



THE HUMANITARIAN MONITOR

OCTOBER 2009

October Overview

October's events highlight the impact of access restrictions, including restrictions on the use of space, on the ability of Palestinians throughout large areas of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) to meet their basic humanitarian needs.

In the Gaza Strip, while the number of referrals to medical treatment abroad approved by the Palestinian Ministry of Health in October was the highest since the beginning of the year (nearly 1,000), in practice, access to such treatment continues to be hindered by the extremely restrictive opening of the Erez and Rafah crossings by the Israeli and Egyptian authorities respectively. This month, two patients needing emergency care died while waiting to leave Gaza, one through Rafah and another through Erez, bringing the number of such



Farmers exiting area with 12000 olive trees behind the Barrier through Qaffin agricultural gate (Tulkarm governorate) - Olive Harvest, 2009. Photo by Patrick Zoll

cases to 25 in 2009. Over one quarter (25.5 percent) of all permit applications to leave Gaza through Israel were delayed this month by the Israeli authorities (249), and nearly three percent were rejected (28). When a permit is delayed, patients miss their

ISSUES COVERED THIS MONTH

West Bank, including East Jerusalem: Upward trend in direct-conflict casualties continues • Casualties from settler violence remain high; Palestinians attempt to harvest olives amidst settler violence • Demolitions resume in East Jerusalem after six week lull • Movement and access developments • Humanitarian Access in the West Bank

Gaza Strip: Relative calm in Gaza; casualties decrease, but tunnels continued to claim lives • Commodities Import • Winter approaching, ban on entry of essential materials further exacerbates poor living conditions • Fuel Imports • Patient • Referral Abroad • Ongoing addressing the water and sanitation crisis • UNRWA undertaking health assessments to identify possible causes of poor academic performance

Other oPt issues: Save the Children UK releases findings on forced displacement • New report on administrative detention • Consolidated Appeals Process and HRF update

appointment at the health facilities to which they had been referred, and must submit new applications after obtaining a new hospital appointment. The percentage of delayed applications during October, however, reflects a relative improvement compared to the parallel average since January 2008, which stood at 36 percent.

With winter fast approaching, restrictions on the import of construction materials are likely to worsen the already poor living conditions of families living in homes damaged during Israel's "Cast Lead" offensive. The rain-flooded streets of Gaza in the last days of October underscore the risks of winter storms, and highlight the precarious state of sewage and sanitation facilities, some of which may overflow and endanger lives and cause damage to surrounding property. While in the past few months the Israeli authorities have allowed the entry of limited supplies for water and sanitation repair and rehabilitation projects, including eleven truckloads during October, delays in the approval of additional supplies, as well as other difficulties in the coordination process, have significantly slowed down the implementation of these highly needed projects.

In the West Bank, the Israeli authorities continued to implement measures that ease Palestinian movement between most urban centers, including the removal of 13 earthmounds this month, mainly in the Hebron district. At the same time, the impact of restrictions on access to land and on the use of space and natural resources was apparent in October in a variety of situations. Indeed, following a six week lull, this month the Israeli authorities resumed the demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem, where Palestinians suffer from a severe housing crisis stemming from the restrictive planning regime applied by the Israeli authorities to Palestinian areas. A total of 31 people, including 13 children were displaced as a result of October demolitions. While no demolitions occurred in

Area C for the third consecutive month, additional demolition orders to Palestinian communities were distributed.

By the end of the month, the 2009 olive harvest season had largely come to a close due to the extremely poor yield resulting from a combination of the natural cycle and unfavourable weather conditions; in some areas access restrictions imposed by Israeli measures, mainly the Barrier and the associated permit regime and settler related violence exacerbated the problem, despite some mitigating measures implemented by the Israeli authorities.

Access restrictions serve as a constant source of tensions and clashes. The two most prominent causes of injuries in the West Bank in October (nearly 90 percent) were related, in one way or another, to access issues. Half of the Palestinian injuries occurred during clashes in and around Al Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem. While the clashes were immediately triggered by attempts by Israelis to enter the Mosque compound, they were likely exacerbated by tensions over the recent prevention of the majority of the Palestinian Muslim population from accessing the Mosque during the month of Ramadan. In addition, nearly a third of this month's injuries resulted from clashes during the weekly demonstrations in protest of the isolation of agricultural land by the Barrier.

The lack of significant improvement in access, both in Gaza and in the West Bank undermines the ability of Palestinians to meet basic human needs such as protection, shelter, food, water, healthcare. The lifting of the blockade over Gaza, along with the freezing of demolitions and the revocation of the Barrier permit regime in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are essential steps to improving the humanitarian situation and restoring dignity to many Palestinians.

West Bank

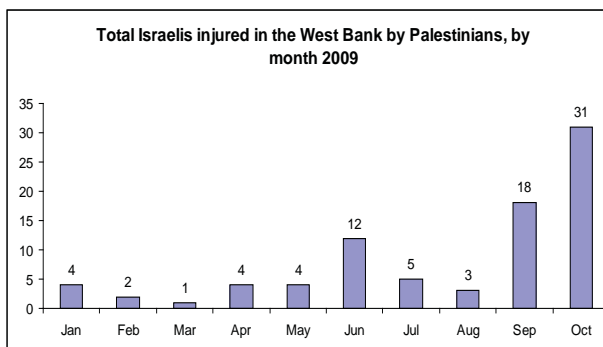
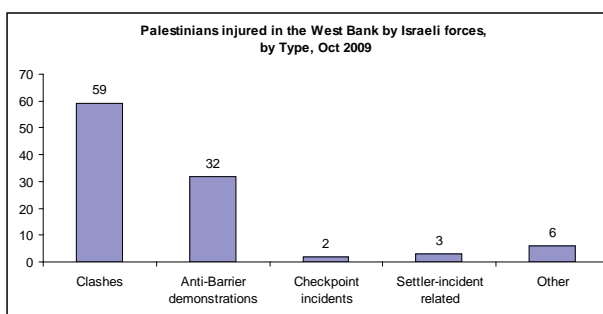
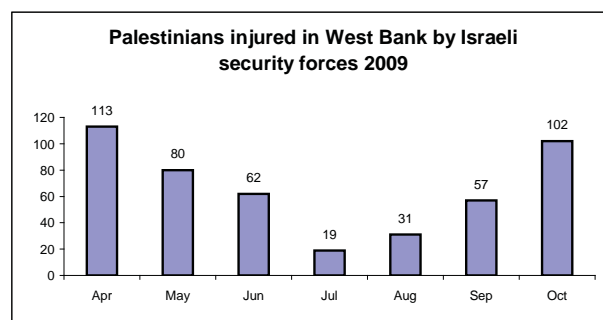
Upward trend in direct-conflict casualties continues

In October, clashes led to the highest levels of Palestinian injuries by Israeli forces since May, and the highest number of conflict-related Israeli injuries in 2009. Although the steady monthly decline in the number of Palestinians injured had ended in August, the period of relatively calm in the West Bank continued through mid-September 2009. This abruptly ended on 27 September, when clashes erupted in the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in the old city of Jerusalem and precipitated confrontations throughout the West Bank. Thereafter, restive conditions in the West Bank continued well into the month of October, during which, 102 Palestinians¹ and 31 Israelis, including 26 members of Israeli security forces and five Israeli settlers were injured, mostly in clashes related to tensions surrounding Al Aqsa mosque compound and anti-Barrier demonstrations.

