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HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT – October 2003

*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](http://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><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>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><b>West Bank &amp; Gaza: 64 incidents</b> Palestinian ambulance operators reported a total of <b>64</b> humanitarian access incidents, in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF.</p> <p><b>Ambulance Access Denials:</b> Of the <b>64</b> incidents reported, <b>16</b> included humanitarian access denials. Some of these incidents are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>05 October – A PRCS ambulance was denied access when it was attempting to transport a pregnant woman in a critical condition from Rafah to Khan Yunis, despite the coordination with ICRC.</li> <li>06 October – A MoH ambulance was denied access after a delay of 90 minutes when it was transporting a new born baby from Rafah to the European Hospital in Khan Yunis.</li> <li>26 October – Israeli soldiers at the Azmoot Gate at the Barrier denied access to an ambulance that was on its way to transport a woman in labour after being back-to-back transferred from another ambulance at the other side of the Barrier. The IDF fired towards the ambulance. The ambulance was forced to return back without the woman.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ambulance Delays:</b> <b>31</b> documented incidents included delays considerably in excess of the 30-minute limit, which ranged from <b>45</b> to <b>300</b> minutes. The following are some of the longest delays reported in September:</p> <p><b>Harassment of Ambulance Crews:</b> In October, in <b>17</b> incidents crews came under IDF attacks (firing and physically abusing paramedics)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14 October – IDF soldiers at Huwwara checkpoint stopped a PRCS ambulance transporting kidney dialysis patients home. The patients were forced out of the ambulance although one of the patients was disabled. A similar incident occurred the same day where soldiers used dogs to search the ambulance.</li> <li>Israeli soldiers stopped a PRCS ambulance at the Huwwara checkpoint on its way to Nablus to transport a patient after a back-to-back ambulance transfer at the same checkpoint. The ambulance driver was detained with his hands tied with plastic handcuffs for three hours until he was eventually released and brought back to base by an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) vehicle. A second PRCS ambulance was called to the scene and was allowed to transport the patient in critical condition to hospital.</li> </ul>	<p>The reporting period saw a worsening in ambulance access. The deterioration is seen in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The access denials – 16 in October.</li> <li>The delays of the ambulances and medical personnel.</li> <li>Abuse on medical staff and shooting and damages to ambulances.</li> </ol> <p>The deterioration is in contrast to the improvements seen between June and August.</p> <p>Not only are delays again being encountered however, outright cases of access denial have been experienced, shots have been fired at ambulances.</p> <p>Should the IDF impose tight internal restrictions within Gaza on the grounds of security, it should provide alternative routes for humanitarian service providers.</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. (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 October<sup>1</sup> in addition to the ongoing closures, three additional factors further aggravated the already critical water supply situation in the West Bank and Gaza:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant reduction in water supply to Palestinian communities by the Israeli Merkorot company <sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>• Damages/destruction of water distribution networks</li> <li>• Movement restrictions of maintenance teams and water tankers</li> </ul> <p>The combination of these factors created a greater dependency on water supplied by tankers. The increased dependency should be seen against the background of tight internal closures in the West Bank and limited purchasing power of the general population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>194</b> private roof tanks were destroyed during the month of October in the Gaza Strip and Ramallah Governorate. In addition, 7 Wells in 5 localities, 2 springs in 2 localities, 10 cisterns in 1 and 3 reservoirs were destroyed:</li> <li>• In October 2003, in <b>74</b> incidents, water tankers movement was affected by checkpoints, road barriers and curfew. In <b>43</b> reported incidents water tankers were delayed between 1-6 hours. In <b>31</b> incidents water tankers were denied access: <b>14</b> incidents due to checkpoints, <b>14</b> because of road barriers and <b>3</b> due to curfew.</li> </ul>	<p>The closure and restriction of movement remains one of the most serious causes of the water problem in Palestinian towns and villages dependant on tankered water. IDF roadblocks, ditches, earth mounds, gates and other barriers on primary roads and entrances to Palestinian residential areas, force water tankers to take more circuitous and often unpaved routes. The water tankers eventually reach the villages but the re-routing results in higher transport costs transferred onto the Palestinian consumer. With the purchasing power of the Palestinian population drastically reduced, many Palestinians cannot afford to pay for the expensive water. Removing the IDF barriers positioned at the entrances and on the roads leading to Palestinian towns and villages, is an important element in enabling Palestinians access to a viable water supply.</p> <p>Maintenance teams reported 104 incidents restricting movement, while trying to maintain the destroyed. These were the result of permanent/mobile checkpoints, road barriers and curfew.</p>
<p><b>3. International Organisations</b></p>		<p>International relief agencies filed some <b>193 incident reports</b> (compared to <b>165</b> in September) in which the delivery of humanitarian aid and/or movement of</p>	<p><b>A consistent and swift process is a minimum requirement on the</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> Approximately **64** communities were surveyed during the month of October 2003 from a total of 643 communities. The incidents reported here relate only to 64 communities.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated average losses in the water network are about **40%** of the total supplied amount according to Palestinian Water Authority (PWA).

