

UNITED NATIONS

OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF  
HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Occupied Palestinian Territory



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## HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT – August 2003

*The Humanitarian Monitoring Report is a monthly report issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It draws on information from the Access, Closure and Information System (ACIS), among other data sources that humanitarian agencies have submitted to OCHA. This report is provided to the Task Force on Project Implementation (TFPI) as a basis for discussions with the Government of Israel. It is compiled by OCHA. This is available on the website ([www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt](http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt)).*

### I) Context

The humanitarian report monitors the humanitarian commitments the Government of Israel (GOI) made to the Bertini mission. On August 7 2002, the UN Secretary-General appointed Ms. Catherine Bertini as his Personal Humanitarian Envoy to address the humanitarian needs arising from the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict since September 2000. Ms. Bertini was requested to assess the nature and scale of the humanitarian needs, and to clarify the respective responsibilities of all actors with regard to humanitarian needs.

Her visit the region from August 12-19 2002, concluded that there were serious humanitarian problems linked to the ongoing conflict and specifically to the measures implemented by the GOI to safeguard its citizens from Palestinian attacks.

These security measures including curfews, closures and roadblocks have led to a crisis of access and mobility, instigating a near-collapse of the Palestinian economy. A large part of the Palestinian population has difficulty accessing basic services such as health and education. Similarly, humanitarian service providers such as UN agencies, NGOs and Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) have experienced providing assistance and services to beneficiaries.

### II) Commitments

#### Health:

1.1 Ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at checkpoints

1.2 Mechanisms will be set in place to ensure patients seeking critical medical services eg. delivery, dialysis, chemotherapy can quickly pass all checkpoints

#### Water:

2.1 Problems relating to water deliveries in Palestinian towns and villages will be addressed to ensure daily provision of adequate volume can be supplied by Palestinian water tankers

#### International Organizations:

3.1 GOI will fully facilitate the activities of international organizations with particular reference to UNRWA

3.2 GOI agreed to review and strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the IDF

#### Additional Commitments:

*On previous occasions, the GOI has made the following commitments, which were confirmed to the mission:*

- The fishing zone for Palestinian boats off the Gaza coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles
- Enabling olive farmers access to their fields
- Increase in shipments at Karni crossing
- Increase in the number of permits for Palestinian workers in Israel.

Commitment	Benchmarks	Actual Status	Remarks
<p><b>1. Health:</b></p> <p>1.1 Palestinian ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at any checkpoints (Gol to Bertini mission, 12-19 April 2002)</p> <p>1.2 Effective mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that Palestinians seeking critical medical services (e.g. giving birth, dialysis, chemotherapy, etc.) can quickly pass all checkpoints. (Gol to Bertini mission, 12 – 19 August 2002)</p>	<p>1.1. Instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders concerning maximum time for ambulance delay at checkpoints; PA MOH, PRCS, UNRWA and hospitals no longer report ambulance delays at checkpoints.</p> <p>Mechanisms established and Palestinian public informed; Explicit instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders.</p> <p>1.2.1 No more instances of Palestinians seeking critical medical services denied passage at checkpoints reported</p>	<p><b>West Bank &amp; Gaza: 43 incidents</b></p> <p><b>West Bank: 33 incidents</b></p> <p>Palestinian ambulance operators reported a total of <b>33</b> humanitarian access incidents, in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF. The number showed a slight increase compared to July with <b>28</b> humanitarian access incidents.</p> <p><b>Gaza Strip: 10 incidents</b></p> <p>The easing of internal restrictions within Gaza since the beginning of July, most notably at Abu Houli crossing, meant that ambulances have moved with relative freedom of movement throughout the Strip. Problems, however, remain at Touffah check point adjacent to the entry-exit for Al Mawasi where <b>10</b> incidents were reported by PRCS. In three cases out of the <b>10</b>, humanitarian access was denied after a delay of 2-3 hours. In the <b>7</b> reported incidents, there was a delay for the PRCS ambulance between 2-7 hours.</p> <p><b>Ambulance Access Denials:</b></p> <p>Of the <b>43</b> incidents reported, <b>13</b> included humanitarian access denials :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 August – A PRCS ambulance transporting two women in labour to hospital were stopped by IDF at the Huwwara checkpoint, and checked the patients' IDs. One of the women was denied access because she was carrying a Jordanian passport. The woman gave birth at the village health centre.</li> <li>• 13 August – A PRCS ambulance transporting a patient with abdominal pain and high fever from al-Mawasi area to Naser hospital in Khan Yunis was denied access after waiting for 190 minutes at at-Tofah checkpoint.</li> <li>• 26 August – A PRCS ambulance was transporting an old woman with cardiac problems from al-Mawasi area to Naser hospital in Khan Yunis city was denied access after a delay of 190 minutes.</li> </ul> <p>In Gaza, the PA Ministry of Health in August was permitted in exceptional cases such as cardiac and cancer patients to transport them via Erez to hospitals in Israel where specialist treatment is available. The MoH reports that in spite of the freedom of movement experienced inside Gaza during August, delays of up to 2.5 hours are being encountered when transporting patients across Erez. These delays are attributable to comprehensive vehicle searches which may also entail the patient having to leave the ambulance for purposes of the search.</p> <p><b>Ambulance Delays:</b></p>	<p>While the majority of Gaza residents are finding it considerably easier to access health facilities, this is not the case for those living in Al Mawasi who are still subjected to unacceptable delays.</p> <p>Similarly, those patients experiencing critical conditions and requiring treatment outside Gaza have found their ability to access such services significantly restricted since the end of August, by the reduction in the number of MoH ambulances leaving Gaza to one a day. This action by the Israeli authorities clearly runs counter to the commitment that allows critical cases access to the medical services their condition requires.</p> <p>Most delays and problems with checkpoints occurred from mid-end of August that coincided with the end of the Hudna (ceasefire called by Hamas and Islamic Jihad) and following the bus bombing in Jerusalem on 19 August.</p>