Sixty-nine (69) of this month's injured, including 51 Palestinians and 18 members of Israeli forces, occurred as a result of confrontations that took place in East Jerusalem on three separate days (4, 9 and 25 October). Following the initial incident on 27 September, clashes again sparked on 4 October when 150-200 Palestinian worshipers barricaded themselves in the Mosque compound after religious and political leaders called on followers to protect the site from Israelis; clashes in and around East Jerusalem commenced, and continued for several days. The situation calmed on 11 October when the Palestinians keeping vigil inside the Mosque were allowed to leave without being arrested. However, after a brief respite, confrontations resumed on 25 October when Jewish clerics called on their followers to perform rituals inside the compound, prompting Muslim leaders to again call on Palestinians to protect Al Aqsa compound.

October's increase in casualties was also due to the increase in injuries during anti-Barrier demonstrations (32 Palestinians and six Israelis),²

which was the highest since May 2009.³ After an unarmed Palestinian demonstrator was killed by Israeli forces in demonstration in Ni'lin village in June 2009, calls by Human Rights organizations and public outcry triggered a change in response tactics by Israeli military police. The use of live ammunition was curtailed, and a change in the manner in which teargas canisters were being used was observed, which led to a general reduction in the number of injuries incurred during demonstrations. However, since then, the increase in the number of Palestinians injured may be due to a number of factors: increasing numbers of demonstrators, increasing demonstration "intensity", and the introduction of different types of weapons used, including new types of tear-gas canisters, and firearms with plastic-coated ammunition.



CONCERNS OVER REPORTED ABUSE AND MISTREATMENT OF ANTI-BARRIER ACTIVISTS

Following a complaint filed by the Israeli human rights organization, Yesh Din, the Israeli authorities arrested on 5 October an IDF soldier suspected of beating the Chair-person of the Bil'in committee against the Barrier during a night time military operation in mid-September in Bil'in village. According to Israeli media reports, the man was later hospitalized for injuries and the Israeli army imposed a gag order on information about the soldier or the investigation.⁴

Also, in October, the Palestinian human rights organization Addameer, reported that an Israeli military court had extended for the third time the detention of a Palestinian human rights and anti-Barrier activist, who was arrested on 22 September 2009 at Allenby Bridge Border Crossing upon return from an advocacy tour abroad. According to Addameer, which is providing legal representation, the activist has been subjected to abusive conditions of interrogation, including interrogation sessions of 10 – 15 hours, abusive language and threats against himself and family members. According to Addameer, on 8 November an Israeli military court extended the anti-Barrier activists detention for another 10 days and has imposed a ban on lawyer visits to the detainee.⁵

In addition to the above casualties, a 17-year-old Palestinian boy from the town of Beit Ummar (Hebron) died this month of wounds sustained by Israeli fire in March 2009. In the aftermath of the boy's funeral (12 October), clashes took place between Israeli forces and Palestinian youths, who threw stones at the troops; during the clashes two Palestinian children were injured when physically assaulted by Israeli forces.

Casualties from settler violence remain high; Palestinians attempt to harvest olives amidst settler violence

OCHA recorded a total of 41 settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians and their property in October, up from 27 in September and above the 2009 monthly average of 29.⁶ The level of Palestinian casualties increased slightly, to a total of 23 injuries, compared to 21 in September. In 2009, on average, thirteen Palestinians⁷ have been injured per month in settler-related incidents.

There were a number of serious incidents involving damage to property during the month, most of which occurred in the context of the olive harvest, which officially began on 11 October. According to IDF reports, ahead of the olive harvest, the Israeli authorities adopted several measures to protect Palestinian farmers from settlers' attacks, including

coordination with Palestinian District Coordination Offices, the mapping of potential conflict areas, the closing of specific areas to settlers, the issuance of expulsion orders from the West Bank to two Israeli settlers for a period of six months, and the deployment of a special Border Police battalions in sensitive areas. As in the previous two years, the Israeli authorities allocated forces to protect Palestinian farmers in "friction areas" in the vicinity of some Israeli settlements, on the basis of prior coordination.

Despite the above mentioned measures, OCHA recorded numerous attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians harvesting their olives and on olive groves. Israeli settlers picked olives belonging to Palestinians, uprooted or damaged a number of olive trees, and harassed olive pickers on the way back from the harvest. For example, in Kafr Qaddum village (Qalqiliya), settlers from the Mitzpe Ami settlement outpost burned 250 olive trees following evacuation of the outpost by the Israeli army and police. This incident came in the context of the "price tag" strategy, where, for every attempt to dismantle a settlement outpost, settlers attack Palestinian communities. According to Israeli media, the Israeli police arrested 13 Israeli settlers after the latter refused to leave the area.

In another incident, a group of 50 - 60 settlers from Ma'ale Levona settlement attacked Palestinian farmers from Sinjil village (Ramallah) en route to pick olives; Israeli forces, which were present in the area, subsequently evacuated the settlers, allowing Palestinians to pick their olives. Similarly, settlers from Adei Ad settlement outpost cut down 55 olive trees belonging to farmers from Al Mughayyir village (Ramallah), after Israeli soldiers arrested two of the settlers for stealing olives belonging to the Palestinian village.

During the month, there were also a number of reported problems related to coordinating access to Palestinian olive groves in the vicinity of Israeli settlements. For example, during the week of 7 – 13 October, Israeli forces denied farmers from the villages of: Al Lubban ash Sharqiya, Sabastya, An Naqura, 'Azmut (Nablus), Kafr Qaddum (Qalqiliya) and Yasuf (Salfit), access to their olive groves next to Eli, Shave Shomoron, Elon Moreh and Kfar Tappuah settlements, due to the lack of prior coordination.

