



The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

GAZA HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT 31 July – 7 August 2007

Access and Crossings:

Since 19 June, several days after the Hamas takeover of Gaza, a total of 4,339 truckloads (excluding gravel and aggregates) have been allowed through the crossings, including 457 from humanitarian agencies. This represents an average of 118 truckloads/day, as opposed to an average of 238 truckloads/day which were allowed into Gaza prior to mid-June. Food supplies represent 89% of the total commercial supplies transported into Gaza.

Karni crossing has been closed since 13 June – representing 59 days as of 6 August. Only one conveyor belt remains open on two days/week for the inflow of grains and animal feed. 474 truckloads of grains and animal feed came through Karni since 19 June.

Rafah Crossing has been closed for 58 days. Between 10 June and 6 August, fewer than 200 Palestinians were allowed into Gaza and none allowed out. During the same period last year 17,758 were allowed in and 11,045 were allowed out of Gaza through the crossing.

Since 29 July, Israel has allowed 5,166 Palestinians stranded in Egypt for two months to return back to Gaza through Nitzana Border Crossing and then Erez Crossing. At least another 1,000 are still waiting to cross in the next few days.

As a result of the Karni closure, the **Sufa and Kerem Shalom crossings** continue to function as the principal alternative entry points for commercial and humanitarian supplies. Between 19 June and 6 August, 153 truckloads of commodities from humanitarian agencies and 291 commercial truckloads entered through Kerem Shalom; 289 humanitarian and 3,017 commercial truckloads entered through Sufa; and 9 humanitarian truckloads, carrying mostly medical supplies, entered through Erez.

Gazan Economy:

The limited opening of the Gazan crossings continues to weaken the Gazan economy. The Palestinian Shippers' Council estimates the total losses of the private sector since the closure of the Gaza border in mid-June at \$35 million.

Due to the shortages of raw materials, of which 90% come from Israel, the 600 Gaza-based **garment factories** that provide employment to more than 25,000 Palestinians have all closed down. 1 million pieces of clothing worth \$12 million, which were scheduled to be exported over the last 8 weeks, will not be exported as a consequence of the closures. 90% of garment products are usually exported to Israel.

More than 1,600 **containers of non-food items** (including clothing, furniture and spare parts) that were scheduled to enter Gaza in the last 8 weeks are still on hold at the Israeli freight terminals and warehouses. Delays in processing the containers are costly for the shippers: each container is charged \$50/day by the International Shipping Company and \$300/month by the Israeli Port Authority. At the same time, none of the 500 empty containers stranded in Gaza since mid-June have been shipped back out, resulting in a cumulative loss of \$1 million by commercial shippers.

In the 2007 season, farmers are likely to cultivate less than 500 dunums (50 ha) due to the severe shortages of raw materials (such as fertilizers and pesticides) and the unlikelihood of export¹. During the 2006 season, more than 3,000 dunums (300 ha) of a variety of crops were cultivated. If the closure continues, the estimated loss to the

¹ Source: Ministry of Agriculture

agricultural sector this season will be more than \$12 million². Large quantities of vegetables including tomatoes, cucumbers and sweet peppers are being sold on the Gazan local markets for very low prices instead of being exported.

Construction materials are still not allowed through to Gaza. As a result, 11 tile-making factories, 30 concrete-making factories, 140 marble-making factories and 145 brick-making factories, which collectively employ 2,500 Palestinians, are coming under severe pressure. More than 90% of these factories have closed down and laid off their staff.

Infrastructure:

About 50% of the Gaza Power Plant's production capacity has been lost due to delays in maintenance in both turbines. On 7 August, due to extensive coordination by UN staff, one of the two turbines needing maintenance was shipped to Israel through Kerem Shalom for servicing by the corporate supplier. The servicing period is estimated at 10-15 days, after which the second turbine will undergo maintenance in either Gaza or Israel.

Protection of civilians:

IDF air and ground military operations in Gaza left 4 Palestinians dead and 15 injured during the reporting period, while an additional 3 Palestinians were killed and 8 injured in internal factional violence. Palestinian militants fired 24 Qassam rockets and 6 mortar shells from the Gaza Strip, most of which targeted the southern Israeli town of Sderot.

United Nations - Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

occupied Palestinian territory P.O. Box 38712 East Jerusalem Phone: (972) 2 – 5829962 / 5825853

Fax: (972) 2 - 5825841 Email: ochaopt@un.org www.ochaopt.org

² Ibid.