		<p><b>30</b> documented incidents included delays considerably in excess of the 30-minute limit, which ranged from 45 to 360 minutes. The following are some of the longest delays reported in July:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 12 August – An ambulance was on its way back from Ramallah to Nablus transporting two patients was delayed at Za'tara checkpoint for 2 hours. The ambulance was then allowed to pass with one of the patients but the other was denied access, and the soldiers refused to offer any explanation.</li> <li>▪ 13 August – An PRCS ambulance transporting a patient with head injury and broken leg from al-Mawasi area to Naser hospital in Khan Yunis was delayed for 300 minutes.</li> <li>▪ 25 August – A PRCS ambulance transporting a pregnant woman with bleeding from al-Mawasi area to Naser hospital in Khan Yunis city was delayed for 65 minutes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Damage of Ambulance/Harassment of Ambulance Crews :</b>          In August a number of incidents of harassment of ambulance crews were reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In 08 August, a PRCS ambulance while tending to a number of injuries due to Israeli Army gunfire was hit by four bullets, damaging the engine and slightly injuring one of the medics.</li> <li>▪ 23 August – A PRCS ambulance from Tubas was transporting a patient from al-Watania hospital to Nablus. While the ambulance was driving down Al-Faysal Street, soldiers verbally and physically abused the medical crew and threatened to shoot the crew.</li> <li>▪ On 30 August at the entrance of Tubas, medics transporting an elderly patient back to his house from Jenin hospital were stopped and the medics were assaulted by soldiers. After half an hour the ambulance was allowed to pass.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Water</b></p> <p>2.1 Problems related to water deliveries to Palestinian towns and villages will be addressed to ensure that daily water deliveries in proper quantities can be supplied by Palestinian water tankers.          (Gol to Bertini Mission, 12-19</p>	<p>2.1.1 Instructions issued to all checkpoints allowing for the easy transfer of water tankers through all checkpoints.</p> <p>2.1.2 The IDF removes barriers that prevent the access by water tankers to villages that rely on tankered water.</p>	<p>In August, no unmanned barriers were removed. In addition to the ongoing closures, three additional factors in August further aggravated the already critical water supply situation in the West Bank and Gaza. These factors continued over into the months of August:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant reduction in water supply to Palestinian communities by the Israeli Merkorot company</li> <li>• Damages/destruction of water distribution networks</li> <li>• Movement restrictions of maintenance teams</li> </ul> <p>The combination of these three factors created a greater dependency on water supplied by tankers. The increased dependency should be seen against the background of tight internal closures in the West Bank and limited purchasing power of the general population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Merkorot company, that controls a large percentage of Palestinian</li> </ul>	

<p>August 2002)</p>	<p>2.1.3 Absence of any reports on lack of water or delay/stoppage of water tankers at checkpoints.</p>	<p>water resources, significantly reduced water supply to the West Bank and Gaza. Some <b>175,637</b> Palestinians in 11 of the surveyed communities (16-28 August 2003) faced critical water shortages as a result of the reduced water supply by Merkorot (e.g., 67 percent decline in Khuza'a and Abasan al Kabira/Khan Yunis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of <b>28761</b> