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## HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT – September 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
<b>1. Health:</b>  1. 1 Palestinian ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at any checkpoints (Gol to Bertini mission, 12-19 April 2002)  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)	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.  Mechanisms established and Palestinian public informed; Explicit instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders.  1.2.1 No more instances of Palestinians seeking critical medical services denied passage at checkpoints reported	<p><b>West Bank &amp; Gaza: 39 incidents</b>  <b>West Bank: 35 incidents</b>  Palestinian ambulance operators reported a total of <b>35</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>Gaza Strip: 4 incidents</b>  <b>4 incidents</b> of ambulances denied access were reported by PRCS and MoH. Since 28 August, the IDF has prevented MoH ambulances from crossing Erez to transport patients to West Bank and Israeli hospitals, although the MoH is permitted in exceptional cases to transport patients suffering from cardiac problems and cancer to Israeli hospitals via Erez for special treatments.</p> <p><b>Ambulance Access Denials:</b>  Of the <b>39</b> incidents reported, <b>17</b> included humanitarian access denials :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 September – IDF denied access to MoH and PRCS ambulances to evacuate a 17-year old youth, who sustained injuries died after bleeding for approximately 18 hours.</li> <li>13 September – A PRCS ambulance was denied access on its way to pick up an 82-year man injured by gunshot. After delays and coordination with ICRC, the ambulance was allowed to reach the injured, but he was pronounced dead at the hospital.</li> <li>16 September – A PRCS ambulance transporting a patient from Huwwara village to hospital received a call from a clinic in Huwwara village to pick another patient in a critical condition. IDF denied access to the ambulance because the patient in the ambulance was from Awarta village. After coordination with ICRC the ambulance and a delay of an hour, the ambulance was allowed to cross the checkpoint. The patient died in the interim.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ambulance Delays:</b>  <b>19</b> documented incidents in excess of the 30-minute limit, which ranged from 45 to <b>240</b> minutes. The following are some of the longest delays reported in September.</p> <p><b>Harassment of Ambulance Crews:</b>  In September <b>3</b> incidents of harassment of ambulance crews were reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01 September – A PRCS ambulance was stopped by the IDF at Beit Iba checkpoint while on its way to transport a woman in labour to Sebastiya village. After searching the ambulance and checking the medics' IDs, the driver was ordered to park the vehicle, and abusing the crew verbally. The ambulance</li> </ul>	<p>The reporting period saw a significant regress in the implementation of this commitment. The deterioration is seen in</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The access denials – 17 in September up from 13 in August, which lead to the death of the patients in three cases.</li> <li>The delays of the ambulances and medical personnel.</li> </ol> <p>While the majority of Gaza residents are finding it considerably easier to access health facilities, this is not the case for those living in Al Mawasi who are still subjected to unacceptable delays.</p> <p>Similarly, those patients experiencing critical conditions and requiring treatment outside Gaza have found their ability to access such services significantly restricted since the end of August, by the reduction in the number of MoH ambulances leaving Gaza to one a day. This action by the Israeli authorities clearly runs counter to the commitment that allows critical cases access to the medical services their condition requires.</p> <p>Most delays and problems with checkpoints occurred from mid-end of August that coincided with</p>

		medical team were abused and told to sit on the ground. After coordination with ICRC the ambulance and the team were released.	the end of the Hudna (ceasefire called by Hamas and Islamic Jihad) and following the bus bombing in Jerusalem on 19 August.
