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HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT – January 2004

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

I) Context

The report monitors the humanitarian commitments made by the Government of Israel (GOI) to the Bertini mission in August 2002. The UN Secretary-General appointed Ms. Catherine Bertini as his Personal Humanitarian Envoy to address the humanitarian needs arising from the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict since September 2000. Ms. Bertini was requested to assess the nature and scale of the humanitarian needs, and to clarify the respective responsibilities of all actors with regard to humanitarian needs.

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

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

II) Commitments

Health:

- 1.1 Ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at checkpoints
- 1.2 Mechanisms will be set in place to ensure patients seeking critical medical services eg. delivery, dialysis, chemotherapy can quickly pass all checkpoints

Water:

- 2.1 Problems relating to water deliveries in Palestinian towns and villages will be addressed to ensure daily provision of adequate volume can be supplied by Palestinian water tankers

International Organizations:

- 3.1 GOI will fully facilitate the activities of international organizations with particular reference to UNRWA
- 3.2 GOI agreed to review and strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the IDF

Additional Commitments:

On previous occasions, the GOI has made the following commitments, which were confirmed to the mission:

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

Commitment	Benchmarks	Actual Status	Remarks
<p>1. Health:</p> <p>1. 1 Palestinian ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at any checkpoints (Gol to Bertini mission, 12- 19 April 2002)</p> <p>1.2 Effective mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that Palestinians seeking critical medical services (e.g. giving birth, dialysis, chemotherapy, etc.) can quickly pass all checkpoints. (Gol to Bertini mission, 12 – 19 August 2002)</p>	<p>1.1. Instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders concerning maximum time for ambulance delay at checkpoints; PA MOH, PRCS, UNRWA and hospitals no longer report ambulance delays at checkpoints.</p> <p>Mechanisms established and Palestinian public informed; Explicit instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders.</p> <p>1.2.1 No more instances of Palestinians seeking critical medical services denied passage at checkpoints reported</p>	<p>West Bank & Gaza: 44 incidents Palestinian ambulance operators reported a total of 44 humanitarian access incidents (compared to 43 incidents in December 2003), in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF.</p> <p>Ambulance Access Denials: Of the 44 incidents reported, 12 included humanitarian access denials. Some of these incidents are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 03 January, Nablus – IDF denied a PRCS ambulance access at the entrance of a hospital and detained while transporting a person in a critical condition. The man was later pronounced dead on his arrival at the hospital. • 22 January, Beit Iba checkpoint – IDF denied a PRCS ambulance access while transporting two patients; one of them was a child suffering from epilepsy. Both patients were ordered out of the ambulance and the ambulance was denied to continue its route. <p>Ambulance Delays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 documented incidents included delays considerably in excess of the 30-minute limit, up to 3.5 hours. <p>Harassment of Ambulance Crews: In January, in 5 incidents crews came under IDF attacks (firing and physically abusing paramedics). In 1 incident, medical staff was beaten, blind folded and taken to Ofra Military detention Camp where the staff member was released one hour later.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 January, Gaza – an Israeli tank fired at a PRCS ambulance while trying to transport injuries to hospital during an IDF incursion in al Zeitun area. The shattered glass of the ambulance caused injuries in the right eye of the medic. <p>Using ambulance as a shield:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 January, Hebron – A PRCS ambulance on its way to transport an elderly patient home was used to shield the IDF during a military operation in al Arrub Refugee Camp in Hebron. Soldiers jumped on the back of the ambulance and forced it to drive into the Camp while firing in the direction of the Camp residents. <p>There were several observed instances of obstruction of UNRWA and other health providers including ambulances at checkpoints. Of particular concern is the access of health workers and ambulances to those areas adjacent to the Barrier and restricted areas.</p>	<p>Most of the incidents happened at the checkpoints around Nablus, and at Abu Houli and at Toffah checkpoints in the Gaza Strip. In addition, numerous flying checkpoints hindered the access of ambulances and medical teams during this month.</p>

