



## occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)

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OCHA  
Humanitarian  
Update  
OPT

### Highlights

- 11 Palestinians were killed and 131 wounded during the reporting period;
- At least 120,000 Palestinian children and some 5,800 teacher were unable to reach their classrooms as a result of movement restrictions and curfews
- The partial cease-fire “Gaza, Bethlehem first” collapsed on 6 September, when the IDF raided the Al-Bourej refugee camp in Gaza;
- PRCS ambulances were prevented from providing first aid to the wounded for three hours in Deir el-Balah on 7 September

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### Overview

The Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) met this week in Al-Bireh to discuss PA reform plans and approve a new government. 14 Gaza members of the 88-member Council were not allowed to participate in the session on the grounds that they were associated with terrorist groups.

Tensions remained high throughout the West Bank during the reporting period. 7 Palestinians were killed and another 114 injured in 44 armed incidents in the West Bank alone. For comparison, the number of registered armed incidents was 30 a week earlier. The quiet has been holding in Bethlehem and Ramallah, where the Palestinian police forces began patrolling the city street during the PLC session.

The partial cease-fire – “Gaza, Bethlehem first” totally collapsed on 6 September, when Israeli tanks and troops raided the Al-Bourej refugee camp. Following the deaths of two soldiers in separate incidents at the weekend, the IDF conducted two massive incursions in the middle area of the Gaza Strip, in Deir el Balah on the 6 September and another one in Maghazi and Nuseirat two days later. The city of

Raffah, at the Egypt/Gaza Strip border was a scene of fierce gun battle. Seven civilians were wounded there when IDF demolished a Palestinian house.

4 Palestinians were killed and at least 17 were wounded this week in separate armed incidents in the Gaza Strip. The total number of casualties in the Gaza strip is now stated at 716 fatalities and 9724 wounded – 41 and 48 percent of all Palestinian casualties and injuries.

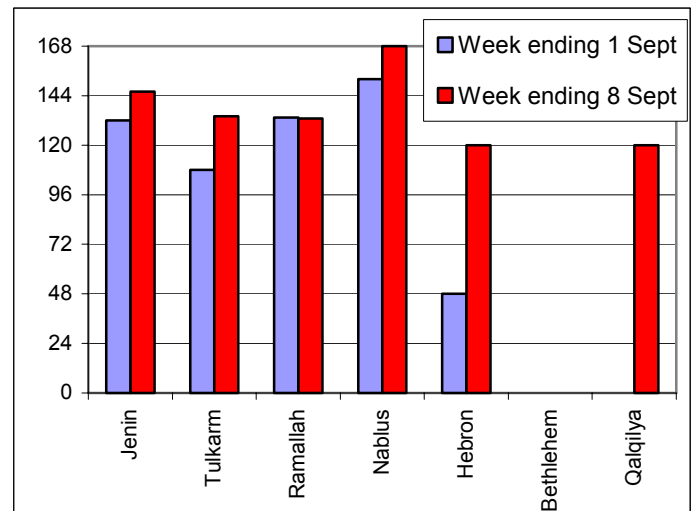
### Closures this week

The total closure regime continuously enforced by the IDF since 19 June 2002 remained unchanged during the period under review. However, the curfews were significantly tightened notably in the main Palestinian urban centers. The more stringent curfew regime (in terms of its geography and duration) was said to be an extra precautionary measure taken by the IDF during the celebrations of the Jewish New Year – Rosh Hashanah (7-8 September).

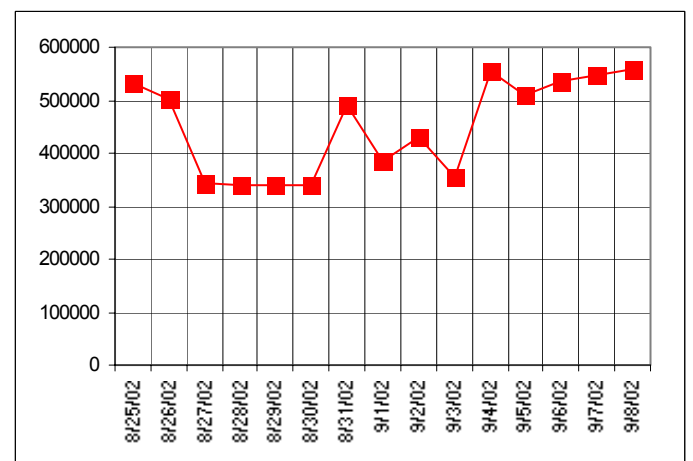
On average some 550,000 civilians were placed under curfew last week. This represents a considerable rise from the average of 380,000 a week earlier. This rise is due to enforcement of curfews in several districts of Hebron and in the Qalqilya Governorate. On average, residents of some 23 West Bank localities were confined to their residences for a varied duration.

