

# Humanitarian Update

9 – 18 December 2002

## occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)

20 December 2002

OCHA oPt,  
[www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt](http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt)  
Phone/Fax +972 2 589 0459  
[hic9.opt@wavenet.unog.ch](mailto:hic9.opt@wavenet.unog.ch)  
c/o UNRWA, West Bank  
PO Box 19149 Jerusalem

# OCHA

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### Overview

The newly-established Humanitarian and Emergency Policy Group (HEPG) in the oPt (EU/EC Chair: Norway/UNSCO; vice-chair: USAID/US/World Bank) held its inaugural meeting on Thursday 12 December. The objectives of the HEPG are to develop and update a coherent donor strategy for the current emergency and consider relevant policy options. The HEPG will report to the Local Aid Coordinating Committee (LACC) members on its findings and will meet fortnightly.

UNRWA held a memorial at its West Bank field office on 13 December, in memory of the UNRWA staff who have lost their lives during the current conflict. In all, six UNRWA staff members have been killed by the IDF in 2002. Two staff members were shot on duty: Kamal Salem while driving in a well lit and marked UN ambulance in Tulkarm; and Iain Hook who was inside the UNRWA compound in Jenin refugee camp. In a meeting with Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz in New York on 16 December, the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan reiterated that he expected a thorough investigation of Mr. Hook's killing from the Israeli government, and that the United Nations would be provided with a written report. A draft UN Security Council resolution sponsored by Syria, which condemned recent Israeli actions in the oPt, including the killings of UN staff, was defeated on 20 December by the United States casting a no vote and effectively vetoing the text. Twelve countries voted in favour and two abstained.

Pope John Paul II made an appeal on 12 December for free access to Bethlehem during the upcoming Christmas celebrations. The IDF have reported that if the security situation permits they will position their forces in Bethlehem in a manner that allows religious ceremonies celebrating Christmas to take place. The IDF will make its decision in the coming week.

The World Bank approved, on 17 December, US\$ 45 million in grants for two projects aimed at delivering essential social and municipal services to Palestinians in the oPt. US\$ 25 million will finance equipment, supplies and contracts essential for the continued delivery of basic health, education and welfare services, while US\$ 20 million will be used to sustain solid waste collection, electricity, water and wastewater services.

Israel's Coordinator in the Palestinian territories, General Amos Gilad, has told donors he will compensate the UN World Food Program (WFP) for the loss of the food that was destroyed when the IDF demolished a WFP warehouse in Gaza on 30 November. The modalities of the compensation are still being discussed and it is still not yet clear whether the compensation will be in cash or in kind.