<p>2. Water</p> <p>2.1 Problems related to water deliveries to Palestinian towns and villages will be addressed to ensure that daily water deliveries in proper quantities can be supplied by Palestinian water tankers. (Gol to Bertini Mission, 12-19 August 2002)</p>	<p>2.1.1 Instructions issued to all checkpoints allowing for the easy transfer of water tankers through all checkpoints.</p> <p>2.1.2 The IDF removes barriers that prevent the access by water tankers to villages that rely on tankered water.</p> <p>2.1.3 Absence of any reports on lack of water or delay/stoppage of water tankers at checkpoints.</p>	<p>In January, the main four factors still affected the existing critical water supply situation in the West Bank and Gaza. These factors continued over into the months of January:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing closure regime/Barrier • Reduction in water supply to Palestinian communities by the Israeli Mekorot company • Damages/destruction of water distribution networks • Movement restrictions of maintenance teams and water tankers <p>Northern part of the West Bank:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jenin: Silat adh Dhahr (population: 4670)¹: The main source of water for the community is from Mekorot Company through Homesh settlement. Supplied quantities to the community were reduced from 11,000 m3 to only 3,000 m3 per month forcing people to buy more expensive tanker water from Jaba' community. - Nablus: 'Asira al Qibliya (population: 1708), Madama (population: 1239), 'Urif (population: 2122) rely on cisterns for their main source of water supply. Tanker water – transported from a Mekorot connection in Huwwara (about 15 Km away) – supplements this supply but has been subject to delay/denial of access on checkpoints, which also increased water prices. - Nablus: Salim (population: 3799), 'Azmut (population: 2036), Deir al Hatab (population: 1687), Tell (population: 3542), Sarra (population: 2161), 'Iraq Burin (population: 576), Qaryut (population: 1845), Jalud (population: 338) and Talfit (population: 2235) communities that depend on tankers have been affected by the closures that has prevented tankers from entering and transferring water. - Qalqiliya: The construction of the Barrier in the West Bank has directly impacted 22 communities in the Qalqiliya Governorate. Eighteen ground water wells were completely isolated and separated from communities, in addition to the groundwater wells located in the 'closed' or 'seam zone' behind the Barrier. These communities face problems of water availability. In addition, special permits are only given to a limited number of tankers and for only during a limited time. <p>Southern parts of the West Bank:</p> <p>Hebron: In Beit Ummar (population: 9106), Safa (population: 795), and Surif (population: 9667) closures affected the movement of maintenance teams to rehabilitate and fix the damaged water networks in these communities.</p>	<p>The closure and restriction of movement and destruction of the water networks remains the most serious causes of the water problem in Palestinian towns and villages.</p> <p>The restriction on movement of maintenance teams maintaining destroyed water networks increased the number of communities depending on the tankered water.</p> <p>Physical barriers on primary roads and entrances to Palestinian residential areas, force water tankers to take more circuitous and often unpaved routes resulting in higher transport costs that are transferred onto the Palestinian consumer. Removal of IDF barriers positioned at the entrances and on the roads leading to Palestinian towns and villages will ease this situation.</p>
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¹ Palestinian community population based on Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) 1997 census – 2004 projected population.