In the southern West Bank, this was the first olive harvest that the permit system was implemented, following the declaration of land between the Barrier and the Green Line as closed (“seam zone”) on January 2009. The Palestinian DCL reported that approximately half of the 420 permit requests submitted by Palestinians to access their olive trees located on land behind the Barrier in the Ithna area (Hebron) were approved by the Israeli authorities.

By the end of the month, the 2009 olive harvest season had largely come to a close, due to the extremely poor yield, which is estimated to be only 10 percent that of a peak season. A small yield was expected this year, given that this is the off-season of the two year cycle; however, the adverse weather conditions earlier this year resulted in this year's yield being exceptionally poor. Consequently, the amount of time that Palestinian farmers needed to spend in the field to harvest was significantly less than in previous years, thus reducing the likelihood of exposure to settler violence and access restrictions.

Also in October, there were a number of other settler violence incidents, not related to the olive harvest. Of note, on 20 October, clashes between Israeli settlers and Palestinians erupted in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem, when the former attacked the tent of the Al Ghawi family, who was evicted from its house in August 2009. As a result, 11 Palestinians were injured and some Palestinian property was damaged. The police subsequently intervened in the incident and arrested five Palestinians and four settlers.

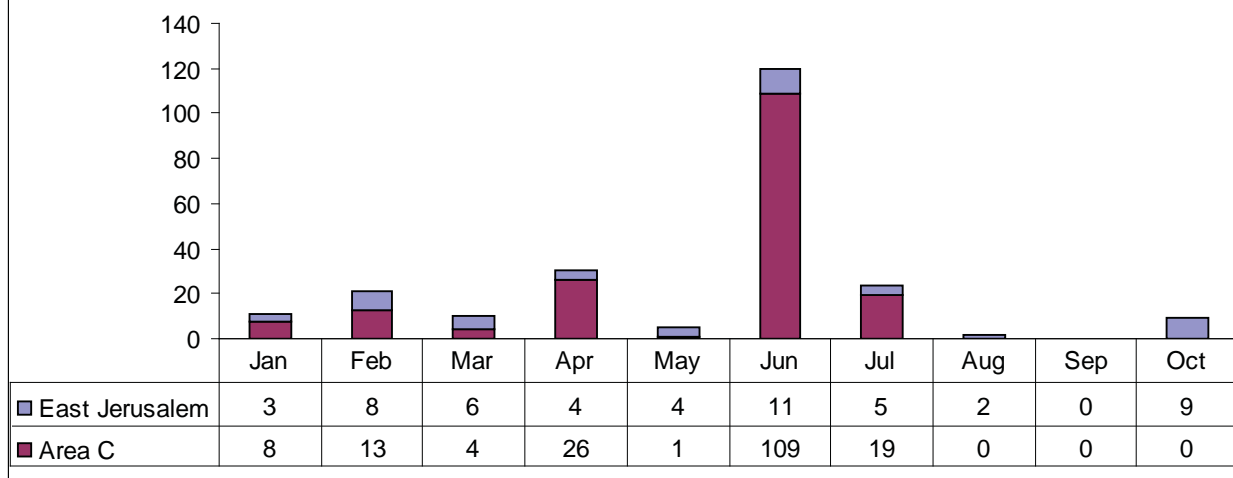
In addition, OCHA recorded 14 incidents of stones (10 incidents) and Molotov cocktails (4 incidents) thrown at Israeli-plated vehicles traveling on West Bank roads in October, resulting in the injury of five Israelis, including one serious injury as a result of a Molotov cocktail, thrown near Al Fawar Refugee Camp (Hebron).

Demolitions resume in East Jerusalem after six week lull; no Area C demolitions for third consecutive month

In October, the Israeli authorities demolished 11 Palestinian-owned structures, including nine residential structures, all in East Jerusalem, displacing 31 Palestinians including 13 children.⁸ In 2009, the Israeli authorities have demolished a total of 237 Palestinian-owned structures, including 57 in East Jerusalem and 180 in Area C. These demolitions have displaced 588 Palestinians. Over half of those displaced (298) have been children.

While Israel has expropriated approximately 35 percent of occupied East Jerusalem for Israeli settlements, only an estimated 13 percent is available Palestinian construction in East Jerusalem, and much of this is built-up already. In those areas where construction is possible, Israeli restrictions on Palestinian planning and development, including bureaucratic requirements and high fees, make it extremely difficult for Palestinian residents to obtain building permits, leaving many families with no choice to meet their housing needs but to build “illegally” and risk demolition of their home. Conservative estimates indicate that as many as

West Bank demolitions - 2009



60,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem may be at risk of having their homes demolished.⁹ During the month, the Israeli daily, *Yedioth Yerushalayim*, reported of a document produced by the Jerusalem Municipality, indicating its intention to implement in the near future 42 pending demolition orders issued against Palestinian-owned buildings and structures in East Jerusalem, as well as 17 demolition orders against Israeli-owned structures.¹⁰

There is increasing concern regarding the possible eviction of additional Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem, particularly in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. On 15 October, the deadline passed for the evacuation of one house, home to a family of five, specified in a previously-issued eviction order. On 31 December 2008, the Jerusalem District Court ruled in favor of a group of Israeli families claiming ownership of the land, on which the house is built. In November 2008, a Palestinian family in the same area was evicted under the same circumstances. Likewise, in early August 2009, 53 people belonging to two families were evicted from their homes in a different quarter of Sheikh Jarrah under these circumstances. In a related development, on 30 October, a group of Israeli settlers attacked a Palestinian family in the Beit Safafa neighborhood of East Jerusalem, injuring four family members, one by a live bullet. The attack took place in the context

of a dispute over land ownership. On 2 November, a group of about 40 Israeli settlers, accompanied by armed guards, took over an uninhabited part of an additional Palestinian house in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. (*See November Humanitarian Monitor for details*)

As has been the case since 25 July 2009, there were no demolitions in Area C during October, however, the Israeli authorities continue to issue demolition and stop work orders for Area C structures. During the month, OCHA received reports that the Israeli authorities' distributed 30 stop work and demolition orders against Palestinian-owned structures, including 21 residential structures, in Area C, due to the lack of building permit. These orders threaten to displace 182 Palestinians, including 91 children. Since the beginning of the year, 319 people, including 167 children, have been displaced following demolition of their structures in Area C. There are over 3,000 outstanding demolition orders affecting Palestinian-owned structures in Area C that can be executed at any given moment.

