



occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)

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www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/

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OCHA
Humanitarian
Update
OPT

Highlights

- 9 Palestinians killed and another 20 injured in the first IDF incursion in the Gaza City since the beginning of Intifada;
- The IDF fired warning shots in the direction of the UNRWA Commissioner General visiting the Rafah refugee camp;
- Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRSC) ambulances are still needlessly delayed at checkpoints;
- Access to water remains critical in a number of West Bank villages;
- Because of severe budget constraints UNRWA will be forced to cut back on emergency aid to refugees;

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Overview

In its 17 September communiqué The Quartet (European Union, Russian Federation, United Nations and the United States) on the Middle East called on Israel and the Palestinians to recognize and act upon their respective responsibilities “to ameliorate the sharply deteriorating humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza.” The communiqué stressed that “Israel must ensure full, safe and unfettered access for international and humanitarian personnel”.

On 18 September the IDF fired warning shots in the direction of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA Peter Hansen and a delegation including several donor country representatives and Palestinian officials visiting the Rafah refugee camp. The delegation was visiting the camp to attend the handover ceremony of UNRWA funded shelters to refugee families whose houses had been demolished by the IDF.

Two suicide bombings in as many days (18-19 September) put an end to a six-week calm, during which no Palestinian attacks were observed in Israel. The same six-week period has been marked by continued violence in the West Bank and Gaza, where some 62 Palestinians had been killed and another 197 injured (4 August – 18 September 2002).

Following the Tel Aviv bus bombing, which killed six and injured 70 Israelis on 19 September, the IDF imposed curfews on all major urban centres in the West Bank except Bethlehem, and launched a massive assault on Chairman Arafat's Muqata compound in Ramallah.

On Thursday -19 September a 11 year old boy was shot and killed by the IDF in El Bireh during curfew. In total four Palestinian children under age of fifteen were killed by the IDF during the reporting period. In addition a girl was wounded in Kafr Usserin - Nablus when the city residents broke the almost 100-day curfew and confronted the IDF soldiers.

There were 67 armed incidents in the West Bank from 17 through 23 September – a 27 percent increase as compared with the week of 10 - 16 September with 53 registered armed incidents.

The security situation dramatically deteriorated in the Gaza following consecutive IDF incursions to several areas of the Strip. The Rafah/Egypt border remains very violent and incidents occur on a daily basis. Several areas in Deir El Balah in the vicinity of Kfar Darom settlement were subjected to shelling and land bulldozing.

Early in the morning on 20 September, the IDF conducted a massive incursion into the centre of the Gaza City. The incursion was the first in its kind as the IDF had refrained from entering the Gaza city since the beginning of Intifada. The IDF tanks reached Shijjaya quarter - 3 kilometres deep inside the Gaza Strip. 9 Palestinians, including 6 civilians and a 14-year old child were killed on 23 September when the IDF re-entered the city's eastern neighbourhoods of Az-Zaitoun and al-Shijjaya with 90 military vehicles supported by combat helicopters. In total, 16 Palestinians were killed and another 95 injured in the Gaza Strip during the reporting period. In addition, at least 80 dunums of land were bulldozed, 3 houses destroyed and 45 were damaged in a number of separate incidents.

Closures and Humanitarian Access

For more detailed information and maps on curfews see www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/

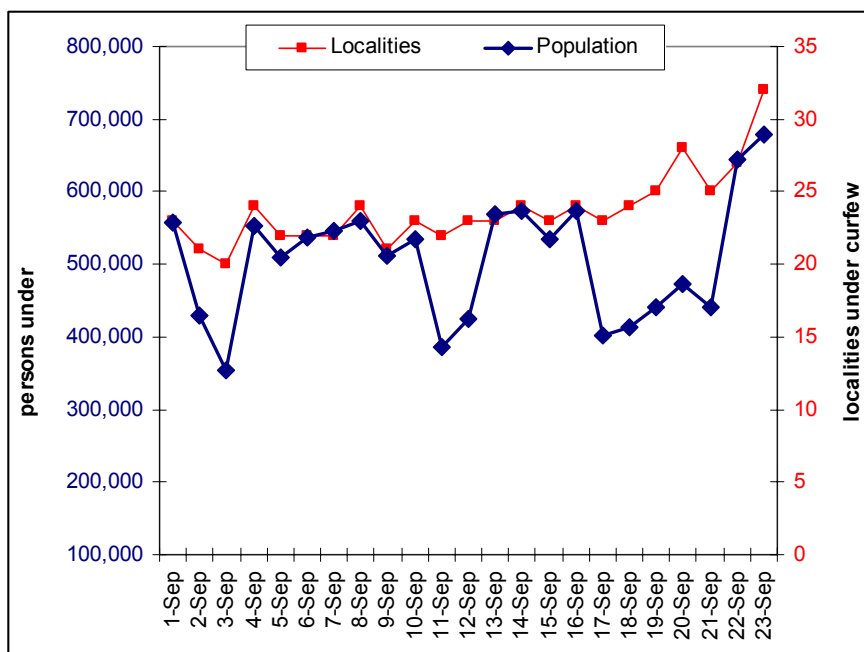
The closure regime enforced by the IDF in the occupied West Bank towns and villages was total during the reporting period. This implied a strict 24-hour curfew imposed in most important population centres; hermetic closure of the curfew-free Palestinian areas and comprehensive restrictions on the Palestinian travel internally.

