



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS WEEKLY REPORT

29 FEBRUARY - 06 MARCH 2012

Key issues

- ❖ Two Palestinian children were killed, and three others were injured in the West Bank by unexploded ordnance (UXO)
- ❖ Increased power outages continue throughout the Gaza Strip due to insufficient fuel supply to run the Gaza Power Plant, disrupting the delivery of public services, and impacting daily civilian life.
- ❖ Israeli authorities allow first transfer of goods from Gaza to the West Bank since the beginning of the blockade in mid-2007.

WEST BANK

Casualties decline; concerns over UXOs and the misuse of tear gas canisters

Two 12-year-old Palestinian children were killed on 6 March when an unexploded ordnance (UXO) detonated while they were playing in a location in Area B near Sa'ir village in the Hebron governorate. Three others, including two children, were also injured in the same incident. Both Israeli and Palestinian police arrived to the area, and the wounded were transported to Hebron hospital for medical treatment. The Israeli authorities confirmed that the UXO had been left by the Israeli military, and have opened an investigation into the incident. This is the second such incident in the West Bank in 2012: on 20 January, two Palestinian children were injured by unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Jinba, south of Hebron. Israeli military officials said that the latter UXO was planted by an unidentified Palestinian armed group.

This week registered a significant decrease in Palestinian injuries by Israeli forces (22 injuries), compared to the previous week (136), as well as with the rest of 2012 (39 injuries on average per week). Two of this week's injuries, however, are in a critical state: one injured with a rubber bullet to the head during an Israeli search operation in Biddu (Jerusalem), and another injured when a tear gas canister hit him directly in head during a clash with Israeli forces during a demonstration held at the Atara partial checkpoint (Ramallah). The firing of high-velocity tear gas canisters at demonstrators by Israeli forces has long been a concern. Although the Israeli military prohibits the firing of such canisters directly at people's bodies, since the beginning of 2009, two demonstrators have been killed and 376 others

Palestinian casualties by Israeli forces

Killed this week: 0

Killed in 2012: 1

Killed in 2011: 10

Injured this week: 22; 21 in demonstrations

Of whom were children: 0

Injured in 2012: 315

2012 weekly average of injured: 25

2011 weekly average of injured: 28

Search and Arrest Operations: 82

Search-and-arrest operations this week: 130

have been injured in these circumstances.

The remaining 20 Palestinian injuries during the week were as a result of tear gas inhalation (requiring medical treatment) that occurred at a demonstration in the village of Kafr Qaddum (Qalqiliya) against the continuous closure of the village's main eastern entrance.

The level of reported settler violence was relatively low this week, with two settler incidents. In one incident, Israeli settlers partially cut down 25 Palestinian-owned olive trees in the village of Far'ata (Qalqiliya). The second incident occurred near a water spring in Qarawat Bani Zaid village (Ramallah), when two settlers entered the village and were met with stone-throwing by a group of Palestinian children. The settlers retaliated with live ammunition, and one of the bullets hit a rock near one of the children, splintering it; pieces of the rock hit the child in the eye.

There were also reports of Palestinian stone-throwing targeting settlers in Hebron City (Hebron) and near Al-Ram village (Jerusalem). While there were no injuries, some damage to vehicles was reported.



Demolitions and evictions in Area C and Jerusalem continue

Israeli forces demolished an agricultural structure in the village of Qaffin (Tulkarm). According to the mayor of the village, no demolition order against the structure was received prior to the demolition. The structure was used to store water tanks and 500 forest seedlings, all of which were also destroyed during the demolition.

Also, in the Haris village in Salfit governorate, the Israeli authorities issued stop-construction orders against six structures under construction, potentially affecting the livelihoods of six families. Additionally, five stop building orders were delivered against extensions of existing structures belonging to a Bedouin community near Deir Ammar village (Ramallah), affecting 60 people.

Finally, in Beit Hanina (East Jerusalem), two Palestinian families comprising of 20 people, including 13 children, were given notice to evacuate their home after an Israeli court order ruled that the land on which the house was built is owned by an Israeli settler.

GAZA STRIP

Calm in Gaza

The Gaza Strip was generally calm this week in compared to previous weeks, with no direct conflict casualties and no reported Israeli military activities. This contrasts with the previous five weeks, during which five Palestinians had been killed and 25 others injured. Armed Palestinians fired several rockets and mortar shells toward southern Israel, none of which resulted in Israeli injuries or damage to property.

