open market; however due to high mark-ups, they are unaffordable for most Gazans.

### **Drinking water- Electricity cuts and lack of backup fuel reserve dramatically affecting supplies**

According to UNICEF, due to lack of fuel and spare parts, 80% of water wells in the Gaza Strip remain partially functional, causing the Gaza city population to have water supply once every four – five days for 4-6 hours. Middle areas have access to water once every two – three days for 6-8 hours, and Khan Younis and Rafah areas have access to water once every one to two days for 4-6 hours.

On 27 November, 18 tonnes of chlorine, used to disinfect water, were allowed into Gaza. This represents only 8% of the Gaza Municipal Water Utility's request of 220 tonnes. Supplies remain low. The shortage increases the risk of outbreak of waterborne diseases such as Cholera and Hepatitis A.

### **Gaza Strip Muslim pilgrims (Hujjaj) denied access**

The Gaza Strip pilgrims found themselves caught in the Palestinian internal divide. Discrepancies between the lists of registered Gaza pilgrims, one prepared by the PA authorities in Ramallah, and the other by the Hamas authorities in Gaza have resulted in the denial of all Gaza pilgrims from making the annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

### **West Bank demonstrations**

Anti-Barrier demonstrations were held in Ni'lin and Bil'in (Ramallah governorate), Jayyus (Qalqiliya governorate) and Ma'sara (Bethlehem governorate) villages. The Israeli army fired tear-gas canisters and rubber-coated metal bullets at demonstrators, resulting in the injury of four Palestinians, including two children, and three international activists. Cases of tear-gas inhalation were reported.

#### *This week at a glance:*

#### **Palestinian – Israeli conflict related casualties**

- Palestinians killed: 2 in Gaza, 1 in West Bank,
- Palestinians injured: 7 in Gaza, 28 in West Bank, 1 in West Jerusalem
  - Of whom 15 are children
- Israelis injured: 8 IDF, 1 Settler
- Internationals injured: 3

**Israeli military search operations: 70 (previous week 80)**

**Palestinians arrested by the IDF: 97 (previous week 65)**

**IDF flying checkpoints: 62 (previous week 60)**