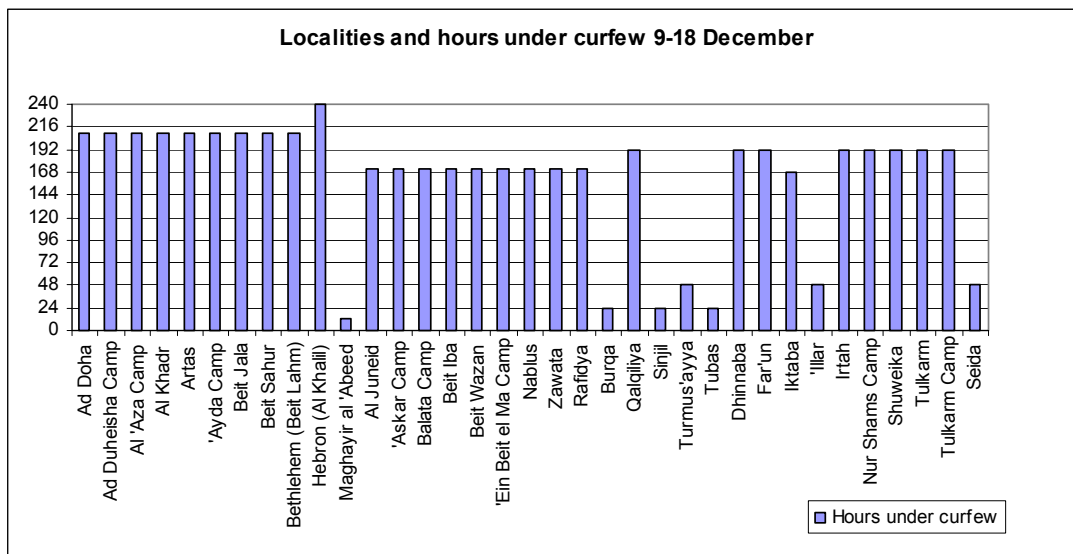
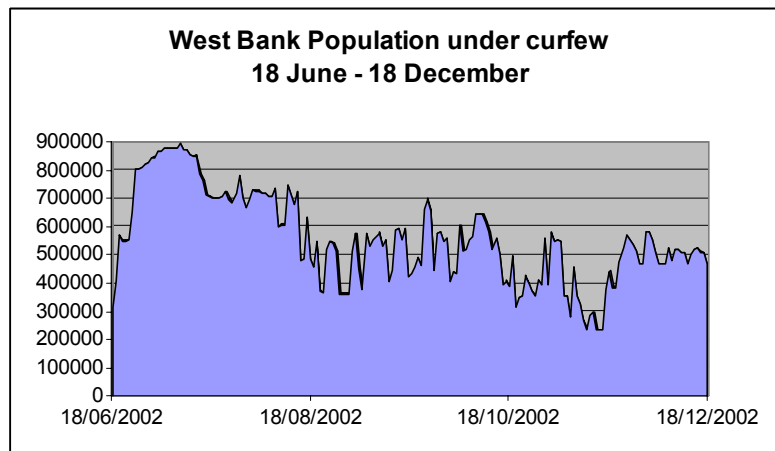
**Statistical Update**  
*Total children killed (under 18 years old):* 450 children, including 367 Palestinians; 82 Israelis; and one foreigner (Defence for Children International – Palestine Section and B'Tselem);  
*Total Palestinian children injured:* More than 8,000 (estimate only) children (Defence for Children International – Palestine Section).  
  
 Note: In February 2002, B'tselem ended its collection of information on injured Israelis. As such, no reliable, independent source exists that provides statistics on injured

Palestinian child deaths are on the increase, according to UNICEF. Since 29 September 2000, more than 450 children under the age of 18 have been killed, including 367 Palestinians, 82 Israelis and 1 foreigner. In 2002, more than 175 Palestinian children were killed in comparison to 98 in 2001. On average, 13 Palestinian children are now killed every month. This significant increase in child deaths, especially in Jenin, Nablus and Rafah, coincides with the beginning of the IDF's operation "Determined Path" in June 2002. Since June at least 92 children have been killed by the IDF.

### Curfews & Closure

The curfew regime in the West Bank has now lasted for six months. In total some 1,052,000 Palestinians in 169 localities have been affected, some for only 48 hours and others (e.g. Nablus) for six months continuously.

During this reporting period (9-18 December) curfews were imposed on 35 localities and 541,455 people. The duration under curfew varied from 24 hours to 240 hours out of a possible 240 hours in ten days. On average some 29 localities and 502,300 people were under daily curfew. In addition to the imposed curfews, which in most places were intermittent, movement continued to be restricted by checkpoints,



permanent roadblocks and trenches cutting off lines of communication between neighbouring villages and urban centres.

- Nablus has been under curfew for six months, which has been lifted on some 60 occasions. During this reporting period the curfew was lifted on six occasions for 10-12 hours each time, allowing the population access to schools and markets. However, the area is still under strict closure and the population's right to freedom of movement continues to be denied. This affects public services, such as schools, if staff are employed in Nablus but live outside the town. Access to neighbouring villages and towns through one of the many checkpoints is difficult for civilians as this requires permits. Furthermore, the IDF has been digging ditches to isolate villages, further preventing movement between localities in the Nablus area.
- No curfew was imposed in the Jenin area during the reporting period. The closures however remain in place. Ditches have been dug along both the western and northern borders of Jenin city in order to restrict the movement of people and goods.
- Tulkarm and surrounding villages and refugee camps were placed under curfew for a total of 192 hours out of a possible 240 hours. The curfew was lifted on 9, 10, 17 and 18 December, each time for 12 hours.
- Qalqiliya was under 24 hour's curfew every day except 12 and 18 December.
- Ramallah has been without a curfew since 1 December. Access to the city, however, remains difficult.
- Bethlehem remains a closed military area and the curfew inside the city was not reported lifted at all during the ten days reporting period. The curfew in the surrounding villages and refugee camps was lifted on four occasions for a total of 30 hours during the reporting period.
- Hebron Old City, home to 147,291 Palestinians, was under 24 hours curfew without any official lifting throughout the reporting period.