Power outages continue in Gaza

The Gaza Power Plant (GPP) resumed operation of a single turbine on 1 March after receiving limited amounts of fuel through the tunnels under Gaza and Egypt border. Disruptions in fuel supply from

Settler-related incidents resulting in injuries or property damage:

This week: 2

2011 weekly average: 8

Palestinians injuries by settler violence:

This week: 2

Injured in 2012: 20

2011 weekly average: 4

Israeli settlers injured by Palestinians:

This week: 0

Injured in 2012: 5

Total in 2011: 21

Palestinian-owned structures demolished in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

This week:

Demolished: 1

Displaced: 0

Demolished in 2012: 116

People displaced in 2012: 220

2012 vs. 2011 demolitions (weekly av.): 9 vs. 12

2012 vs. 2011 people displaced (weekly av.): 17 vs. 21

Egypt, mainly due to unrest in the Egyptian Sinai, resulted in a significant decline in the amount of fuel that entered Gaza through the tunnels; in the previous five weeks, the GPP received only 32 percent of the average amount of fuel entered in the previous three months.

This week, the GPP received approximately 100,000-150,000 liters of diesel a day, well below the 400-450,000 liters of diesel per day needed to operate its three turbines at full capacity. As a result, there is currently a 50 per cent of electricity deficit, resulting in blackouts lasting from eight to 16 hours per day, with unscheduled power cuts also occasionally occurring due to increased load on the network.

The power blackouts caused major disruptions

to public services. Water supply was especially impacted, with up to 40 percent of the population accessing water only once every four days. Most public services have relied heavily on electricity generators to augment the reduced electricity output from the grid.

Cooking gas shortage

Cooking gas continued to be rationed in Gaza, with almost half of its 28 gas stations reportedly closed during the week. From 26 Feb - 03 March, 326 tonnes of cooking gas entered via Kerem Shalom crossing, less than 27 percent of the weekly required amount of 1,200 tonnes, and the lowest amount entered since the second week of October 2011. The shortage is being partially addressed with cooking gas entering through the tunnels: an estimated 2-5 tonnes of cooking gas are piped into Gaza, and more than 3,000 empty gas canisters are refilled in Egypt each day.

This week, seven tunnel workers were rescued by a Palestinian civil defense team after they were suffocated inside a tunnel as a result of gas leak, while another worker was killed when he fell down a tunnel chute. The impact of the gas shortage is especially acute given the current cold weather. The reasons behind the reduced imports through Kerem Shalom crossing are yet unclear.

Hundreds affected by floods during rain storm

Between 29 February and 02 March, heavy rains and bad weather conditions affected 133 families living in poorly constructed houses, and resulted in some roads leading to the flooded areas being temporarily closed. The situation was compounded by the absence of a rainwater drainage system, which resulted in the overflowing of sewage pools.

Among those affected were residents of two houses in Gaza City that were severely damaged, by the floods but refused to be evacuated. In

Palestinian casualties by Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip:

Killed this week: 0

Killed in 2012: 5

Injured this week: 2

Of whom were children: 0

Injured in 2012: 25

2011 weekly average of injured: 9

addition, approximately 15 families from Jabalia were temporally evacuated in 2 March, when a wastewater pool flooded and the main roads were blocked. UNRWA responded by providing mattresses for more than 80 families, and the Ministry of Social Affairs in Gaza, together with the World Food Programme (WFP) distributed blankets and food parcels (sufficient for 2-3 days) to affected families. An additional 148 water tanks will be distributed by Oxfam GB to replace damaged water tanks in Al Sarsanc area in Gaza City.

Movement of goods (Kerem Shalom Crossing):

Imports:

Truckloads that entered this week: 897

Percentage carrying food: 31

Weekly average since the beginning of 2011: 1058

Weekly average before the blockade: 2,807

Exports:

Truckloads that left this week: 7

Weekly average since the beginning of 2011: 16

Weekly average before the blockade: 240

First shipment of Gazan goods to the West Bank since the beginning of the blockade

Between 26 February and 3 March, nine truckloads were authorized to exit Gaza via Kerem Shalom crossing, including six truckload of cut flowers (970,000 stems) and one truckload of cherry tomato (7.6 tonnes) to European markets, along with two truckloads of fortified date bars designated for WFP food distribution in schools in the West Bank.

The latter was the first transfer of goods from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank since the beginning of the blockade in mid-2007. This shipment is the first batch of a total of 140 tonnes (or 19 truckloads) of locally-produced date bars to be transferred over ten days. The date bars, which are already distributed in Gaza schools, will be distributed also in the West Bank, where WFP assists 75,000 school children in 292 schools in the most food insecure communities, including Seam Zone and Bedouin communities in Area C.

Israeli approval of the shipment required more than six months of negotiations, and does not entail a resumption of the normal transfer of goods from Gaza to the West Bank. Prior to the imposition of the blockade, over 80 percent of Gaza's exports were marketed in the West Bank and Israel.

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