Also during the month, the Israeli Civil Administration removed irrigation pipes laid down on land belonging to residents of the village of Al Baqa'a in Area C of the Hebron governorate; according to the Israeli Civil Administration,

the pipes were illegally connected to the water network, which supplies water for domestic use to the Hebron area. Clashes that broke out during the operation resulted in the injury of six Palestinians, including five women.

In addition, within the framework of a petition to the High Court of Justice, and an agreement signed between the legal department of the Civil Administration and a Rabbis for Human Rights lawyer representing the community, it was agreed that 20 families from Bir Al Idd, a community of cave dwellers in Area C of southeast Hebron, could go back to their homes and lands as of 28 October 2009. These families were evicted from their homes by the IDF and Israeli settlers, and since then they were prevented to return due to systematic violence by Israeli settlers in 1999-2000. Following the agreed and coordinated return date, some members of the affected families have postponed returning to the area out of fear that they will be attacked by Israeli settlers. Others who did return have suffered settler attacks and harassment including the injury of women herders and the killing of a lamb. The community lawyer continues to coordinate with the Civil Administration and requests that the Israeli army provide adequate protection from settler attack.

Movement and access developments

Additional measures contributing to the easing of Palestinian movement between the main urban centers in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) were implemented by the Israeli authorities during October, including the removal of 12 earthmounds along Road 60 and Road 325 in the Hebron governorate and one earthmound at the main entrance of Azzun village (Qalqiliya).¹¹ These measures follow the removal of 39 earthmounds and roadblocks during September 2009, most of them along the southern section of Road 60, the main north-south traffic artery in the West Bank.¹² As of the end of the month, there were a total of 578 closure obstacles inside the West Bank territory, down from 632 closure obstacles monitored in May 2009, including 69 permanently staffed checkpoints, 21 “partial checkpoints” (staffed at an ad-hoc basis), and 488 unstaffed obstacles.

The Barrier continues to be the single largest obstacle to Palestinian movement inside the West Bank. Following the declaration of new areas behind the Barrier in the central and southern West Bank as “closed military zones” earlier in 2009, this month the Israeli authorities began requesting farmers “visitor permits” to access these areas. Due to the beginning of the olive harvest season that started in October, the Israeli authorities issued additional permits and opened dozens of “seasonal gates” to allow Palestinian access to olive groves behind the Barrier. The productivity of these groves, however, is negatively affected by the lack of access throughout the year, which prevents farmers from carrying out essential activities, such as ploughing, pruning and fertilizing.¹³

In East Jerusalem, the Barrier and its associated permit regime continued to severely limit the access of Palestinians to specialized medical care, university education, work, social and family events and places of worship. Due to the occurrence of Jewish holidays of Yom Kipur and Succot, during the first ten days of the month, the Israeli authorities imposed a general closure on the West Bank, which prevented permit holders from accessing East Jerusalem and Israel, with the exception of international organizations’ employees and humanitarian cases.

Israeli settlements remain the most important factor shaping the system of movement and access restrictions, including the route of the Barrier. During October, the Israeli army extended for another six months military orders (originally issued in 2006) restricting Palestinian movement within the old city of Hebron, where three Israeli settlements were established in the 1980’s. According to the orders, five road segments are “closed military zones” in which Palestinian movement is either totally prohibited or restricted to pedestrians only. The orders do not apply to Israelis, including settlers living in this area.¹⁴

Also this month, the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) ruled on a petition submitted by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), challenging a prohibition on Palestinian use of a segment of Road

3265 in the western Hebron governorate. According to the Israeli army, the prohibition was imposed to protect Israeli settlers living in the nearby settlement outpost of Neghohot, as well as Israeli soldiers, travelling on this road. Approximately 25,000 Palestinians, living in 12 villages along the road, were forced to make a long detour to reach service centres in Hebron and Dura cities. Residents of one village (Fuqeiqis), who depend on this road to reach the nearby town of Beit Awwa, were eligible for a permit to use the road on specific times of the day. In its ruling, the HCJ declared the prohibition illegal and gave the Israeli army three months to make the necessary arrangements before it opens the road for Palestinians. The HCJ found that the harm stemming from this prohibition on the everyday lives of Palestinians living in this area is disproportionate, compared to the relevant security considerations. The decision, however, does not address ACRI's argument that the prohibition is also illegal because it discriminates between the residents of an area on the basis of their national origin.

Gaza Strip

Relative calm in Gaza; casualties decrease, but tunnels continued to claim lives

This month saw a decline in the level of Israeli-Palestinian violence compared to the previous month. Throughout October, Israeli forces injured six Palestinians compared to eight killed and 18 others injured in September. Four of the reported injuries occurred in one incident, when an Israeli air strike bombarded tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border on 14 October. In addition, one man died of wounds sustained during Israel's "Cast Lead" offensive. The number of rudimentary rockets and mortar shells fired by Palestinian factions from Gaza remained relatively low and, as in previous months, resulted in no Israeli casualty or damage to property. Since the implementation of the "Cast Lead" ceasefires on 18 January 2009, a total of 51

Humanitarian Access in the West Bank

Access restrictions, particularly at Israeli Barrier checkpoints, continue to hinder UN operations in the West Bank. In October 2009, UN staff members reported a 38 percent increase in access incidents, compared to September (80 vs. 50 incidents previously). As a result, the UN lost 701 staff hours or the equivalent of 93 UN staff days—39 percent less compared with September.

The majority (55 percent) of reported UN access delays or denials were a result of Israeli forces demands to perform an internal search on UN vehicles. While outside visual inspections are regularly conducted by Israeli forces staffing checkpoints, Israeli checkpoint personnel often insist on invasive car searches, unless a diplomat is present in the vehicle. According to the United Nations Convention on Privileges and Immunities (1946), UN property and assets are immune from search and, as such, UN staff are instructed not to allow vehicle searches.

In the first half of 2009, there have been 542 access incidents, which have resulted in 3,331 lost staff hours. This is roughly equal to the figures for the first half of 2008.

Palestinians and one Israeli have been killed and another 121 Palestinians and seven Israelis have been injured in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Gaza and southern Israel.

The Israeli military has continued to enforce the access prohibition to a 300-metre-wide strip of land¹⁵ along the border fence and to open fire towards Palestinians who approach that area. In two separate incidents during October, Israeli forces stationed at the border shot and injured two Palestinians, one of whom was a 16-year-old boy and the other was mentally handicapped man, both in Beit Lahiya. On at least ten occasions during the month, Israeli forces entered with tanks and bulldozers a few hundreds into the restricted area along the border and performed land leveling operations, forcing Palestinian farmers to leave their agricultural land.