<b>2. Water</b>  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)	2.1.1 Instructions issued to all checkpoints allowing for the easy transfer of water tankers through all checkpoints.  2.1.2 The IDF removes barriers that prevent the access by water tankers to villages that rely on tankered water.  2.1.3 Absence of any reports on lack of water or delay/stoppage of water tankers at checkpoints.	<p>In September<sup>1</sup> in addition to the ongoing closures, four additional factors in September further aggravated the already critical water supply situation in the West Bank and Gaza. These factors continued over into the months of September:</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> <li>• Continued construction of the Barrier.</li> </ul> <p>The combination of these four 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>• The Merkorot company, that controls a large percentage of Palestinian water resources, significantly reduced water supply to the West Bank and Gaza. In September some <b>334,981</b> Palestinians in <b>40</b> localities faced critical water shortages as a result of the reduced water supply by Merkorot (e.g., <b>100</b> percent decline in Deir al Balah Camp and <b>60</b> percent in Tarqumiya.</li> <li>• An average of <b>2596</b> people was affected due to destruction in the water network main line, and an average of <b>1808</b> people was affected due to the destruction of network in secondary lines.</li> <li>• <b>133</b> incidents related to maintenance teams' movement restriction were reported due to permanent/mobile checkpoints, road barriers and curfew. In <b>60</b> incidents, maintenance teams were delayed between 1-6 hours as a result of the closure. In <b>73</b> incidents maintenance teams were denied access, 24 cases of denial of access were due to checkpoints and 23 as a</li> </ul>	<p>The closure and restriction of movement remains one of the most serious but resolvable 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>

<sup>1</sup> Approximately **75** communities were surveyed during the month of September 2003 from a total of 643 communities. The incidents reported here relate only to 75 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>result of barriers and 13 because of curfew.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In September 2003, in <b>105</b> incidents water tankers movement was affected by checkpoints, road barriers and curfew. In <b>50</b> incidents water tankers were denied access: <b>28</b> incidents due to checkpoints, <b>17</b> because of road barriers and <b>5</b> due to curfew. Water tankers movement witnessed a delay between 1-6 hours in 55 incidents.</li> <li>The impact of the separation wall on water supply observed in 8 localities. These localities faced water problem due to the destruction of water networks and natural resources. (e.g., In Izbet Salman in Qalqiliya <b>60%</b> of the population was affected due to the destruction of secondary lines in the water network.)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. International Organisations</b></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>3.1.1 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</p>	<p>International relief agencies filed some <b>165 incident reports</b> (compared to <b>110</b> in August) 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 <b>24 cases</b> humanitarian access was denied.</p> <p>UNRWA - the largest humanitarian operator in the oPt – reported <b>139 incidents</b> of delay or denial of passage at IDF checkpoints (compared to <b>96</b> incidents reported in August): <b>123</b> incidents of delay <b>16</b> incidents in which staff members were denied access. In these incidents, <b>879</b> (compared to <b>372</b> in August) staff members were affected and UNRWA lost approximately <b>1490</b> working hours.</p> <p>During September, there was an increase in the restrictions on movement of UNRWA staff. The average length of for those who were finally able to pass was more than an hour and a half. The majority of access problems were encountered at IDF checkpoints around Jerusalem, particularly at Gilo checkpoint. The Education Department recorded the highest number of delays (<b>27</b> incidents). Some of the access denial cases included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22 September – At abu Haleb checkpoint, IDF soldiers ordered UNRWA staff out of their vehicle, and demanded that the car be searched. IDF soldiers stated they had received no orders to permit UN cars to pass without a search. The UNRWA vehicle was detained at the checkpoint for one and a half hours before being let, having refused to submit to the search, and the IDF refusing to let it pass.</li> <li>26 September – Following the imposition of complete closure on the West</li> </ul>	<p>The UNRWA West Bank Field Office reports that <b>September was the worst month for access in the past 12 months.</b></p> <p>UNRWA reported that in September encountered access problems on checkpoints around Jerusalem and <b>the most difficult checkpoint was Gilo.</b></p> <p>The situation facing international organisations working in Gaza has <b>steadily deteriorated throughout September</b>, in terms of the relative freedom of movement experienced by staff in July and the first half of August.</p> <p>While Israel can seek to justify a screening process for international staff members entering Gaza for the first time, <b>the arbitrary nature of this process</b> with delays of many</p>

