

Key issues

- Three Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in arrest operations and while enforcing access restrictions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
- Over 40 people displaced due to Area C demolitions on the eve of winter storm; Bedouin communities among the worst affected by weather conditions.
- Heavy rains in the Gaza Strip compound the humanitarian impact of the energy crisis; severe flooding and damage to residential and agricultural properties.
- The Gaza Power Plant resumes limited operations on 15 December following 45 days of complete shutdown.

WEST BANK

Two Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in northern West Bank

During the reporting period, two Palestinians were killed and another eight injured by Israeli forces in northern West Bank in two separate incidents. On 18 December, Israeli forces conducted a search-and-arrest operation in the Jenin Refugee Camp, during which they shot and injured two men who tried to escape arrest, one of whom (24-year-old), died shortly of his wound while in arrest. The incident triggered clashes between the soldiers and local residents, which resulted in the injury of eight additional Palestinians. Another Palestinian man (aged 27) was shot and killed by Israeli forces the following day during a similar operation in Qalqiliya City, after he opened fire at the force, according to the IDF spokesperson. Palestinian sources indicated that the man was a member of the Palestinian security forces and, during the incident, was participating in an anti-drug mission. None of the incidents resulted in casualties among the Israeli forces.

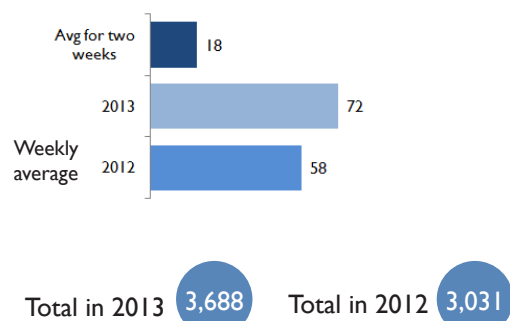
These incidents have taken place in the context of a worrying increase in recent months in the frequency of deadly incidents across the West Bank, particularly during search-and-arrest operations by Israeli forces, as well as inside Israel. Since the beginning of 2013, Israeli forces killed a total of 28 Palestinians, including at least 22 civilians unaffiliated with any armed group, while Palestinians killed three Israeli soldiers and two civilians.

Palestinian Fatalities by Isr. forces

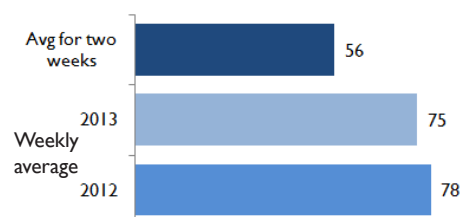
This week:	2
In 2013 (to date):	27
Equivalent 2012 period:	8

This figure excludes the Palestinian worker killed on the 30th November inside Israel

Palestinian Injuries by Isr. forces



Search and arrest operations by Isr. forces



Thirty-five (35) other Palestinians were injured by Israeli forces during the two-week reporting period in clashes across the West Bank. This figure is significantly below the weekly average so far in 2013 (72), and could be attributed to the heavy winter storm that hit the region on 11 December. Sixteen (16) of the injuries occurred on 20 December during weekly demonstrations: in Bi'lin village (Ramallah) against the isolation of land by the Barrier; and in Kafr Qaddum (Qalqiliya) against the prolonged closure of one of the village's main entrances, as well as the settlement expansion on the village's land.

Additionally, on 23 December, an Israeli border policeman was stabbed by a Palestinian near Jaba' junction (Jerusalem).

Bomb explodes in a bus in Israel

In the afternoon hours of 22 December, a bomb exploded in a bus in the Israeli city of Bat Yam. Since all passengers had been evacuated immediately before the explosion, the incident resulted in no casualties. While no one assumed responsibility, the Israeli police indicated that it suspected the attack had been perpetrated by a Palestinian group or individual. A similar attack took place in November 2012 in Tel Aviv, during the last day of the "Pillar of Defense" operation in Gaza, resulting in the injury of 28 Israelis.