The curfew-free hours and their frequency were reduced as well. Of seven major West Bank urban centers, six were placed under curfew on a daily basis, with curfew lifting hours reduced to a maximum of 48 hours (out of possible 168 hours or 7 days) in Hebron and Qalqilya and a minimum of 22 hours in Jenin.

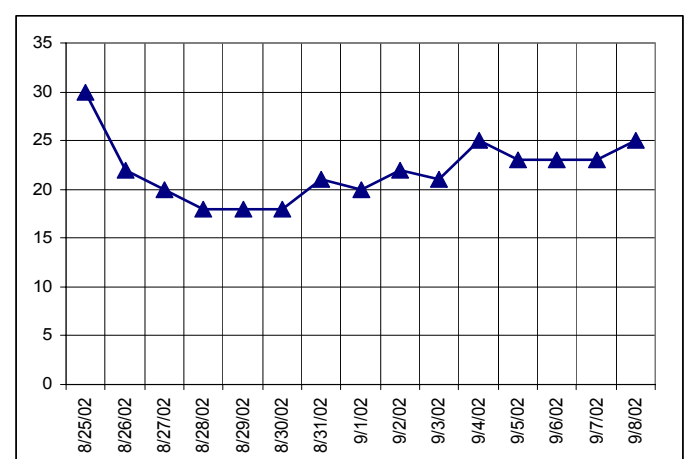
The situation remained particularly dramatic in Nablus, where the curfew was enforced on a 24-hour basis throughout the reporting period. Since 26 August 2002, the curfew was lifted only on two occasions for a total



Graph1. Curfews in seven major Palestinian West Bank towns: The graph illustrated the number of curfew hours (out of 168 possible – 7 x 24 hours) in each of the locations during this and the last week.



Graph 2; The West Bank population under curfew: comparative figures for the last 2 weeks



Graph 3; The West Bank localities under curfew: comparative figures for the last 2 weeks

of 16 hours (out of 336 hours or 14 days). Bethlehem was the only major Palestinian city that remained curfew-free for the last two weeks.

There were some notable changes to the closure regime of the Gaza Strip. On the 2 September the Netzarim/Martyrs junction of the Salah El Deen road (south of Gaza city and East of Netzarim settlement) was reopened for 2 hours in the afternoon. The road had been closed for the last 4 months- since 2 May 2002. Since then all the traffic between the northern and middle parts of the Strip has been diverted to the coastal road. Since its reopening on 2 September, the junction operates only a few hours a day in several shifts.

In Seafa – a Palestinian enclave in the north of the Strip - the closure regime was tightened as the checkpoint opening hours were reduced. In Al Mawasi – an enclosed Palestinian area under the Israeli military control – the movement of persons and goods was banned from 6 through 8 September.

The number of permits issued to Gazan laborers to work in Israel and at the Erez industrial zone remained stable at approximately 8,300. The average number of weekly permits remains relatively high compared with previous months of 2002, as there is an increased seasonal demand for laborers in the Israel's agriculture sector. It is believed that the number of permits will diminish at the end of the harvest season.

### **Humanitarian Access:**

The emergency medical services of the Palestine Red Crescent Society were prevented by the IDF from providing first aid to the injured in Deir El-Balah early in the morning on 7 September. An IDF tank was stationed in front of the PRCS ambulance and ID cards of paramedics were confiscated till the IDF withdrew from the area.

UNWRA reports recurrent difficulties related to the movement of its staff members. The West Bank Office of the Agency recently obtained 234 permits allowing the entry to Jerusalem for its West Bank ID-holder staff. This is a decline in the number of permits in comparison with August 2002, when UNWRA received 247 out of required 381 permits. The majority of permits are valid for a period of three months. UNDP report that it has received 21 out of 57 applied for permits.