In Gaza, severe restrictions on access to Al-Mawasi (the enclosed area inside the Gush Katif settlement bloc) still apply resulting in mothers not being able to take their children for routine vaccinations in Khan Younis and students being prevented from going to high school and university. Few 'exports' of locally grown produce are being allowed out.

A grant of US\$ 15,200 from the Norwegian Peoples' Aid (NPA) has allowed two schools to organize extra lessons for those pupils who have not been able to continue their education outside the Al-Mawasi area.

The IDF stopped and searched a number of people and vehicles causing short closures of the Abu Houli checkpoints between Deir el-Balah and Khan Younis on the 14 and 16 December.

### **House & Land Destruction**

On 9 December, the IDF bulldozed land belonging to four Palestinian families in Hebron to create a "safe passage" between the settlement of Kiryat Arba and the Ibrahimi Mosque. The IDF continued house demolitions in Hebron: on 13 December, 9 houses were demolished, and on 17 December one house was demolished.

In Gaza, 21 houses have been destroyed in Rafah over the reporting period as well as four just south of Gaza city. As part of the ongoing process of destroying Palestinian houses for "security zones" near the border, the IDF has been using armoured bulldozers to raze buildings and over 180 people have been made homeless. A further 57.5 dunums of

agricultural land in Gaza have been razed by the IDF in several locations; citrus, olive and palm trees have been uprooted, eight greenhouses have been destroyed, as have pipelines, agricultural pools, an irrigation system, a dairy farm and a smithy's workshop.

### **Humanitarian Access**

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) reports continuous IDF harassment and attacks on their ambulances and medical crews, ranging from denial of access to patients, denial of access to hospitals when transporting patients, to harassment of medical teams. These actions stand in sharp contrast to the commitments made by the Israeli government to Ms. Bertini, the UN Secretary-General's Special Humanitarian Envoy. Among other issues the Israeli government committed to establishing effective mechanisms to ensure that Palestinians seeking critical medical services (e.g. natal care, dialysis, chemotherapy) could quickly pass checkpoints.

At the Salem checkpoint an ambulance transporting a patient with respiratory problems to hospital was stopped by IDF soldiers on 8 December. The soldiers prohibited the ambulance from continuing to its destination, and the ambulance crew were unable to save the patient's life.

In Nablus on 4 December, and in Qalqiliya on 12 December, ambulances carrying women in labour were blocked by the IDF. The ambulance in Qalqiliya was delayed for one hour, while in Nablus the ambulance was prohibited from continuing to the hospital, and the woman was forced to move to another ambulance and only allowed access to a medical clinic.

The IDF stopped a PRCS ambulance transporting a patient in Nablus on 13 December, and ordered the medical team to take two IDF soldiers to Askar refugee camp. When the medical team refused the IDF confiscated their ID cards and forced them to follow the tank, acting as a human shield, until they reached Salem checkpoint.

In Gaza on 16 December, an Abu Yousef Najar Hospital ICU ambulance was stopped at 6pm by Israeli soldiers and searched for two hours. The ambulance was transferring a 13-year-old girl who had been shot in the chest from Rafah to Gaza. Later the same day an ambulance was prevented from reaching a man who had been shot near the Salah Eddin gate in Rafah at midnight. The IDF fired warning shots at the ambulance when it attempted to reach the man. By dawn, when the crew were finally allowed to approach, the man had died.

