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**OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA)**

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**HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT****Commitments made by the Government of Israel to Ms Catherine Bertini,  
Personal Humanitarian Envoy to the Middle East for the Secretary-General**

*The Humanitarian Monitoring Report is issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It is based on the monthly performance matrices in relation to the commitments that it made to the Bertini mission. The Humanitarian Monitoring Report draws on information from the Access, Closure and Information System (ACIS), among other data sources, that humanitarian agencies have submitted to OCHA. This report is provided to the Task Force on Project Implementation (TFPI) as a basis for discussions with the Government of Israel and will be compiled and distributed monthly and is available on the website ([www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt](http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt)).*

**I) Context**

On August 7 2002, the 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, in light of the ongoing situation, identify appropriate action to address these needs

while preventing further deterioration, and to clarify the respective responsibilities of all actors with regard to humanitarian needs.

Ms. Bertini visited the region from August 12-19 2002, travelling to both the West Bank and Gaza and meeting with representatives from both the Government of Israel (GoI) and the Palestinian Authority (PA) along with UN agencies, NGOs, the ICRC and donors. The mission concluded that there is a serious humanitarian crisis that is linked to the ongoing conflict and specifically to the measures implemented by the GoI to safeguard its citizens from Palestinian attacks.

The introduction of associated security measures including curfews, closures and roadblocks has led to a crisis of access and mobility, instigating a near-collapse of the Palestinian economy while also preventing large part of the Palestinian population from accessing basic services such as health and education. Similarly, humanitarian service providers such as UNRWA and PRCS have experienced considerable difficulties in reaching their places of work and were unable to provide assistance and services to beneficiaries.

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*The Bertini Commitments represent a minimum and specific set of humanitarian standards agreed to by the GoI. The Bertini Commitments are not a substitute for compliance with International Humanitarian Law as laid down in the Fourth Geneva Convention. The maximum waiting period of 30 minutes for an ambulance at a checkpoint, while an improvement on the situation in August 2002, for example, falls short of the intent of provisions of International Humanitarian Law.*

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## II) **Commitments**

Ms. Bertini obtained several commitments from the Gol during the period of the mission that were aimed at improving humanitarian access. The commitments were delivered in the context of health, water, immunities commonly enjoyed by international organisations and fishing rights and were accompanied by quantifiable “benchmarks” allowing for the commitments to be monitored. More specifically:

### **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 Organisations:**

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

### **Additional Commitments:**

*On previous occasions, the Gol 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