### **Relief Efforts:**

#### **Education**

With the beginning of the Palestinian school year, UNICEF is expressing concern that Palestinian children are being denied their right to education. During the first week of the school year, which began on 31 August 2002, at least 120,000 Palestinian children and some 5,800 teachers in Ministry of Education and UNRWA schools were unable to reach their classrooms because of IDF imposed restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement. At least 49 schools remained closed due to ongoing mobility restrictions.

Children living in the old city of Hebron, as well as in the districts of Nablus and Jenin were the most affected by closures, curfews and home confinement. Furthermore, in the districts of Ramallah and Al Bireh, Palestinian children who were able to reach their schools in the first week back were placed in the unprecedented circumstance of being locked-in their classrooms when the Israeli military unexpectedly re-imposed curfew during school hours. The curfew was finally lifted in the late afternoon but only for an hour making it extremely difficult for the safety of the children, while walking home from school and being picked-up by their guardians, to be guaranteed.

As an absolute minimum, UNICEF is calling for the lifting of mobility restrictions imposed by the IDF on Palestinian civilians during and around school hours.

UNICEF is supporting a 'back to school' campaign to ensure that Palestinian children return to school and that classes continue uninterrupted throughout the entire school year. The campaign aims to ensure that all Palestinian children living below the poverty line are provided with school uniforms, school bags and tuition fees. The campaign has so far reached over 12,000 Palestinian children. The agency is particularly concerned that this year, with the economy on the verge of collapse, many Palestinian parents are unable to afford to send their children to school and is appealing to the international community for assistance.

### **Health**

On Sept 9 and 10, 2002, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) assisted PRCS in transporting supplies and relief items from central warehouses in Ramallah to the newly established network of smaller sub warehouses in Hebron, Nablus, and Tulkarm. Over 7 trucks (65 Pallets) were loaded with urgently needed items. This is aimed at increasing the community and district based preparedness and response to the ongoing crisis.

According to the Healthinform, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has declared suspending all vaccination, women's health, child health, environment health and preventive medicine programs in Nablus, due to its inability to deliver medicines to hospitals and health centers. The Palestinian health officials currently state their grave concern at the deteriorating health conditions in the Nablus Governorate, which has been under curfews and strict closures for nearly three months.

### **Food Aid:**

During the reporting period UNRWA distributed some 283 metric tons of basic commodities and 15,440 emergency rations in 16 different locations in the West Bank.

90,000 refugee families, 8,200 hardship cases and 15-18,000 nursing mothers are currently receiving food assistance from UNRWA. This represents a nine-fold increase in the number of beneficiaries compared with the year 2000. Food was distributed in Hebron, Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm Camp, Ad Doha, Kalandia, Burqa, Bethany, Beit Awwa, Kafr Qalil, Al Ram, Fawwar Camp, Silwad, Ramallah, Jalazone Camp and Beit Jala.

World Food Program (WFP) delivered a total of 524 metric tons of rice, wheat flour and vegetable oil to their warehouses in Gaza Town, Khan Younis, and Rafah and to the West Bank warehouses in Bethlehem, Jericho, Qalqiliya, Ramallah, Tubas and Tulkarm.

WFP's Food for Work program implemented by the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) will soon cover between 17,000 and 18,000 families in oPt. Participants to the program commit to work five days a month and will, in return receive a parcel containing 85, 5 kilogram food. The parcels contain wheat flour, rice, vegetable oil, lentils and sugar.

### **Announcements:**

“Forgotten Villages” - a report released by OXFAM this week voices serious concerns at the looming water crisis in the West Bank and the sustainability of the local Palestinian support network. OXFAM has witnessed a rapid erosion of support networks that normally provide a range of services and social protection such as credit, loans and food. People already heavily indebted to impoverished friends and family can no longer turn to them for support. Shopkeepers and water providers no longer give credit to poor families, depriving them of essential services, food, and the means of generating an income. Furthermore, the loss of cohesion in the household and wider community has exposed more women and children to violence and discrimination. For the full report see: [www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/](http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/)

The Palestinian Hydrology Group, with the support of ECHO and Oxfam GB, is pleased to announce the launching of its Emergency Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Monitoring Programme. The program employs a team of Technical Field Monitors to implement a comprehensive survey of the humanitarian water, sanitation, and hygiene situation across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with the objective of helping humanitarian agencies and donors focus their resources most effectively. The first report is already available on PHG's website and on [www.reliefweb.int/hic-op](http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-op) , and the second report, based on visits to 152 villages, has been completed and will be posted on these websites as well.