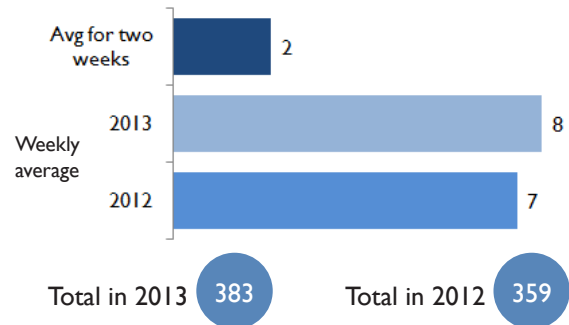
Sharp decline in Israeli settler attacks

The two week reporting period recorded a significant decline in the number of attacks involving Israeli settlers, compared to previous weeks, which could be also attributed to the weather conditions. On 21 December, a group of Israeli settlers cut down or otherwise damaged around 50 olive trees owned by two Palestinian families from Beitillu village (Ramallah), in a Palestinian land adjacent to Nehali'el settlement.

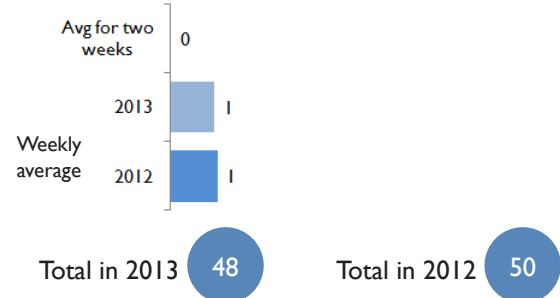
In another incident on 11 December in West Jerusalem, a group of Israeli youth stabbed and injured a 20-year-old Palestinian man from East Jerusalem.

Settler-related violence*

Incidents resulting in Pal. casualties or property damage



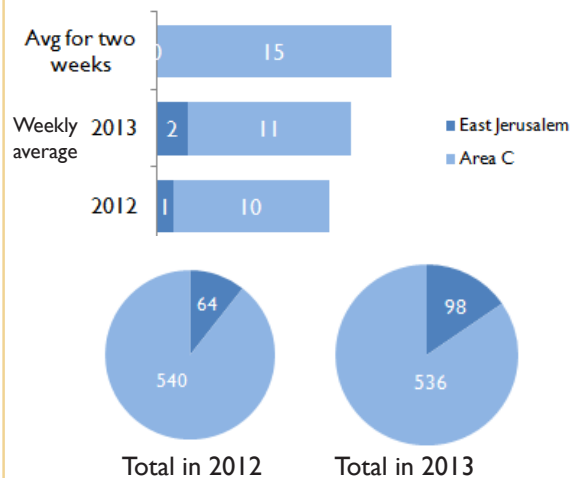
Incidents resulting in Isr. casualties or property damage



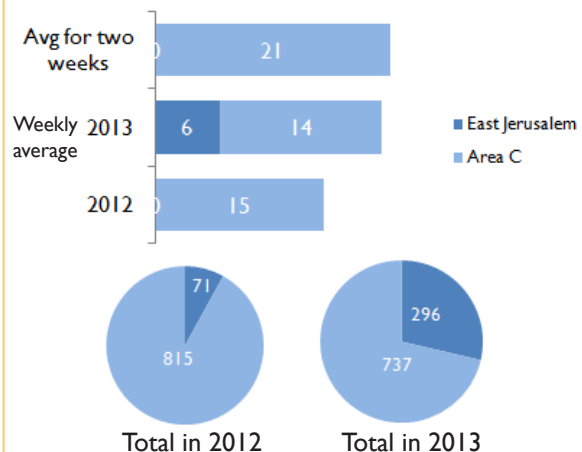
*Excluding casualties by Israeli forces.

Demolitions and related displacements

Structures demolished



People displaced



Multiple demolitions on the eve of winter storm; Bedouin communities among the worst affected by weather conditions

During the reporting period the Israeli authorities demolished 31 Palestinian homes and livelihood structures in the Jordan Valley of the West Bank on the grounds that they lacked Israeli-issued building permits. All but one of the demolitions took place on 10 December, on the eve of the winter storm, displacing 41 persons, including 24 children, most of them for the second time this year. At least 16 of the demolished structures were funded by international donors, including eight emergency shelters that were provided in response to demolitions during previous months. The Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt, James Rawley, expressed serious concern about these demolitions. No demolitions were reported during the two-week period in East Jerusalem.