UNRWA operations in the West Bank continue to be hampered by curfews, checkpoints and permit restrictions imposed by the IDF. On several occasions during the reporting period UNRWA staff members have been denied access or needlessly delayed for hours by IDF soldiers. On 14 December, an UNRWA health team was denied access to Salit al-Harithiya west of Jenin, while another team travelling in a marked UN car from Ramallah to Jericho were delayed for more than two hours. On 16 December, an UNRWA medical team travelling in a marked UN car from Jerusalem to Deir Amar refugee camp northwest of Ramallah was denied access at the Atara checkpoint.

### **Labour**

Following the complete ban on fishing off the Gazan coast new regulations were instigated on 16 December allowing access up to six miles. The lifting of the restriction applied only to the fishermen of Gaza and Deir El-Balah. The fishermen in Khan Younis are still banned. In Rafah, the old regulations are still in force allowing only the fishermen of Al-Mawasi access to the sea. According to the Israeli Coordinator's Office

for Government Affairs in the Territories (COGAT), the restriction for Rafah was lifted on 27 November allowing fishermen access to a 6 mile zone.

According to the UNSCO Economic Unit in Gaza the following number of work permits was recorded between 10-16 December:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Workpermits for Israel</b>	<b>Workpermits for Erez Industrial zone</b>
Tuesday 10 Dec.	9,380	3,530
Wednesday 11 Dec.	9530	2,640
Thursday 12 Dec.	10,536	2,720
Friday 13 Dec.	7,218	1,124
Saturday 14 Dec.	445	1,505
Sunday 15 Dec.	11,587	3,752
Monday 16 Dec.	10,254	3,636

COGAT reported for the period 5-11 December that 13,302 work permits have been issued to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, of which 8,442 are in the construction sector, 2,867 in agriculture and 1,732 in industry and services. The report also stated that 2,000 construction workers will be allowed to stay overnight in Israel and that 637 permits for this use have already been issued. Similarly, 4,802 permits have been distributed for work in the Erez Industrial Zone and a further 2,244 for work inside the Israeli settlements.

COGAT reported that in the West Bank a total of 5,940 permits were issued and distributed between 5-11 December: 2,518 for agricultural work, 2,350 for construction, and 290 for other sectors. In addition, 782 permits have been distributed for the olive harvest inside Israel.

In total, 18,972 permits were reported issued and delivered to Palestinian workers from the West Bank and Gaza in the period 5-11 December. The report states that some 35,406 Palestinians hold (as of 11 December) valid work permits: 18,190 for employment in Israel, 782 for employment in the olive harvest in Israel, 6,524 for employment in Israeli settlements, 319 for employment at the Atarot industrial estate (between Ramallah and Jerusalem), 4,802 for employment at the Erez industrial zone (Gaza) and 4,789 for traders and business people.

The COGAT report also states that the criteria for visas for the different categories vary. For employment in Israel the criteria is over 28 years and married, while for employment in the olive harvest in Israel men must be over 25 and married while women must be over 20 and married. For employment in Israeli settlements the criteria is over 25 and married for both sexes. Traders and business people must be over 27 and married or over 40 if single.

### **Children**

Children's Municipality Council elections were held in late November 2002, as part of UNICEF's Child-Friendly Cities initiative in Rafah, Gaza City, Jenin and Jericho. Over 12,000 Palestinian children voted and the 80 child community leaders elected will initiate projects and develop policies aimed at protecting and improving the lives of their peers. Fun days and community campaigns are also being organised and Safe Play Areas, designed to limit children's exposure to violence and increase their opportunities to play and participate in fun and peaceful activities, are currently being developed in areas most exposed to violence, such as Rafah and Jenin.

### **Health**

UNICEF has undertaken an assessment of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) preliminary findings from the Palestinian Nutrition Survey 2002 (released in July 2002) detailing child and maternal malnutrition rates. The study, technically and financially supported by UNICEF, was a follow up to studies undertaken by PCBS on UNICEF's behalf in 1996 and August 2000.