Israeli naval forces also continued to prohibit the access of Palestinian fishing boats beyond three nautical miles from the seashore, through opening warning fire towards the boats, forcing them ashore.

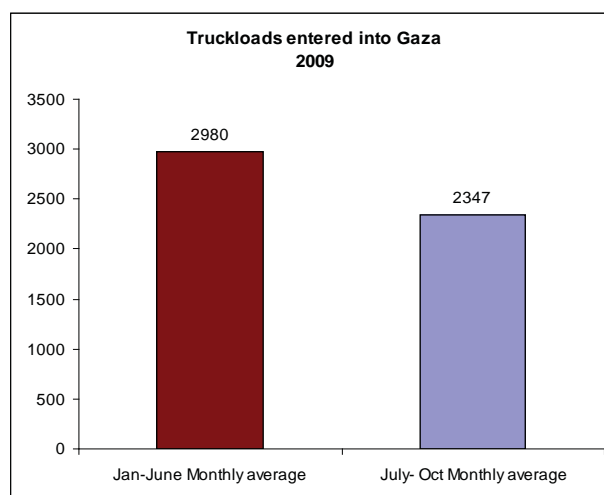
Additional Palestinian casualties, however, were also recorded in other tunnel-related incidents: a total of four people were killed and 17 others injured while working inside the tunnels as a result of tunnel collapses or from electrocution. Tunnel activity has increased gradually since the onset of the Israeli blockade on Gaza in June 2007, in order to compensate for the loss of access to goods previously entered through the official crossings; almost all goods are reportedly transferred through the tunnels, though some are too expensive for the majority of the population.

Also this month, on 6 October, Israeli forces fired seven tank shells near the Ash-Shuhada Boys Secondary School in Gaza City, one of which made direct impact; no students were present. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education, this is the fourth time that Israeli forces have hit this school since the “Cast Lead” offensive (the sixth time since 2004), during which five of the school’s students were killed. The school is located less than 1.5 kilometres from the Gaza border fence, in the closest built-up area in Gaza to the border.

Commodities Import

A total of 2,364 truckloads of goods were allowed entry to Gaza in October. Food supplies and cleaning materials made up the highest portion of imports (92 percent), with the remaining truckloads consisting of fuel supplies, including cooking gas but excluding industrial fuel delivered to Gaza’s power plant (three percent), agricultural raw materials (three percent), and other items (two percent).

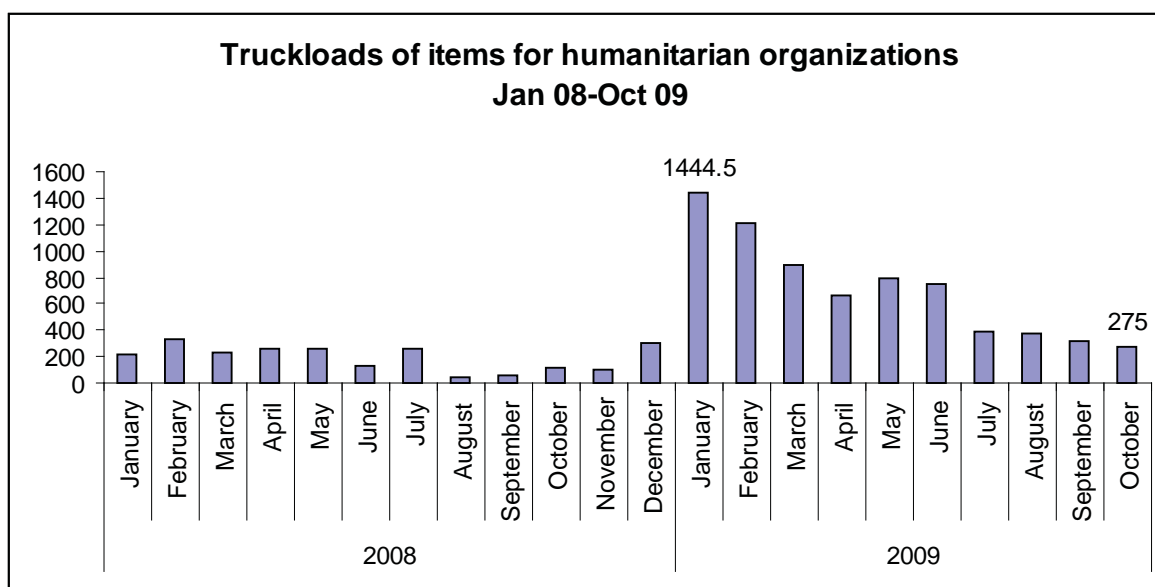
Although the number of truckloads that entered Gaza was up by almost eight percent from the previous month, it was not enough to offset the general decline in the amount of goods entering Gaza through the crossings—from July to October, the average amount of goods entering per month fell



by approximately 21 per cent in comparison with the monthly average of the first six months of 2009. Factors contributing to this decrease may include the change in Kerem Shalom’s scheduled days of operations, which since July has operated five days per week instead of six, increasing supplies entering through the tunnels which in turn may have also affected demand for goods from the crossings, and market saturation of the limited number of items that are allowed through the crossings.

This month, eleven truckloads of supplies designated for water projects were allowed into Gaza, including plastic pipes (four truckloads), cement (two trucks), tar (one truck) and water desalination devices (four trucks). Previous shipment of limited number of truckloads carrying materials needed for water and sanitation projects entered in April and in early August 2009. (See also water and sanitation section below)

The number of truckloads designated for humanitarian aid organizations that entered this month continued to decrease for the fifth consecutive month (see graph - page 10). However, the monthly average of humanitarian truckloads since the beginning of the decline (July-Oct 2009) is 78 percent higher than 2008 monthly average (343 vs. 193 truckloads). In other words, the recent decrease is relative to the high levels of humanitarian aid that entered Gaza in the first six months of the year—during and in the aftermath of the Cast Lead offensive.