<p>3. International Organisations</p> <p>3.1 Israel will fully facilitate the assistance activities of international organisations with particular reference to UNRWA. (GOI to Bertini Mission, 12-19 August 2002)</p> <p>3.2 Israel agreed to review and strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the IDF to facilitate assistance activities (GOI to Bertini Mission, 12-19 August 2002)</p> <p>3.2 Israel will improve the situation at checkpoints, including the deployment of more</p>	<p>3.1.1 Free access for all international staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and Gaza and at international crossings at all times.</p> <p>3.1.2 Free access for all Palestinian staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and Gaza at all times.</p> <p>3.1.3 No delays/stoppage of international organisations' transport of development and humanitarian goods at any point (i.e. at international borders, borders between Israel and the West Bank or Gaza, within the West Bank or Gaza) at any time.</p> <p>3.1.4 Palestinian drivers (with either Jerusalem or West Bank ID) allowed to drive humanitarian transports for international organisations, in particular UNRWA, WFP and ICRC.</p> <p>3.2.1 Procedures established that provide direct access by international organisations</p>	<p>International relief agencies filed some 83 incident reports² in January 2004 in which the delivery of humanitarian aid and/or movement of relief personnel were obstructed by the IDF and the Israeli Border Police. The majority of reported incidents included delays and disrespect by the IDF of international organisations' mandates, privileges and immunities. In 22 cases (compared to 18 in December) humanitarian access was denied.</p> <p>UNRWA - the largest humanitarian operator in the oPt – reported 63 incidents³ of delay or denial of passage at IDF checkpoints (compared to 104 incidents reported in December): 46 incidents of delay and 18 incidents in which staff members were denied access. In these incidents, 408 staff members were affected. The average length of delays for those who were able to cross was more than 4 hours, with an average of 6 staff members involved in each incident. The majority of access problems continued at IDF and Border Police checkpoints around Jerusalem, particularly at Gilo checkpoint. The Health Department recorded the highest number of delays (12 incidents with 49 staff affected).</p> <p>Other UN agencies filed 2 incidents where in 1 incident staff were denied access despite the coordination with DCO liaison office in Nablus trying to access Beit Furik and Beit Dajan.</p> <p>The international NGO humanitarian aid community reported 20 access incidents. In 3 incidents access was denied and in 8 incidents they were subject to delays between 1-2 hours. In Gaza, Medecins Sans Frontiere – MSF had to cancel their field trips or stop their activities and leave the area due to the IDF shooting or military operations.</p>	<p>The most problematic checkpoints were around Hebron, Nablus and in Gaza.</p> <p>UN staff members continued reporting about IDF not recognizing the UN IDs, or recognizing the liaison done by Liaison Offices in the Districts.</p>
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² These figures apply only to the humanitarian aid organisations that reported to OCHA about incidents at checkpoints.

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

experienced IDF personnel.	to operational and command structures within the IDF		
4. Additional Commitments 4.1. The fishing zone for Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles	<p>Extension of fishing zone fully implemented.</p> <p>No arrests or confiscation of fishing boats within the 12 nautical mile zone.</p>	<p>The IDF continues to enforce an order issued at the end of October 2003 prohibiting access to the sea from the entire Al Mawasi coastline. This marks an extension of the ban which previously only applied to Al Mawasi Khan Younis. The order is valid for 6 months. As a result, most of the Al Mawasi fishermen have moved their boats and equipment to Deir El Balah which is unaffected by the closure order.</p> <p>Fishermen are not venturing much further than 6 nm on account of periodic firing at their vessels by Israeli gun boats.</p>	<p>The Israeli government is not meeting its commitment to a 12 nm fishing zone. Indeed, additional restrictions are being imposed meaning that it is no longer possible to fish at all, from a significant stretch of the Gaza strip.</p>
4.2. An increase in shipments at Karni crossing	Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing.	<p>While Karni was open throughout January, the number of imported containers from the West Bank, Israel and overseas was down on the previous month. The total for January was 6,826 as compared to 8,096 for December. The January figure however, was an increase on the 6,598 containers that entered Gaza in November.</p> <p>The number of containers departing Gaza was 1830, which was a slight reduction on the December total of 1853. The export figures for December and January do signify a marked improvement in the export trend when compared to November (957) and October (752).</p>	<p>While the number of imports declined against December, the increased number of exports when compared to October and November should have a beneficial impact on the local economy.</p>
4.3. Increase in the number of work permits for workers in Israel	Quantifiable increase in the number of work permits being made available for workers in the West Bank and Gaza to work inside Israel	<p>Erez was closed between 15 and 17 January following the suicide attack at the crossing on 14 January. In the wake of the attack that killed 4 IDF soldiers, security screening procedures of Palestinian workers were further tightened resulting in a marked reduction in the numbers entering Israel in the second half of the month when compared to the first half. On 11 January, 13,034 workers entered Israel which was the largest single entry since the "Hudna", July 2003. From the second half of the month, the daily figure varied between 254 and 7,458 as a result of more stringent security requirements.</p> <p>Erez industrial estate reflected a similar pattern of workers movement, with a higher number of workers 3976, entering on 11 January than the December high figure of 3877. From 18 – 31 January the daily range was from 271 to 2,187.</p>	<p>The total number of workers entering Israel decreased in January. This was on account of the 3 day closure imposed in the wake of the suicide attack, and the fewer numbers of workers able to enter daily due to heightened security checks.</p>