The continuously imposed curfews in their all forms and durations dramatically damage the socio-humanitarian situation of the West Bank residents and inflict heavy losses upon the Palestinian society as a whole. With the exception of a few shot-lasting breaks in May and June 2002, the population of the major West Bank centres has been living under recurrent curfews since April 2002.

The economic toll of this practice was analysed by an UNSCO economic report (posted on HIC website) estimating the percentage of the West Bank residents living under the poverty line at 55– a sharp rise from 33 percent half a year ago, i.e. prior to re-occupation of Palestinian areas and enforcement of curfews. The prolonged

confinement of hundreds of thousands of civilians is also fraught with grave humanitarian consequences such as inadequate nutrition and health, interrupted education and psychosocial problems.

The present curfew regime has been put in place on 17 June 2002 and is being enforced by the IDF with varying intensity. The regime observed in the period under review was one of the harshest recorded since mid-June 2002. It is noteworthy, that the current tightening of closures comes shortly after an already tight regime that had been imposed on the West Bank and Gaza on the occasion of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur celebrations - implying that residents of the most affected areas did not have sufficient time to prepare for yet another round of confinement. The aggregate number of civilians under curfew

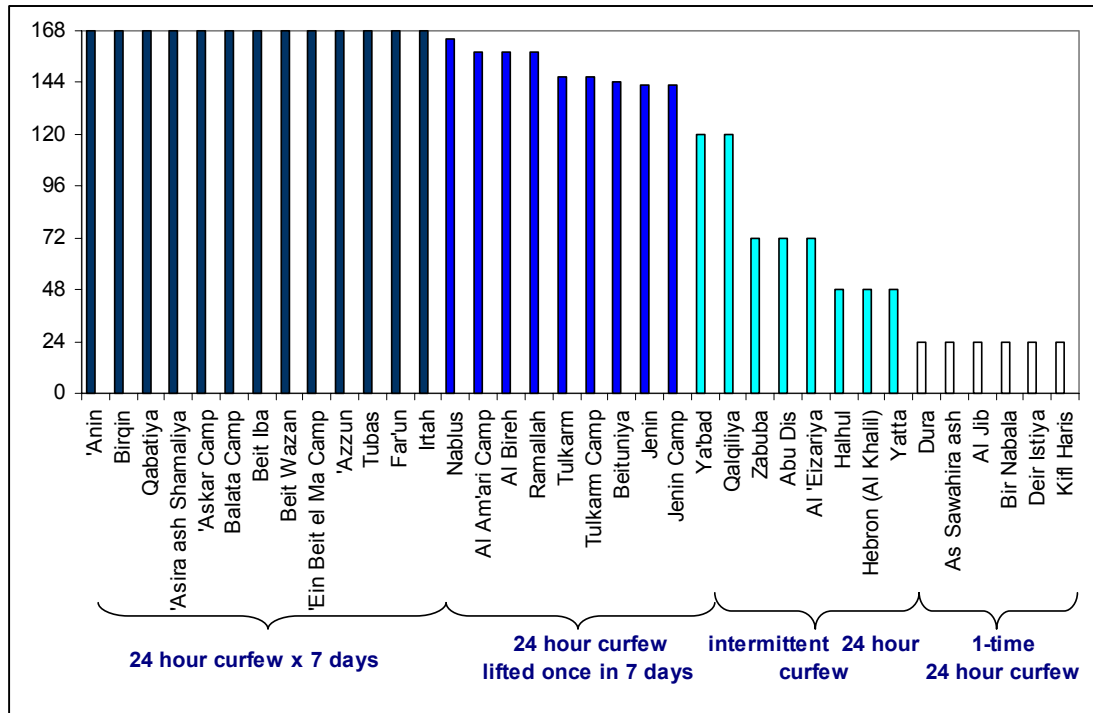


during the reporting period was over 710,000 – up from 570,000 a week earlier. The geography of curfews also expanded to include a total of 36 localities throughout the West Bank alone – up from the 24 curfewed localities registered last week. The highest number of populations and localities under curfew in a single day was registered on 23 September – 678,000 persons and 32 localities. (accompanying graph).