The main preliminary survey findings are as follows:

- The rate of moderate to severe acute malnutrition (wasting) is 2.5% (1.1 % increase since August 2000);
- The rate of moderate to severe chronic malnutrition (stunting) among Palestinian children 6-59 months old is 9.0% (1.5 % increase since August 2000);
- The rate of moderate to severe anaemia among Palestinian children 6-59 months old is 15.1%;
- Among non-pregnant Palestinian women (15-49 years old) the rate of moderate to severe anaemia is 5.9%.

The survey sampled over 5,200 households. UNICEF was involved in developing survey indicators, the questionnaire, training of the data collectors, data collection, tabulation and initial analysis. Birzeit University is currently in the process of further analysis of the survey before its final release in 2003. The rate of Palestinian child malnutrition in PCBS's preliminary survey is significantly less than that found in the preliminary USAID-funded malnutrition survey of July 2002. PCBS's study confirms UNICEF's anecdotal observations in the field.

In response to these findings, and as part of the coordination mechanism put in place by the PA Ministry of Health (MOH) and key stakeholders such as WHO and USAID, UNICEF is supporting MOH in: furthering the capacity of maternal and child health

workers in the areas of appropriate child feeding, growth monitoring, advise and referral; coordinating with all key stakeholders to ensure the iron fortification of flour supplies; proposing more efficient iron and folic acid supplementation programs; increasing awareness-raising activities on the importance of breastfeeding; and increasing public education programs, including the production and broadcasting of public health announcements for television and the development of a television programme entitled 'Health for All'.

Between 2-8 December, an ICRC team delivered dialysis solutions from the Ministry of Health's (MoH) central warehouse in Ramallah to Al-Watani hospital in Nablus. In addition, the ICRC donated two pulse oxymeters to Thabet Hospital in Tulkarm, and

<b>Palestinian Child Malnutrition (1996 – 2002)</b>				
<i>(For children aged 6-59 months)</i>				
*SD = Standard Deviations		1996	2000	2002
<i>Occupied Palestinian Territory</i>				
Weight for Height (wasting)#	Below – 2SD*	2.7%	1.4%	2.5%
	Below – 3SD		0.3%	0.7%
Height for Age (stunting)	Below – 2SD	7.2%	7.5%	9.0%
	Below – 3SD		1.6%	2.4%
Weight for Age (underweight)	Below – 2SD	4.4%	2.5%	3.5%
	Below – 3SD		0.2%	0.6%
<i>West Bank</i>				
Weight for Height (wasting)	Below – 2SD	2.2%	1.5%	2.9%
	Below – 3SD		0.3%	0.8%
Height for Age (stunting)	Below – 2SD	6.7%	7.0%	8.0%
	Below – 3SD		1.4%	2.1%
Weight for Age (underweight)	Below – 2SD	3.9%	2.6%	4.0%
	Below – 3SD		0.2%	0.5%
<i>Gaza</i>				
Weight for Height (wasting)	Below – 2SD	3.7%	1.4%	2.5%
	Below – 3SD		0.2%	0.7%
Height for Age (stunting)	Below – 2SD	8.2%	8.3%	10.5%
	Below – 3SD		1.9%	2.8%
Weight for Age (underweight)	Below – 2SD	5.2%	2.4%	2.6%
	Below – 3SD		0.2%	0.7%
#Note: In well-nourished populations, slightly above 2% of children are usually wasted.				

Rafidia hospital in Nablus received copies of ICRC's videos on war surgery. In Gaza, the ICRC donated surgical equipment to El-Aqsa governmental Hospital in Deir El-Balah.

On 11 and 17 December, the Italian Cooperation facilitated the distribution of medicine from the MoH warehouse in Ramallah to the Bethlehem Public Health Centre.

The UNRWA health centre in Bethlehem closed on several occasions during the reporting period due to the curfew.

### Food Assistance

The ICRC's Urban Voucher Programme distribution continued between 2-15 December, despite the prolonged curfew imposed on most of the main towns in the West Bank: 2,953 families in Bethlehem and Ramallah received a monthly voucher to be redeemed for essential food and non-food items.