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COMMITMENT	BENCHMARKS	ACTUAL STATUS	REMARKS
<p><b>1. Health:</b></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>1.2 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>Palestinian ambulance operators<sup>1</sup>, and UNRWA reported <b>113</b> incidents in June 2003. Of this number, 33 incidents occurred in Gaza and 78 in the West Bank. The largest number of incidents was reported in following Governorates and regions: <i>Nablus – 54; Al-Mawasi – 14, northern and central Gaza – 20.</i></p> <p>Incidents varied in their gravity and frequency, although common features remain:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. attacks on ambulance crews and their physical abuse;</li> <li>2. checkpoint delays exceeding 30 minutes<sup>2</sup>;</li> <li>3. denial of access to ambulances trying to reach patients;</li> <li>4. access denial to ambulances with patients in critical medical condition aboard;</li> <li>5. detention and/or removal of patients from ambulances.</li> </ol> <p><b>80 of the 113 incidents</b> reported, included delays considerably in excess of 30 minutes, <b>ranging from 35 to 690 minutes</b> (9 June 2003, Abu Houli, Gaza). The <b>average length of ambulance delays at IDF checkpoints was 94 minutes</b> (aggregate for June 4,697 minutes) in the West Bank; <b>and 161 minutes in Gaza</b> (aggregate 3,070 minutes).</p> <p><b>In 33 incidents</b> there was a complete denial of access, including the prevention of medical evacuations of critically sick patients or the injured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Denial of medical evacuation of an injured person from Balata camp, Nablus on 4 June;</li> <li>▪ Denial of passage of ambulances with severely injured persons aboard – 8 June, Al-Mawasi and 9 June, Beit Hanoun;</li> <li>▪ Denial of access to an ambulance attempting to evacuate a comatose (foreign national) woman from Erez crossing on 20 June;</li> </ul> <p>In four grave incidents the IDF removed critically sick patients from ambulances. On 18 June, the IDF arrested at Beit Iba checkpoint an injured 16-year-old as a PRCS ambulance was attempting to transfer the patient to hospital. On 25 June, the Israeli police stopped a PRCS ambulance and arrested one of the patients who had suffered from a heart attack (Tel Buyout, Hebron).</p> <p>In eight incidents, ambulance crews came under IDF attacks (firing and physically abusing paramedics) and in one incident (15 June at Beit El) a</p>	<p>Reporting period saw yet another dramatic rise in the number of incidents (20 percent increase compared with May 2003). 113 incidents recorded in June 2003 represent <b>the highest number of ambulance incidents since OCHA began this tracking exercise in December 2002.</b></p> <p><b>Since December 2002, some 371 serious ambulance incidents were registered in the oPt, of which 87 are access denial/first aid denial cases.</b></p> <p>While there was a quantitative deterioration in the IDF's respect for emergency health operators, the incidents also degenerated qualitatively. For example, <b>the length of ambulance delays registered in the West Bank in June was 94 minutes as compared with 71 minutes in May 2003.</b></p> <p>The “qualitative” deterioration is also seen in the surge of physical violence exercised by the IDF soldiers against Palestinian paramedics, in addition to verbal abuse and other types of harassment.</p> <p>Nablus Governorate with its 10 checkpoints (Beit Iba, Quseen, Beit Furik, Huwwara, Deir El-Sharaf, Za'tara, Awarta, Salim, Nablus DCO, Shave Shamron) continued to account for half of all incidents. As a result of IDF practices in Nablus, a large number of communities in the Governorate, particularly in the North (e.g. Asira Ash-Shamaliya, Beita, Taluza, etc.) are unable to access primary and emergency health care. Individual soldiers' behaviour, particularly at Shave Shamron, Beit Iba, and Huwwara, checkpoints was humiliating and taunting vis-à-vis for persons seeking medical assistance, and for national and international relief operators.</p>

<sup>1</sup> PRCS, MOH and Union of Health Care Committees.

<sup>2</sup> Ambulance operators and ICRC consider the “30-minute” delay excessive for all urgent cases; in PRCS's definition any forced delays exceeding 15 minutes at checkpoints, by military patrols, police or Border Police, etc. constitute incidents.

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		<p>PRCS ambulance transporting two patients was attacked by Israeli settlers.</p>	<p>The situation deteriorated markedly in the Palestinian enclave of Al-Mawasi (Gaza), which was practically inaccessible for medical evacuations and first aid.</p> <p><b>Access denials and targeting of emergency health providers remained numerous – medical evacuations and any ability to provide first aid during IDF incursions (e.g. Beit Hanoun, Gaza) was practically impossible.</b></p> <p>Ambulance operators are systematically subjected to appalling treatment. The passage of ambulances is subject to arbitrary decisions of the IDF. Palestinian patients have frequently been required to walk across checkpoints, despite their condition, because of excessive delays in permitting ambulances to pass.</p>
<p><b>2. Water</b></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. (GoI 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>No unmanned barriers have been removed in June to facilitate the movement of water tankers. Conversely, the IDF built additional earth mounds in the Ramallah and Nablus governorates, thus further complicating the circulation of water tankers.</p> <p>In Balata Camp overnight the IDF erected additional earth mounds to block access to the camp. In the process, IDF bulldozers damaged the water main.</p> <p>In Abu Nujeim, in the Bethlehem area, the IDF severed the water connection to this village and a number of others by digging up and destroying the pipes. The communities have repaired them three times, and each time the IDF have returned to destroy the pipes. The residents have been using ground wells – residents with ground wells are sharing their water with those who do not have any access to ground well water.</p> <p>One of the most significant problems experienced by the resident of Beit Hanoun during the prolonged IDF incursion of May-June was the damage to water and sewage infrastructure. As a result, the waste water/sewage regularly entered the main water supply through damaged pipes.</p>	<p>During its military campaigns and incursions the IDF showed no respect for infrastructure essential for the survival of civilians. There have been many reported cases where water pipelines have been deliberately destroyed and earth mounds constructed that have prevented both tanker movement and maintenance work on water systems.</p> <p>Not only has the IDF failed to facilitate the movement of water tankers to villages with no access to water networks, but they also impeded the field work of municipal water/sanitation services attempting to conduct repairs to newly-destroyed water infrastructure.</p> <p>Cases of dysentery, skin diseases and amoeba among residents of affected villages in the West Bank continue to be reported.</p>
<p><b>3. International Organisations</b></p> <p>3.1 Israel will fully facilitate the</p>	<p>3.1.1 Free access for all international staff of international organisations</p>	<p>UN humanitarian agencies and international NGOs filed a record number of <b>302 access incidents</b>, of which <b>81 included total denial</b> of humanitarian access. Compared with the May 2003 statistics (which until</p>	<p><b>If the current trend</b> – sharp increase in the number of humanitarian access incidents – <b>continues the overall relief efforts of the international</b></p>