Winter approaching, ban on entry of essential materials further exacerbates poor living conditions

Almost ten months following the end of the Israel's "Cast Lead" offensive in Gaza, no reconstruction or major repairs of houses destroyed or damaged during the operation have occurred, due to the continued ban on entry of construction materials into the Gaza Strip. According to a joint UNDP-UNRWA survey, more than 6,000 houses were totally destroyed or sustained severe damage during the last offensive.¹⁶

The situation is growing worse due to the upcoming winter season. Heavy rains, which flooded the streets over the last days of October, exacerbated the difficult living conditions of some families whose houses were destroyed during the Israeli offensive. The worst affected—those who continue to live in tents inside or nearby the remains of their severely damaged homes, are estimated by the Shelter Cluster at over 100 families. There is also concern that heavy winter rain, electricity

shortages and poorly functioning pumps could cause sewage treatment plants to overflow, causing significant damage to surrounding property and the contamination of water resources. In a press release issued on 26 October, the Director of Operations in Gaza for the UNRWA, John Ging, called for an immediate opening of all Gaza border crossings before winter.

In addition, the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) warned that electricity supply to some areas may falter during the winter season due to the fragility of power networks that sustained damage during the Israeli offensive. Components of these networks have not been repaired or replaced due to the current import restrictions. When power outages occur, they cover an entire area, including public services facilities located in that area, such as water and sanitation, health, and education facilities. In addition to damaged networks, scheduled rolling power outages occur throughout the Gaza Strip, primarily due to limited supplies of industrial fuel allowed entry.¹⁷

On 9, November 2009, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, Maxwell Gaylard and the Association for International Development Agencies (AIDA), called for the immediate opening of crossings into the Gaza Strip to enable Palestinian communities and families to prepare for the coming winter and rainy season, and called upon the Government of Israel to facilitate the entry of construction and repair materials, adequate supplies of industrial fuel for electricity generation, and essential items for water and sanitation systems. "The people of Gaza share with everyone else the right to dignified lives, free of indiscriminate and prolonged suffering. They should not be subjected to this continuation of collective punishment brought on by the blockade", said Mr. Gaylard.

A number of ongoing programmes continue to be implemented to lessen the impact of damages incurred during “Cast Lead.” These programmes mainly include cash assistance and rubble removal activities. The former is provided for those whose homes were destroyed (USD 5,000) or damaged (USD 3,000), enabling families to cover some of the rental costs and living expenses while reconstruction and repair activities are being completed. The UNDP-led rubble removal activities, which commenced in July are expected to last for a period of one year; so far the rubble of 499 damaged housing units (490) and nine public buildings has been removed—over 140,000 tonnes of concrete and non-concrete debris. In addition, 83 unexploded ordnance (UXO) have been cleared from over 200 at-risk sites.

Fuel Imports

This month, the newly installed fuel pipelines at Kerem Shalom began operation, and 1,739 tons of cooking gas, along with close to 2 million liters of industrial fuel, were transferred into Gaza. In October, the amount of cooking gas and industrial fuel that entered via Kerem Shalom and Nahal Oz crossings combined declined by 32 percent and 33 percent, respectively, compared to fuel imports of the previous month.

Although there are some reports of containers of cooking gas entering through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border, the amount is negligible as there are no cooking gas pipelines. Current supply through the official crossings does not meet the market demand, forcing most cooking gas stations

throughout Gaza (a total of 28) to operate only 1-2 days a week due to lack of stock, and 25 bakeries in Gaza have been reportedly forced switched to alternative fuels. According to the Petroleum Distributors Association (PDA), there are serious concerns that the shifting of the transferring site from Nahal Oz to Kerem Shalom crossing will further exacerbate current shortages.

Although 36,500 liters of petrol for the private sector entered via Nahal Oz fuel pipelines, Gaza still largely depends on fuel being transferred from Egypt through the tunnels below the Rafah-Egypt border—nearly 100,000 liters of diesel and 100,000 liters of petrol is transferred daily into Gaza. While Israel is willing to allow nearly 75,000 liters of petrol and 800,000 liters of diesel per week, local companies made no delivery requests during October, as the price of Israeli petrol remains twice the price of Egyptian petrol (5.90NIS/lit vs. 2.70NIS/lit).

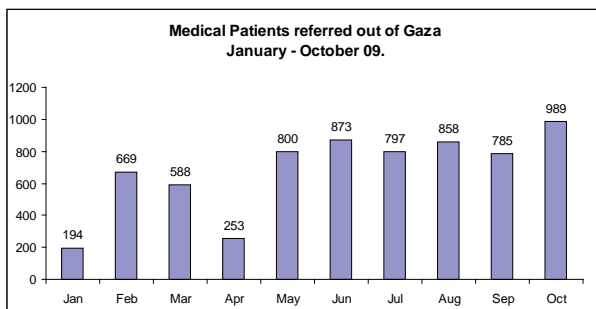
Patient Referral Abroad

The Palestinian Referral Abroad Department (RAD) approved 989 referrals in October¹⁸. The October referrals were distributed as follows: 19.2 % of patients were referred to West Bank facilities, 31.2 % to East Jerusalem, 27.6% to Egypt; 4 % Jordan, and 17.7 % to Israeli hospitals. Notably, 40% of all cardiovascular, oncology, orthopaedics and ophthalmology treatments referred to facilities in within Israel, amounting to 61 % of the total cost for treatment abroad for the month.

TWO PATIENTS DIE WHILE WAITING TO EXIT GAZA

S.A., 59 years old, was suffering from acute myocardial infarction, and was referred to Egypt for treatment. On 15 February 2009 he underwent open heart surgery at Nasser Institute in Egypt. Two months later, his health further deteriorated, and he needed a pacemaker implant. On 11 August, the RAD referred him for treatment abroad, as this procedure is unavailable in the Gaza Strip. As Rafah border is normally closed, opening only sporadically, the patient was unable to enter Egypt; the patient also repeatedly tried to change the referral to an Israeli hospital, but his request was denied by the RAD. The patient died on the 28 October 09.

T.A., 16 years old, was admitted to Shifa Hospital with cancer in the blood on the 8 October. His physician diagnosed his case as critical, and emergency advanced treatment was urgently needed. It took three days to process his documents for urgent referral to Tel Hashomer Hospital in Israel. On 12 October, the patient died within half an hour of receiving a response.



The Israeli District Liaison Office for Erez Crossing processed 974 applications for permits to cross Erez during October, compared to 693 in September, 71.4% of referrals were approved, 2.9 % denied and 25.5 % delayed. Of those delayed, 83 of the patients were asked to be interviewed by the Israeli General Security Services (GSS) before approving their application, 51 did not go to the interview, 29 were asked to submit new applications, one male was approved after the interview. The percentage of delayed applications during October has improved in comparison with the average of delayed from January 08 – September 09 (36 percent).

All of the delayed patients missed their dates of appointment at the health facilities to which they had been referred, and must submit new permit applications to cross Erez, after obtaining a new hospital appointment.