<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 experienced IDF personnel.</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>relief personnel were obstructed by the IDF and the Israeli Border Police. The majority of reported incidents included delays and disrespect for international organisations' mandates, privileges and immunities. In <b>53 cases</b> (compared to <b>24 in September</b>) humanitarian access was denied.</p> <p>UNRWA - the largest humanitarian operator in the oPt – reported <b>161 incidents</b> of delay or denial of passage at IDF checkpoints (compared to <b>139 incidents</b> reported in September): <b>115 incidents</b> of delay <b>46 incidents</b> in which staff members were denied access. In these incidents, <b>1077</b> (compared to <b>879</b> in September) staff members were affected and UNRWA lost approximately <b>2,546</b> working hours (compared to <b>1490</b> working hours in September).</p> <p>During October, there was an increase in the restrictions on movement of UNRWA staff. The average length of those delayed was two hours and 20 minutes with an average of 5 staff members involved in each incident. The majority of access problems were encountered at IDF checkpoints around Jerusalem, particularly at Khamra checkpoint (<b>1,119 hours</b>). The Education Department recorded 27 incidents of delays. Some of the access denial cases included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>17 October:</b> UNRWA vehicle was with the company of a WFP team was prevented from crossing through the agricultural gate into Jayous, on the grounds that the area is now officially a "closed military zone".</li> </ul> <p>Other UN agencies filed <b>11 incidents</b> were in <b>2 incidents</b> staff was denied access. In one of these incident a staff member was shot at with two rubber bullets one on his left shoulder and the second on his right upper arm at the 'Ein Arik checkpoint on 13 October. After the staff member identified himself as a UN staff member, IDF soldiers still denied him access with the rest of the people in that area.</p> <p>On three consecutive days (13-15 October) WFP trucks were delayed at al Jalama and Baka checkpoints on their way to Jenin, despite 48-hour coordination with the IDF. Due to the lack of coordination from the IDF side, each 4-hour trip took at least 14 hours.</p> <p>The international NGO community reported <b>21 access incidents</b>. In <b>5 incidents</b> access was denied and in <b>10 incidents</b> they were subject to delays between <b>1-2 hours</b>. In <b>4 incidents</b> staff reported being abused at the checkpoints, and in <b>2 incidents</b> NGO cars were obliged to be searched in order to cross the checkpoints. Some of these incidents were:</p>	<p>part of the Israeli government to avoid unnecessary delays and inconvenience was not witnessed.</p> <p>Most organisations reported favourably on response from DCL officers.</p> <p>UNRWA reported that in October it encountered access problems on checkpoints around Jerusalem. The <b>most difficult checkpoint was Hamra</b></p>
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	3.2.1 Procedures established that provide direct access by international organisations to operational and command structures within the IDF		
<b>4. Additional Commitments</b>  4.1. The fishing zone for Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles	Extension of fishing zone fully implemented.  No arrests or confiscation of fishing boats within the 12 nautical mile zone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 October – Two fishermen were detained by an IDF patrol boat while fishing in northern Gaza.</li> <li>• 26 October – An IDF patrol boat fired warning shots at Palestinian fishermen who were around 8 nautical miles from the shore.</li> </ul> <p>These incidents contrast to the situation in recent months where the local fishing syndicate had reported members fishing as far as 10 nautical miles without encountering any difficulties from the IDF.</p>	Incidents like the two described were more common in the first quarter of this year. Fishermen are more likely to stay close to shore for fear of detention or attack.