Also, amidst the winter storm, the Israeli army conducted a military training in and around the residential area of Arab Ar Rashayida village in Bethlehem governorate on 16 and 17 December; three families comprising 30 people were temporarily displaced without prior notice for about eight hours. The pipelines feeding the village with water were damaged by the heavy army vehicles that were driving over them during the course of

the training. Additionally, the Israeli authorities issued demolition orders against four residential structures and three animal barracks belonging to three families comprising of 20 people in the village.

The precarious nature of human and animal shelters in most Bedouin and herding communities across Area C, largely due to the inadequate planning and inability to obtain permits, compounded the impact of the storm. Additionally, the weather conditions inflicted significant damage to greenhouses and field crops elsewhere in the West Bank. [For further information on the impact of the storm, as well as the various responses provided by humanitarian actors, including by the Palestinian and Israeli authorities, see OCHA's Situation Reports and the upcoming December Humanitarian Bulletin].

At least 35 additional demolition and stop-work orders were issued against Palestinian-owned structures in other localities in Area C between 17 and 22 December on the grounds that they lack Israeli-issued building permits. Ten of the targeted structures are located in the village of Barta'a ash Sharqiya (Jenin), in the closed area between the Barrier and the Green Line. Hence 10 families comprising at least 50 people are at risk of displacement. The remaining 25 structures are located in a herding community (Al Farisiya Nab' Al Ghazal) in the northern Jordan Valley.

GAZA STRIP

One civilian killed and 10 injured in the Access Restricted Areas (ARA)

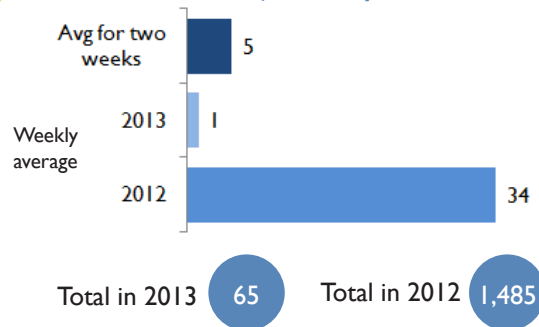
The two-week reporting period saw an increase in the number of shooting incidents and resulting casualties in the context of the Israeli enforcement of access restrictions in areas near the fence separating Israel and the Gaza Strip, as well as in fishing areas along the coast. Also during this period, Palestinian armed groups fired a number of projectiles towards Israel, one of which resulted in limited property damage in southern Israel, while the majority fell short of their targets within the Gaza Strip, resulting in no casualties or damage.

On 20 December, Israeli forces killed a Palestinian civilian man and injured another in an area next to

Palestinian Fatalities by Isr. forces

This week:	1
In 2013 (to date):	10
Equivalent 2012 period:	263

Palestinian Injuries by Isr. forces



the fence, north of Beit Hanoun. An investigation by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) indicated that the two were shot without prior warning while collecting scrap metal and plastic, and that an ambulance attempting to enter the area to evacuate the person injured was delayed by the Israeli forces for some 45 minutes.

Another eight civilians were injured during the reporting period in seven similar incidents along the ARA. In one event, a militant was injured by IDF gunfire near the fence. In two other incidents, Israeli forces opened warning fire at Palestinian civilians who reportedly attempted to cross into Israel, resulting in no injuries. Additionally, in at least five occasions during this period, the Israeli navy shot at Palestinian fishing boats sailing near the 6 NM limit, forcing them ashore.

Despite the increase in violence compared to previous weeks, the number of civilian deaths and injuries in the ARA recorded so far in 2013 (5 and 59 respectively) remain well below the relevant figures in previous years.

Winter storm exacerbates dire humanitarian situation in Gaza

The impact of the severe energy crisis affecting the Gaza Strip in recent months has been exacerbated by heavy rains between 10 and 14 December, which caused severe flooding and damage to homes, agriculture and livelihoods. Approximately 1,400 families (11,000 individuals) were evacuated to temporary shelters and about 1,500 families to relatives' homes at the height of the storm. Most people have returned to their homes or rented accommodation as of 17 December.