Two patients needing emergency care died this month, one while waiting for Rafah crossing to open to access the medical facility to which he had been referred, and the other while waiting for his application to be processed for treatment in Israel. (See box) So far in 2009, 25 patients have died while waiting to exit Gaza for treatment.

Ongoing projects addressing the water and sanitation crisis

The limited availability of building resources, spare parts, and fuel has prevented, since the imposition of the Israeli blockade in June 2007, the adequate operation and maintenance of the water and sanitation infrastructure in Gaza creating a significant public health and environmental hazard. The decline of the system is reflected in the limited capacity of Gaza's wastewater utility to properly

treat the volume of sewage produced, forcing it to discharge as much as 80 million liters of raw and partially treated sewage into the environment. This practice has resulted in further deterioration of the already low quality of the water supplied for domestic consumption from the underground aquifer, due to sewage infiltration. The main factor affecting the water quality in Gaza is the increase in saline levels of the aquifer due to over-extraction.

Despite the enormous difficulties stemming from the blockade, there are currently a number of water and sanitation projects at various implementation stages, which are aimed at partially addressing the ongoing crisis. While the Israeli authorities have expressed support for these projects and allowed the entry of some of the required materials, implementation has been undermined due prolonged delays in the clearance of these imports and other difficulties in the process of coordination with these authorities. The main projects include:

- The construction of an emergency wastewater treatment plant in northern Gaza, funded by the World Bank. Once complete, the plant will be able to treat the sewage of more than 500,000 people and filter the treated effluent back into the aquifer. While works are ongoing, the pace is severely affected by the shortage of critical materials;
- The upgrade of one treatment plant in Gaza City (Sheikh Ajleen), funded by Germany. This plant was originally designed to treat 32 million liters of sewage per day, however it actually treats 50-60 million liters. The upgrade will ensure that the wastewater entering the plant is treated to a sufficient standard, as to avoid the current pollution of the sea and aquifer. After repeated delays, works are scheduled to begin in early 2010.
- The construction of two wastewater treatment plants in Khan Younis and Rafah by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The plant in Khan Younis is about to be complete by the end of 2009. Due to the restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities, the majority of the materials for these projects had to be procured locally (mostly recycled materials).

- The installation of three desalination plants aimed at improving the quality of water for drinking purposes. Two of these plants, brought to Gaza by UNICEF after a delay of over two years, were installed in Rafah and Khan Younis and are expected to be operational during December 2009. Each of them will serve a population of about 15,000 people. The third, brought by an Italian NGO (GVC), was installed in Al Bureij refugee camp and is already operational benefiting some 10,000 people.

UNRWA undertaking health assessments to identify possible causes of poor academic performance

Recent test results have raised serious concerns regarding the education of Gaza students. During the 2008 – 2009 academic year, 14,000 students, out of a total of 207,000 students in 228

UNRWA schools, failed in all subjects. As part of the Schools of Excellence program, UNRWA has taken a number of actions to improve educational standards over the last few years. This has included the introduction of comprehensive health assessments targeting the students who underperformed in the unified testing of the second semester of the 2008/2009 school year and who also failed in UNRWA's Summer Learning programme.

Under the new initiative, all students who failed all subjects will undergo comprehensive health assessments by specialized teams comprised of a pediatrician, a general practitioner, an optometrist, an audiologist, a practical nurse and a lab technician. The assessments are done to identify of low academic achievement. During the months of September and October, a total of 1,900 children were assessed and the most common primary health issues identified, is malnutrition, commonly short stature, underweight, anemia and illnesses related to urinary tract infection.

OPT-wide issues

	September 2009	October 2009
Palestinian children killed	1	0
Israeli children killed	0	0
Palestinian children injured	8	30
Israeli children injured	0	0
Palestinian children displaced from home demolitions	0	13
Palestinian children in Israeli prisons	326	325

The survey's findings indicated that those living in high risk areas are significantly poorer and less protected than families elsewhere in the oPt. They live in poorer housing conditions and have less access to food, water and basic services compared with the general population of the oPt. In addition, depression rates among the population in high risk communities are higher than among the general population and available coping mechanisms are dwindling or have largely been exhausted.

Save the Children UK releases findings of its research on forced displacement

Save the Children UK released the findings of a research study²⁰ that examines conditions for families living in areas identified as being at high risk for displacement in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). The study is based on a household level survey conducted in June 2009, comparing conditions in the high risk areas of Area C in the West Bank, the "no-go zone", and extended "buffer zone" in Gaza, with randomly selected locations elsewhere in the West Bank and Gaza.²¹

Nearly half of those surveyed in high risk areas said that they had changed their place of residence either permanently or temporarily at least once since the year 2000, significantly higher than the 15 percent among respondents from the general population in the oPt. Home demolition was identified as the most common reason for displacement (41 percent). In addition, in both the West Bank and Gaza, loss of income and sources of livelihoods was also a common phenomenon experienced by displaced families; approximately 38 percent of the respondents in high risk areas who reported losing

their jobs said that they had changed their place of residence. In addition, lack of physical security is a major concern: while 61 percent of the general sample respondents said that they feel secure, just 17 percent of respondents living in high risk areas (9 percent in Gaza, 23 percent in the West Bank) reported that they feel physically safe and secure—the main reasons given were related to Israel's occupation.

Regardless of the reason for their displacement, the study indicates that families who have been displaced fare significantly worse in terms of living conditions, socio-economic impacts and psychosocial well-being than they did before their displacement. Sixty-eight percent of those displaced in high risk areas of the West Bank and 38 percent in Gaza were displaced for more than one year. Despite the vulnerabilities and fears associated with life in high risk areas, 78% of those who had been displaced wish to return to their homes.

Finally, although humanitarian assistance appears to be reaching those in need in Gaza, more than half of households surveyed in high risk areas in the West Bank said that humanitarian assistance from local and international organizations was not available to them, despite deteriorating socio-economic conditions and less access to services following displacement.

New report on administrative detention

Two Israeli human rights organizations, B'Tselem and Hamoked, released this month an 80-page report documenting the practice by the Israeli authorities of detaining Palestinians in the oPt for prolonged periods of time without prosecuting them. This practice denies the right of detainees to a due process, including their right to know why they are detained, when they will go free and what evidence exists against them, as well as their right to try and refute such evidence.