<p>3.2 Israel will improve the situation at checkpoints, including the deployment of more experienced IDF personnel.</p>	<p>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 to operational and command structures within the IDF</p>	<p>Bank, Field office staff members residing in Bethlehem were denied access at Gilo and Tunnel checkpoints.</p> <p>UN OCHA reported about <b>1</b> incident being denied access at the Shave Shamron checkpoint even after the coordination with Nablus DCL on 18 September. In another incident on 16 September, the IDF insisted on searching the UN vehicle before allowing the staff members to allowed to cross the Huwwara checkpoint.</p> <p>The international NGO community reported <b>24</b> access incidents (compared to <b>13</b> incidents in August). In <b>11</b> incidents access was denied and in <b>7</b> incidents they were subject to delays between 1-4 hours. In <b>4</b> incidents staff reported being abused at the checkpoint. In <b>2</b> incidents NGO cars were shot at in the Gaza Strip. And in <b>1</b> incident a staff member was arrested. Some of these incidents were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 September – A staff member of an international organization was arrested and transported to Ariel police station, and the car was confiscated. The IDF claimed that the car he was driving was stolen. After one hour in the police station the staff member was able to contact his supervisor and family. After coordination he was released.</li> <li>• The Country representative of an international organization was stopped outside Jenin at ash Shuhada checkpoint with two staff members. He was shackled, blind folded and threatened at gunpoint. 3 hours later he was released after his colleague coordinated with DCL. IDF claimed that he was posing a “security threat” coming out of Jenin which was under curfew, though it was confirmed that the staff members and himself never went into Jenin.</li> <li>• 30 September – a staff member that works with an international organization was physically abused at the Yitzhar settlement junction by the IDF. His national, organization and AIDA ID cards were confiscated. He was forced to sit on the ground near the road. After intervention and coordination with the DCO, the staff member was released. This incident lasted for three hours.</li> </ul>	<p>hours and in some cases complete denial is totally unacceptable. <b>A consistent and swift process is a minimum requirement</b> on the part of the Israeli government to avoid unnecessary delays and inconvenience.</p> <p>National staff members should similarly be allowed to travel unhindered between the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza. <b>The imposition of this travel ban on Palestinians working for international agencies implies they are a security threat, a charge that is unfounded.</b></p>
<p><b>4. Additional Commitments</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>Extension of fishing zone fully implemented.</p> <p>No arrests or confiscation of fishing boats within the 12 nautical mile zone.</p>	<p>Palestinian fishing boats are now going out as far as the 10 nautical mile limit that the Israelis announced on 3 June. There had been an initial reluctance on the part of fishermen to venture out this far for fear of attacks; however this concern has now declined. As a result of seasonal factors however, fewer fishermen are dropping nets due to the smaller volume of catches at this time of year.</p> <p>In spite of the extension of the fishing range, boats are still unable to leave Al Mawasi Khan Younis while fishing out of Rafah is only permitted to residents of Al Mawasi Rafah. Non Mawasi Rafah fishermen thus have to fish out of boats from central and northern Gaza.</p>	<p>In spite of the Israelis now allowing boats to fish 10 nm off the coast, <b>there is still a continuing failure to meet the 12 nm range</b> that was originally agreed upon.</p>

<b>4.2. An increase in shipments at Karni crossing</b>	<p>Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing.</p>	<p>Karni was closed on 28 and 31 August, and this was reflected in a small reduction in the number of containers <b>entering Gaza</b> from the West Bank, Israel and Overseas. A total of <b>8,898 entered in August compared to 9,209 for July</b>. The <b>number of containers leaving Gaza showed a marked increase</b> in August as against July, when <b>935</b> containers left as against <b>627</b> the previous month.</p>	<p>August saw a net increase in the total movement of containers, with a notable rise in the number of units leaving Gaza, which can be assumed to be of benefit to the local economy.</p>
<b>4.3. Increase in the number of work permits for workers in Israel</b>	<p>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>In contrast to August where Karni was only closed on 2 working days, <b>a full and partial closure was imposed throughout most of the second half of September</b>. This was reflected in <b>a marked reduction</b> in the numbers of containers entering Gaza from the West Bank, Israel and Overseas with a near 50% on the numbers entering for July and August. 4557 containers for September compared to a total of 8898 and 9209 for August and July respectively.</p> <p>The number of containers leaving Gaza reduced by nearly one third for September compared to August but was similar to the total for July. 618 containers for September compared to 935 and 627 August as against July respectively.</p> <p><b>Erez remained closed to Palestinian workers for the majority of September</b> with total closure on 14 days, while a near closure was in place between 16-20 September when a total of only 136 persons was allowed to pass. On the remaining days, the daily number of workers varied from 3937 to 9066.</p> <p>The Gazan economy was again 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 728 and 4024. The average per day for September was down on the figure for August, June and July.</p>	<p>A <b>quantifiable decrease</b> in shipments entering and exiting Gaza was seen in <b>September</b>. The reduction in the quantity of exports clearly represents a loss of income to the local economy.</p> <p>On the grounds of “security” Erez crossing remained closed for a large part of the month, making irrelevant the number of permits that may be available on a daily basis.</p>