<b>4.2. An increase in shipments at Karni crossing</b>	Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing.	<p>In contrast to September, Karni was open for imports throughout October.</p> <p>The number of containers entering for October was 7272 compared to 4557 for September. The October figure however, is less than the number of containers entering for July (9209) and August (8898).</p> <p>Karni was closed for exports for 3 days in October on security grounds. The number of containers leaving for the month was 752, as compared to 618 for September and 935 for August.</p>	There was a quantifiable increase in both imports and exports for October when compared with the previous month.
<b>4.3. Increase in the number of work permits for workers in Israel</b>	Quantifiable increase in the number of work permits being made available for workers in the West Bank and Gaza to work inside Israel	<p>While Erez was open to Palestinian workers entering Israel from 1-3 October, the Haifa bombing led to a complete closure between 4 and 28 October. Only 261 workers passed Erez during the last 3 days in October.</p> <p>The Gaza economy was adversely affected by a significant loss of income on account of the ongoing restrictions on movement into Israel.</p> <p>Erez industrial estate remained open through out the whole of the month with the number of workers per day ranging between 857 and 3877.</p>	In the wake of bombings inside Israel, it can be expected that Erez was closed to Palestinian labourers for a prolonged period.

<p><b>5. Additional comments:</b> Additional comments on access and closures.</p>		<p>From 5 October, Gaza was placed under one of the tightest internal closures since the outbreak of conflict in September 2000. While the Strip has been subject to periodic tri-section, there was only one previous occasion when the Strip was cut into four, as occurred from 5 October with closures located at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach road to the south of Gaza city;</li> <li>• Abu Houli junction in central Gaza;</li> <li>• Morag-Sufa junction to the south of Khan Younis.</li> </ul> <p>The effect of these closures was to prevent population movement from northern Gaza and Gaza city to the central area; between the central area and Khan Younis and between Khan Younis and Rafah. The controls also impacted national and international agencies that deliver assistance.</p> <p>For a period of 6 days from 5 October, only one international organisation, Medecins Sans Frontiers (France-Spain) was able to reach southern Gaza. By driving down the beach to by-pass the blockade and then use dirt tracks to circumvent the closure at Morag-Sufa. Other international agencies, which requested IDF liaison to allow passage via the Abu Al Ajin road were refused.</p> <p>International agencies were unable to respond to the critical humanitarian situation in Rafah with the onset of a large military incursion from 10 October. Ambulances also experienced major difficulties in reaching secondary care facilities in Khan Younis while civilian populations suffered from localised cuts in water and power supplies.</p> <p>Following the eventual withdrawal by the IDF from Rafah on 20 October, the system of controls that had been progressively re-instated at Abu Houli junction from the end of August (with the collapse of the "hudna"), remained firmly in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.00 – 20.00 opening hours, (contrary to the 24 hour access that had been available from 30 June);</li> <li>• IDF observation towers controlling traffic movement at the north and south of the junction had returned to their original positions (prior to the hudna);</li> <li>• Re-introduction of the traffic light system allowing only 5 vehicles at a time to move alternatively in each direction;</li> <li>• Cars carrying less than 3 persons prohibited from crossing.</li> </ul> <p>Such accumulated conditions and restrictions severely impact on the ability of</p>	<p>The situation facing international organisations working in Gaza significantly deteriorated throughout October.</p> <p>Far from facilitating the activities of international organisations, the actions taken by the Israeli government through the internal closures severely impacted on the ability of agencies to provide their services. Only one agency was able to reach southern Gaza over a six day period.</p> <p>Where a tight closure is put in place that effectively divides Gaza into 3 or 4 segments, an alternative route should be offered on humanitarian grounds.</p> <p>Controls imposed at Abu Houli directly impact the freedom of movement of staff. Time is being wasted sitting in queues at the junction, while human resources are being directed towards making up numbers in terms of the 3 person vehicle requirement.</p>
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		<p>international agencies to go about their daily activities.</p> <p>National staff members were not able to cross Erez throughout October as was the case in September, thus marking a continuation of the closure policy introduced after the 19 August attack in Jerusalem. No indication was given as to when restrictions would be lifted.</p> <p>The situation at Al Mawasi enclaves and Siafa remains unchanged. While international agencies report that access in and out of the enclaves remains easier, the Israeli authorities still insist on prior coordination and continue to impose a “back to back” system, where the delivery of food aid is concerned. International agencies are generally positive regarding the cooperation on the ground at Tuffah check point with the southern DCL officer.</p>	
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