In the West Bank this practice is carried out following administrative-detention orders issued by IDF Central Command. The grounds given are that the person endangers the “security of the region” and that the danger cannot be prevented by

other means. As of 30 September 2009, there were 335 Palestinians under administrative detention, of whom some 37 percent have been held for six months to one year and almost 33 percent for one to two years. By contrast, Palestinians from the Gaza Strip can be held in detention without trial under the “Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law”, passed by the Israeli Parliament on 2002, with original aim of holding Lebanese nationals classified as “bargaining chips” for the exchange of prisoners of war and bodies. The Law defines an “unlawful combatant” as a person who is not entitled to the status of prisoner of war and belongs to a force carrying out hostilities against the State of Israel. By the end of September Israeli was holding nine Gazans as “unlawful combatants”.

The organizations call on the Government of Israel to release the administrative detainees or prosecute them in accord with the due-process standards set forth in international law, and to repeal the “Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law”.

Consolidated Appeals Process and HRF update

As of 17 November, funding for the revised CAP 2009 stands at approximately 70 percent, with a total of USD 522.8 million of the USD 804.5 million requested already received. Gaza projects, including a few joint projects shared with the West Bank, have received a total of USD 361 million. The largest sector, food, approximately one-third of the CAP's financial requirements, has now received USD 149.7 million of the USD 256.3 million requested. Economic recovery, coordination and support, and education and health sectors are all over 40 percent funded.

In October, two projects were funded with a total funding of USD 375,000. The first project was in the WASH sector and was funded by the Polish Humanitarian organization. The project aims at eliminating sewage infiltration to the water supply system and groundwater to improve public health, quality of life and the environment of El Sater area. The records of both Coastal Municipalities Water

Utility (CMWU) and Municipality of Khan Younis have many cases of water contamination in the area, which has inadequate wastewater collection and discharging systems; sewage flooding and leakages to the existing water supply system and groundwater is common, and, as a result, the population is at risk of exposure to water-borne diseases.

The second project was for Relief International-UK. This is the first project funded in the agricultural sector through HRF, and aims to address agricultural rehabilitation needs and assist farmers and their families whose productive assets, including land and crops, have been destroyed from the last "Cast lead" operation. The primary objective is to assist poor farming families develop sustainable livelihoods.

Endnotes

To date the HRF has funded 37 projects in various sectors with a total funding of USD 5,477,934.

1. In addition, 23 Palestinians were injured by Israeli settlers in the West Bank
2. One additional Israeli activist was injured by Israeli forces on 2 October 2009
3. October had the highest number of Palestinians injured in anti-Barrier demonstrations since May 2009, when 53 Palestinians were injured. From June – September 2009, the average number of Palestinians injured during anti-Barrier demonstrations was 10 injuries per month.
4. Amira Hass, "Soldier arrested for beating Bil'in Man," *Ha'aretz*, 9 October 2009.
5. See the Joint Statements of Addameer and the "Stop the Wall" campaign, "Update on the arrest of human rights defender and activist Mohammad Othman," 20 October 2009 and 9 November 2009.
6. This is reference to the frequency of reported incidents. It is not a indicative of the gravity of an incident, or level of violence.
7. This figure does not include the number of Palestinians injured by Israeli military or police forces during Israeli-settler related incidents. It only includes Palestinians injured by Israeli-settlers.
8. During the reporting period, the Jerusalem municipality demolished two Palestinian-owned structures, including a residence and an animal pen, in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Beit Hanina, due to the lack of permit. As a result, a family of five members, including three children, was displaced. Also in Beit Hanina, foundations of two buildings under construction were damaged; one of the structures was intended to provide eight large housing units. On 27 October, the Jerusalem Municipality demolished three buildings in the East Jerusalem neighborhoods of Anata, Sur Bahir and Jabal al Mukkafir. As a result, six families, comprising 26 people, including ten children, were displaced. In addition, two families comprising 19 people, including eight children, were affected by the partial demolitions of their houses in Jabal al Mukabbir on the same day. In addition, Palestinian owners self-demolished two structures, including one residential structure, following receipt of demolition orders from the Israeli authorities.
9. See OCHA oPt, "The Planning Crisis in East Jerusalem: Understanding the Phenomenon of "Illegal" Construction," April 2009.
10. Yekutiel Tzafri and Tzippi Malkov, "Forecast: International Storm," *Yedioth Yerushalayim*, 23 October 2009, p. C16.
11. The earthmound was installed on August 2009 following a series of stone-throwing incidents at Israeli-plated vehicles traveling on Road 55, next to the village, and impeded access for over 15,000 people from three villages to Qalqiliya City, the main service centre in this area. Its removal occurred after the Palestinian police increased their presence in the area. Another earthmound obstructing movement between Azzun and Kafr Thulth villages, as well as a fence along a section of Road 55 next to Azzun, remain in place.
12. Prior to these removals the Israeli Civil Administration announced the upcoming removal of 100 obstacles, of which OCHA was able to confirm only 39.
13. For further information on the impact of Barrier restrictions on agriculture see, OCHA, *Five Years*

after the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion: A Summary of the Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier, August 2009.

14. According to B'Tselem and ACRI, between 2000 and 2006 more than 40 percent of Palestinian apartments in the City Center had been vacated and over 75 percent of Palestinian businesses had closed due a combination of settler harassment and restrictions on their freedom of movement. See, *Ghost Town: Israel's Separation Policy and Foced Eviction of Palestinians from the Center of Hebron*, May 2007
15. While Israel ha dropped thousands of leaflets over parts of Gaza explicitly warning to maintain a distance of at least 300 meters from the border with Israel, Gazans have on occasion been targeted in agricultural areas as far as 1,000 meters from the border.
16. 52900 homes incurred minor damages
17. On average, only 70 % of the industrial fuel requirement for operation of the Gaza Power

Plant enters Gaza.

18. In addition, 165 patients were referred in September and 177 patients were referred in October to NGO-run medical facilities inside Gaza.
19. One additional Palestinian child died as result of an IDF vehicle collision.
20. In June 2009, Save the Children UK conducted a household level survey through Near East Consulting (NEC) in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) and Gaza. The survey included 1,529 individuals in randomly selected locations throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Of these, a total of 472 random interviews were conducted in areas identified as high risk in Area C of the West Bank and locations near or within the Gaza buffer zone.
21. Of a total of 1,529 interviews, a total of 472 random interviews were conducted in high risk areas.

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

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), Campaign for the Right to Enter, ACF-E, AAA, ACPP, ACAD, and members of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM).

MORE INFORMATION: Omar Abulhaj, abulhaj@un.org, +972 (0)2 5829962