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<p>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</p>	<p>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 the ICRC;</p>	<p>then was the worst month in terms of humanitarian access) this represents more than a 35 percent increase in the absolute number of serious incidents. It should be noted that the registered incidents are not exhaustive, since there were numerous non-quantified access incidents during the IDF-imposed blanket closures and prohibition of circulation (e.g. Beit Hanoun).</p> <p>a) <b>IDF restrictions on UNRWA's ability to move freely within the West Bank hit their highest level since the beginning of the Intifada. There were 231 instances of delay or denial of passage at checkpoints (186 incidents of delay, 41 incidents of denial and 4 incidents in which staff members were detained).</b></p> <p>b) The average length of delay for those who were finally able to pass was nearly two hours, with an average of four employees involved in each incident. The majority of access problems were encountered at the IDF checkpoint north of Hebron (587 hours).</p> <p>c) UN Agencies (other than UNRWA) reported another <b>14</b> access incidents: all but one incident occurred in the West Bank (Shave Shamron, Huwwara, Beit Fourik checkpoints); <b>6</b> of the reported incidents included outright access denials (Erez/Gaza; Feit Fourik, Shave Shamron, Huwwara checkpoints). The remaining UN-filed incidents included long delays (up to 7 hours, Erez 13 June), disrespect for UN privileges and immunities, including car searches, and verbal abuse.</p> <p>d) <b>45</b> incident-reports were filed by international NGOs: 28 in the West Bank and 17 in the Gaza Strip. On <b>20</b> occasions humanitarian access was denied. The remaining access problems encountered by NGOs included long delays, insulting and unprofessional behaviour of IDF soldiers (“<u>I have an order to kill you</u>” – an IDF soldier to an international worker of a medical NGO, on 18 June at the Seafa gate, northern Gaza).</p> <p>In <b>4</b> incidents UN staff members were detained by IDF. On 21 June, a UN employee was detained for several hours at Beit Furik checkpoint. Soldiers <b>forced</b> the UN staff member to crouch in the sun. The staff member was released four hours later following the intervention of UNRWA Operations Support Officers (OSO).</p> <p>The situation at Erez crossing continued to be unsatisfactory during June, with international staff members being delayed for several hours while “security checks” (that had already been done before) were carried out. The IDF continued to insist on adherence to new requirements such as searching of vehicles entering Gaza.</p> <p>Unannounced closures of internal checkpoints in Gaza increased slightly in comparison with the previous month. There was disruption to humanitarian operations during the closures.</p>	<p><b>community in the oPt will soon be in jeopardy.</b></p> <p>Access problems have consistently increased over the last three months. The Access and Closures Information System (ACIS) has documented:</p> <p>126 incidents, including 13 access denials in April 199 incidents, including 88 access denials in May 302 incidents, including 81 access denials in June</p> <p>In the past (December 2002 – March 2003) the increase had a direct relationship with OCHA's improving tracking capacity. Since April, ACIS has been benefiting from cooperation of organisations across the aid community, and is now believed to be documenting the great majority of serious access incidents.</p>