Following the suicide attack of 19 August the IDF imposed strict 24-hour curfews on all major Palestinian urban areas except Bethlehem, Jericho and Hebron. The latter came under curfew only twice on 22-23 September.

- **215,000** residents of 'Anin, Birqin, Qabatiya, 'Asira ash Shamaliya, 'Askar Camp, Balata Camp, Beit Iba, Beit Wazan, 'Ein Beit el Ma Camp, 'Azzun, Tubas, Far'un, Irtah and Nablus were placed under 24-hour curfews for 7 consecutive days. The only exception to the above is the city of Nablus - the 121,000 residents of the city were relieved of curfew for a short of four hours on a single occasion (18 September).
- **223,000** residents of Al Am'ari Camp, Al Bireh, Ramallah, Tulkarm, Tulkarm Camp, Beituniya, Jenin, Jenin Camp, Ya'bad and Qalqiliya, were confined to their residences throughout the reporting period, however, the curfew was lifted on several occasions with a total curfew-free hours ranging from 12 (in 7 days) in Ramallah and al-Bireh to 38 in Qalqilya.
- **272,000** residents of Zabuba, Abu Dis, Al 'Eizariya, Halhul, Hebron (Al Khalil), Yatta, Dura, As Sawahira ash Sharqiya, Al Jib, Bir Nabala, Deir

Istiya, and Kifl Haris were placed under a less severe closure regime with curfew hours ranging from 72 hours in Abu Dis to 24 hours in Al Jib.



Around midnight on Saturday 21 September Palestinians throughout the West Bank broke the curfew and demonstrated against the siege of Chairman Arafat's compound and curfews. The IDF opened fire at the demonstrators in Nablus, Tulkarem and Ramallah killing 4 and injuring 25.

Following the IDF incursions in the Gaza city closures were tightened throughout the Strip. The movement control regime currently in place resembles the situation prevailing in May – August 2002 when the junction of Salah ed-Deen and the Netzarim bypass roads was completely sealed off. Currently all traffic between the northern and southern regions of the Strip is diverted to the narrow coastal road. (Gaza closure map <http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/mapcentre.htm>) In the south of the Strip, the Abu Houli checkpoint was operating irregularly with sporadic opening and closure hours. IDF conducted search and arrest campaigns at the checkpoint.

Al Mawasi: The movement restrictions in and out of this Palestinian area under the total Israeli control were modified this week. The “age barrier” was reduced from 40 to 35 years for people willing to cross the checkpoint. Al-Mawasi's second checkpoint at Rafah Tel el Sultan was re-opened this week. The checkpoint had been closed for several months.

The movement of Gazan workers to Israel was subject to stricter limitations this week: access was granted during 3 days with an average of 7,900 labourers given work permits. The opening hours of the Erez industrial zone were not affected by the recent demonstrations.

Humanitarian Access:

UNRWA continued to report needless delays of its staff members and vehicles at IDF checkpoints. On 17 September UNRWA vehicles and staff on their way from Nablus to Balata & Askar refugee camps were delayed by IDF for more than one hour. In Nablus approximately 20 percent of the UNRWA staff has not been able to report to their offices. UNRWA schools in Nablus, Camp No.1, Ramallah, Amari Camp, Hebron and Arroub operated partially due to curfews, military activity and closures. Starting from 19 September UNRWA staff members living in Bethlehem and holding valid permits are not allowed entering Jerusalem.

UNRWA reports that due to curfews the health clinic of the Amari refugee camp (Ramallah) operated intermittently during the reporting period, thus severely reducing the access to health services for the 5000 inhabitants of the camp.

In Ramallah, the IDF denied access to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) ambulances to evacuate one dead and two injured from the PA Muqata compound. Following lengthy negotiations between ICRC and the IDF, a PRSC ambulance was granted permission to evacuate the wounded. The authorisation to retrieve and evacuate the dead body was not given until 2 PM the following day - (20 September).

A PRSC ambulance was denied access to Baqa Ash-Sharqiya after first being delayed by the IDF for 20-30 minutes on 20 September.

