



OCHA Situation Report **Gaza**

occupied Palestinian territory

13 June 2007

Resumption of factional fighting in the Gaza Strip

Report as of 7:00 pm

At least 59 Palestinians have been killed including three women and one child and at least a further 273 people have been injured throughout the Gaza Strip since 9 June¹. A number of those killed in the last five days have been summarily executed. Two Palestinians working for UNRWA have been killed and another two injured today. UNRWA has announced with immediate effect that it will temporarily suspend its operations in Gaza except for essential medical services and emergency food distributions.

A march in Gaza City this morning calling for an end to the factional violence resulted in one death as gunmen opened fire at members of the crowd.

Factional fighting resumed between Fatah forces and Hamas and its affiliated Executive Support Forces (ESF) in Rafah in southern Gaza on 9 June following a previous ceasefire that was agreed on 19 May. A ceasefire called on 11 June did not take effect as violence escalated in Beit Hanoun in north eastern Gaza, during which four people were killed and at least 15 injured.

The situation in the Gaza Strip appeared calmer this morning with fewer incidents reported, and shops and markets reopening in Gaza City. However fighting has since resumed in north west Gaza City around Shifa and Beach camp and also in Khan Younis in southern Gaza where a tunnel was detonated under a Fatah security base.

Fighting spread to the middle area of the Gaza Strip on 12 June as Hamas forces attacked security bases loyal to Fatah. Hamas/ESF is now believed to be in control of the majority of the

middle area of the Gaza Strip including the refugee camps of Maghazi, Brej, Nuseirat and the nearby town of Suweida. Hamas/ESF is similarly believed to now control most of northern Gaza and large parts of Khan Younis and the eastern villages. From early afternoon on 12 June Hamas has been announcing through its TV and radio station and local mosques that PA forces should evacuate all their bases throughout the Gaza Strip.

There are concerns that the violence in the Gaza Strip may spread to the West Bank.

Nablus: On 12 June three people believed to be Hamas members were lightly wounded by gun fire and there have been isolated armed incidents today with at least six injuries, while 11 people working for a media office affiliated with Hamas were abducted by gunmen this afternoon.

Ramallah: On 12 June the Deputy Minister of Transport was taken from his offices by gunmen believed to be affiliated to Fatah, while in two other incidents a further four people, including a student, believed to be affiliated with Hamas were abducted in and around Ramallah by gunmen. None have been released.

Hebron and Bethlehem: Palestinian security forces in both towns are currently reinforcing their bases with additional sand bags.

Qassam rockets and mortars continue to be fired by Palestinian militants towards Israel, and Israeli media have reported that one person was lightly injured by shrapnel in a western Negev factory zone on 12 June.

¹ Ministry of Health



Humanitarian concerns

- **Civilians fear for their safety.** Gunmen returned to the streets and high rise buildings of Gaza City as was seen during previous factional clashes in January, February and May this year. This presence severely disrupts the lives of Gazan civilians. Many are afraid to leave their homes and face being interrogated at impromptu militia checkpoints by armed, masked militias or risk the chance of being caught in cross fire between the rival factions.
- **The Ministry of Health has confirmed that six of their ambulances have been hit by gunfire since the outbreak of violence on 9 June.** A further two MoH ambulances were hijacked by militants including one that was evacuating an injured person. The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has faced difficulties in evacuating the injured due to the intensity of clashes in the affected areas. In some instances ambulance staff have refused to enter certain areas due to the intensity of the fighting. The red crescent mandate is not being respected by many of those involved in the factional fighting.
- **Access to Health Care.** On 12 June, seven of UNRWA's 18 health clinics in the Gaza Strip were forced to close. Major interruptions to service provision have also been experienced at Ministry of Health (MoH) with all primary health care clinics closed in Gaza city on 12 June. All UN staff in Gaza City were instructed to work from their homes on 11, 12 and 13 June while other staff in the Gaza Strip have been unable to reach their work places due to checkpoints and general insecurity in their neighbourhoods.
- **Access to Hospitals.** Armed incidents have taken place in and around a number of Gazan hospitals, including Abu Yussef Najjar hospital in Rafah, and Beit Hanoun hospital on 11 June and the European hospital in Khan Younis on 12 June. The four casualties from Beit Hanoun on 11 June were reported to have been killed in fighting around the hospital while the hospital generator was damaged by gunfire. Hamas/ESF have taken up positions around Shifa hospital in Gaza City and exchanged fire with Fatah forces from surrounding positions. Hospitals are limiting their activities to emergency services.

- **The MoH Director General of hospitals reported to WHO that there is an overload on all hospitals in Gaza.** Some specific surgery procedures are hampered due to lack of special kits, mainly for vascular surgery. Some lack of blood units are expected due to the inability of donors to reach blood banks. Shifa hospital reported an urgent need for an auto-analyzer for chemistry laboratory tests, as the two available machines are not functioning.

There are also concerns on the need to rotate staff as some of the doctors, nurses and administrative support have now been present in the hospitals for over 72 hours while replacement staff have been encountering difficulties in getting to work. ICRC is in the process of trying to coordinate the safe movement of staff in and out of Shifa hospital.

- **Current Stocks of Essential Food Supplies.** **There are no reports of shortages of essential supplies** however many shops and supermarkets have been closed in Gaza City and people have not been willing to leave the safety of their homes. Karni, the principle crossing point for the movement of goods and supplies was open on 10 and 11 June for imports and exports but closed on 12 June and today.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has distributed 1000 tons of supplies in the last week including 600 tons since 9 June. WFP currently has 1000 tons in its main warehouse at Karni industrial zone with a further 3500 tons dispersed at 23 other warehouses run by implementing partners throughout the Gaza Strip. The WFP, in conjunction with ICRC, has distributed 160 bread parcels (3.5kg each) to five hospitals in the Gaza Strip. WFP is seeking to bring in 11 trucks of additional supplies of sugar and vegetable oil via Kerem Shalom on 17 June.

Three of UNRWA's five Food Distribution Centres were forced to close on 12 June due to factional fighting in close proximity to the premises.



- **Access to Education.** The school year for the majority of Gazan pupils finished last week, however 24,000 senior pupils are in the process of sitting for their matriculation exams (Tawjihi). The cease fire that was announced on 11 June, was called in part to enable students to take their exams. The Ministry of Education (MoE) also identified six alternative locations for pupils to sit for the exams in certain areas of Gaza City as several school premises had come under fire in recent days. According to UNICEF most of the students have taken the exam so far. On 13 June, nine exam centres were closed in Gaza city and three in Khan Younis out of a total of 146 centres for the whole of the Gaza Strip.

Classes and exams have been suspended at Gaza's three universities, Al Azhar, the Islamic University and Al Quds Open University.

UNRWA schools have been entered by militants. On 12 June, Hamas militants broke into the UNRWA Deir el Balah Co-ed school and asked the UNRWA staff to leave the school. Thereafter armed clashes erupted around the school between ESF and National Security Forces (NSF) in which an NSF member was killed. In Khan Younis, two Hamas militants entered the UNRWA Prep C school with negotiations being required before being persuaded to leave.

- **Freedom of Movement.** Numerous, illegal militia checkpoints are present on the two main north-south arterial roads, Salah ed Din street and the Coastal road. People are afraid to move south of Gaza city to the middle area, Khan Younis and Rafah when faced with such restrictions and populations are becoming restricted to their localities.
- **International organisations.** UN staff were instructed to work from their homes on 11, 12 June and today. There is a significant risk of being stuck at checkpoints, caught in crossfire and kidnapping for international staff. Very few international staff working for NGOs now remain in Gaza.