Some 10 days after the heavy rains, some areas remain flooded, particularly in the Sheikh Radwan area of Gaza City where the storm water pond was almost completely full prior to the heavy rainfall. The remaining flooding as well as storm water mixing with sewage raises public health concerns. The fragile water and sewage infrastructure, which had already been stretched beyond its capacity and partly non-operational due to the energy crisis, was at the root of the flooding experienced in Gaza.

[For further information on the impact of the storm, as well as the various responses provided by humanitarian actors, see OCHA's Situation Reports and the upcoming December Humanitarian Bulletin].

Gaza Power Plant resumes operations following fuel donation

On 15 December, a month and a half after it totally shut down, the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) partially resumed operations following a US\$10 million grant by the government of Qatar, which allowed for the fuel purchase. Some 3.1 million litres of fuel purchased in Israel for the GPP have entered Gaza through Kerem Shalom Crossing, which exceptionally opened on Friday 13 December to facilitate this transfer. Since then the GPP has been producing around 60 megawatts of electricity, reducing rolling blackouts from 16 to 12 hours per day in most areas.

The GPP was forced to shut down on 1 November as its fuel reserves had run out following an effective halt in the smuggling of fuel and goods via illegal tunnels under the Egyptian border. The resulting crisis has been prolonged by the lack of agreement between the Palestinian authorities in Gaza and Ramallah concerning the funding of fuel from alternative sources, including Israel.

Additionally, on 18 December the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) announced that equipment required to finish the first phase of the expansion of sea water desalination plant had successfully entered Gaza through Kerem Shalom Crossing. Six truckloads of electrical and mechanical equipment had entered Gaza which would enable the plant to increase the water production capacity. The project had been halted for approximately a year due to the lack of necessary equipment.

Cooking gas shortage continues despite increased imports

Between 15 and 21 December, 1,167 tons of cooking gas entered Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing, constituting the largest amount of cooking gas in a single week since July 2009. This increase, however,

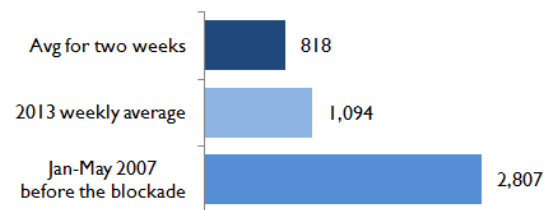
has fallen short of meeting current demand. Similarly to other critical goods, the supply of cooking gas to the Gaza Strip has been severely cut due to the halt in tunnel smuggling. At the same time, the demand has grown due to the weather conditions, as well as to run transportation given the fuel shortages.

Rafah Crossing update

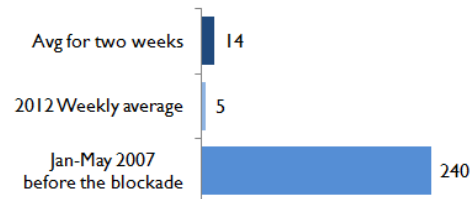
The Egyptian Authorities opened the Rafah Crossing between 10 and 12 December, allowing 1,378 people to enter Egypt and 322 to enter Gaza. This is well below the average of 1,860 people crossing per day in June 2013. Another 112 people were denied entry into Egypt and some 240 travelers in two buses were turned away on the Palestinian side after waiting to cross. On 23 December, Egyptian authorities announced that Rafah Crossing will open for three days for humanitarian cases. Since the beginning of December, the Rafah Crossing has been open for five days only; it has been closed since 13 December and no construction or other materials have entered through Rafah Crossing since then. In recent years, the crossing has functioned as the primary exit and entry point to the Gaza Strip for Palestinians, due to the long-standing restrictions imposed by Israel on movement of people via the Erez Crossing.

Movement of goods (Kerem Shalom Crossing)

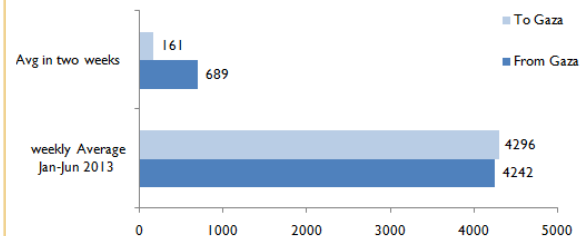
Imports



Exports



Movement of People Rafah Crossing (weekly)



Please note that the figures in this report are subject to changes upon the receipt of additional information.

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