PRSC reports two attacks on its ambulances between 17 and 23 September. In Nablus shots were fired at an ambulance trying to reach a patient. In Iben Rushd an ambulance came under fire while trying to evacuate a patient from his house.

Needless delays (up to three hours) of PRCS ambulances were also reported in the Gaza Strip.

Sectoral Updates and Relief Efforts

Water

Water shortages remain critical throughout the West Bank. According to the findings of the Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG), four of the recently surveyed communities face urgent water needs:

- In Deir Al Ghunsun, in Tulkarm - home to 7,800 people, the main water well stopped pumping on 20 August. The population is now said to be dependent on water tankers which bring water from different neighboring communities at a price of 12 NIS per 1 m³.
- In Rantis in Ramallah, home to 2,300 people around 1,500 cases of ameba infections were registered, as the water comes from different sources that might be contaminated. The actual water consumption in the village is 9 liters per person per day, i.e. sharply below the minimum medical requirement of 15 liters per person per day. The price of tanker-water has soared to 28 NIS per

m³ while the average family incomes have drastically plummeted as a result of protracted closures.

- In Allubban al Gharbi, home to 1,200 people some 100 cases of ameba were registered and in Deir abu Mash'al also in Ramallah, home to 2,800 people 400 cases of infection were registered. The Emergency Water Operation Room (EWOC) is currently envisaging a response to critical water problems in the West Bank villages.

CARE is currently launching water projects in 9 villages in the east of the Jenin Governorate. CARE will be providing household cistern and tankered water.

Save the Children US is currently starting a water project that will provide water to an estimated 14,000 residents of four West Bank villages - Tubas, and Beit Furik, Beit Djian in Nablus. The water will be provided from water sources licensed by the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) to secure the quality.

The ICRC Wathab Program in the Hebron district started water distribution in August. Through this project some 1,300 households in Dura and Yatta (South of Hebron) will be provided with 5 m³ each. The program is run in cooperation with local municipalities, village councils and PWA and is financed by the ICRC.

ANERA is launching a water distribution project in 20 villages east of Nablus. The project will target about 50 percent of the population in each village and make 1 to 2 deliveries per household.

Water prices are in

creasingly unaffordable in a number of the West Bank villages with prices as high as 25-30 NIS per cubic meter (e.g. south of Hebron).

Food

ICRC has completed its first round of distribution of vouchers in all the major cities in the West Bank, except Nablus and Jenin where military operations and the curfew have hindered the implementation of the programme. Last week ICRC distributed vouchers to 488 families in Tulkarem and 1,249 families in Qalqilya. Through the voucher program 20,000 targeted families will be able to purchase each month basic commodities with a total value of US \$ 90.

ICRC's Rural Relief program distributed some 96 MT of sugar, rice and wheat flour to families in Ramallah and Nablus Governorates. In total ICRC's Rural Relief Program delivered food assistance to 695 families in 13 villages. Each family in Nablus received 50 kg of rice, 50 kg of wheat flour and 50 kg of sugar, while each family in Ramallah received 45.7 kg of rice, 45.7 kg of wheat flour and 45.7 kg of sugar. In addition 1,000 food parcels were distributed in Hebron.

World Food Program (WFP) delivered 11.5 MT of vegetable oil in its warehouses in Khan Younis and Rafah, in addition to 211 MT wheat flour delivered to Deir Alballah, Gaza town, Khan Younis and Rafah. In the West Bank WFP delivered 4.5 MT of rice, 0.69 MT vegetable oil and 15 MT of wheat flour to Nablus; 74.7 MT of wheat flour to Hebron.

Each family covered by WFP emergency food assistance operation receives 50 kg of wheat flour, 15 kg of rice, 3 kg of sugar and 3 kg vegetable oil per month.

During the reporting period the UNRWA West Bank Field Office distributed 14,444 parcels of basic commodities to 16 localities in the West Bank, covering in total 28,888 beneficiaries. The parcels from UNRWA are supplementary food aid and are distributed every four months.

Food parcels were distributed in Nur Shams Camp, Hebron, Tulkarem town and Tulkarem Camp, Hashimiyyeh, Jalazone Camp, Beit Jala, Ramallah, Araneh & Jalmeh, Silwad, Yamoun, Beit Sahur, At Taibe, Deir Amar Camp, Husan and Beit Qad.

ANERA in partnership with the Islamic Relief Societies completed a food distribution project, through which some 32,500 food parcels were distributed to the needy throughout the West Bank and Gaza.