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<p>arrangements between international agencies and the IDF to facilitate assistance activities (GOI to Bertini Mission, 12-19 August 2002)</p>	<p>3.2.1 Procedures established that provide direct access by international organisations to operational and command structures within the IDF</p>	<p>On 30 June, the Abu Houli/Gush Qatif junction was open for all traffic, including PA vehicles and pedestrians. The IDF removed the road blocks at both entrances of the road but the concrete military observation posts remain. The armoured vehicles also left their positions at Beit Hanoun, thereby freeing traffic to travel along the Salaheddin Road.</p> <p>Coordination arrangements with the IDF/COGAT Liaison officers in Gaza <b>either did not function, or the demands were completely unacceptable</b> to most INGOs i.e. the “waiver” and “list”. In contrast COGAT officers in the West Bank were generally helpful and reacting to aid workers’ requests for access facilitation. However, the efficiency of COGAT officers’ interventions continued to diminish, e.g. the military commander of the Huwwara checkpoint denied passage to a UN staff member, despite the efforts of the COGAT liaison officer who had arrived at the checkpoint (12 June).</p>	<p>While the Gaza IDF Liaison mechanism has never been efficient in facilitating access, the June 2003 incidents revealed the increasing inability of the West Bank Liaison Officers to facilitate humanitarian access at times of heightened tensions.</p>
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<p><b>4. Additional Commitments<sup>3</sup></b></p> <p>4.1 The fishing zone for Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles</p>	<p>4.1.1 Extension of fishing zone fully implemented;</p> <p>4.1.2 No arrests or confiscation of fishing boats within the 12 nautical mile zone;</p>	<p>On 4 June 2003, the IDF announced an extension of the Gaza fishing zone to 10 nautical miles. Previously the range was up to 6 nautical miles, however in practice boats rarely sailed beyond 3-4 miles.</p> <p>Fearing possible attacks of Israeli gunboats the Gaza fishermen initially abstained from sailing far from the shore. Over the course of the month the fears have gradually declined with boats now going out to the 10 nautical mile limit.</p> <p>In spite of the extension of the fishing zone in central and northern regions of the Strip, boats are still unable to leave Al-Mawasi/Khan Younis shore.</p>	<p>The extension of the fishing zone in the Gaza Strip represents a considerable improvement. However, there is still a continuing failure to meet the 12 nautical mile range for all Gazan fishing communities. The IDF still refuses to allow fishermen from Al-Mawasi and Seafa (another Palestinian enclave in the north of the Strip) to fish.</p>
<p>4.2 An increase in shipments at Karni crossing</p>	<p>4.2.1 Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing;</p>	<p>Following a Palestinian attack at the Erez crossing on 8 June, the Karni cargo terminal closed for 4 days but reopened thereafter for the rest of the month.</p> <p>The Sufa crossing (Gaza) was open from 2 through 5 June and was closed for the remainder of the month.</p>	<p>A quantifiable <b>increase</b> in humanitarian assistance <b>has not taken place</b> while the entry of <b>commercial goods</b> into Gaza has <b>declined monthly</b> since March. While the cargo movement at Karni has relatively improved in June (in comparison with May, when it operated for 7 days only), the entry of commercial goods to the Gaza Strip remains below pre-May 2003 levels (i.e. up to 700 trucks a day).</p>
<p>4.3 Increase in the number of work permits for workers in Israel</p>	<p>4.3.1 Quantifiable increase in the number of work permits being made available for workers in the West Bank and Gaza to work inside Israel;</p> <p>4.3.2 On average, permits are available for 14,000 workers from Gaza and 11,000 workers from the West Bank to enter Israel on a daily basis;</p>	<p>No Palestinian workers were able to enter Israel from the Gaza Strip between 9 and 29 June. Access was permitted up until 8 June, but was then forbidden following the Erez attack (8 June). Workers were able to re-enter Israel from Gaza on 30 June.</p> <p>Erez industrial zone was open throughout June with the exception of 8-9 June. The daily passage of workers in June was similar to that of May, ranging from 800 to over 3,900.</p>	<p>Palestinian workers have been unable to reach their work inside Israel on virtually a daily basis for a 2.5 month period since a tight closure was first imposed starting 16 April.</p>

<sup>3</sup> These pledges were made by the Government of Israel to the humanitarian community prior to the Bertini mission and were reconfirmed to Ms. Bertini in August 2002.