As part of the ICRC's relief programme in rural areas, coordinated with the World Food Programme, 3,725 families in 25 villages in Jenin, Hebron, Bethlehem and Salfit districts received more than 685 Mt. of flour, rice, sugar and pulses as well as 15,720 litres of oil.

In December 2002, ANERA, Islamic Relief, UK and local Palestinian partner institutions conducted a food distribution for families in need in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In total, 9,500 families (66,500 beneficiaries) received food aid. The table shows the contents of the packages:

ANERA Distribution						
West Bank	No. of Parcels	Gaza	No. of Parcels	Content of Parcels	Produced in oPt	
Jenin	1,000	North Gaza	800	5 kg sugar		
Tulkarm	500	Gaza City	1,800	5 kg rice		
Qalqilya	500	Middle camps	800	3 kg lentils		
Nablus	1,000	South Gaza	1,600	3 kg beans		
Bethlehem	1,000			3 kg hummus	yes	
Hebron	500			1 kg halaweh	yes	
				0.87 kg of date jam	yes	
				1 litre olive oil	yes	
				0.58 kg tomato paste	yes	
				0.5 kg tea		
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>4,500</b>		<b>5,000</b>	1 kg dates	yes	

One of the achievements of the program was to procure more than 50% of the value of the food parcels from the local Palestinian market, thus indirectly providing assistance to the agricultural sector in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Olive oil, hummus, halaweh, and dates were purchased in the West Bank and halaweh, tomato paste and date jam came from Gaza. Each food package contained goods from both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This exchange of local goods greatly supports local Palestinian farmers while providing food aid to families.

The UNRWA Field Office in the West Bank distributed in total 11,729 emergency parcels for 23,458 beneficiaries in 15 localities throughout the West Bank. In addition, distributions were held for special hardship cases in Amari refugee camp, Nabi Saleh, Abud, Deir Abu Mishal, Mazraat e-Nubani,

Localities	No. of Parcels	Parcel content
Beit Surik	20	30 kg wheat flour
Budrus	14	7 kg sugar
Anabta	4	7 kg rice
Askar Camp	4952	4 kg milk powder
Ramadin	1138	4 litres of oil
Qantaneh	24	
Jenin Camp	9	
Al-Majd	622	
Beit Awa	661	
Jalazone Camp	1949	
Aida Camp	600	
Husan & Nahalin	557	
Deir Samet	288	
Idna	491	
Wadi Fuqin	400	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>11729</b>	

Abwein, Turmus Aya, Kafr Nime, Deir Ibbie, Rashaydeh, Mazra'ah Al-Sharqieh, Taybeh, Deir Dibwan, Biteen, Beit Iksa and Bidu villages.

In Gaza, UNRWA distributed 23,133 food parcels between 10-18 December (see table):

District	No. of Parcels	Parcel content
Jabalia	4,000	50 kg wheat flour
Gaza	7,619	5 kg rice
Gaza Middle	4,500	5 kg sugar
Khan Younis	4,000	5 kg lentils
Rafah	3,014	1 kg milk
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>23,133</b>	<b>2 litres oil</b>

## Water

The rainy season has still not alleviated the chronic shortages of water in the West Bank. CARE is currently running two emergency water projects in Jenin, funded by ECHO, through which 19 villages are receiving assistance to provide potable water to a number of households. CARE, utilising funds from USAID, has provided Jenin town and refugee camp with tankered water since the beginning of November because of the malfunctioning of Jenin's well no. 2. Approximately 45,000 people have received water through this project. Although Jenin well no. 2 is now functioning again it only provides water to approximately 60% of households in the catchment area. CARE has also launched a water quality and hygiene awareness campaign in 9 villages in the Jenin area, and will shortly start a new water project in Tamoun, Jenin.

The Palestinian Hydrology Group's (PHG's) Water and Sanitation, Hygiene (WaSH) Monitoring project has recently completed their fifth report. The project has so far covered 419 out of 708 communities in the oPt. All the reports from the project can be found at: <http://www.phg.org/monitoring/monitoring.html>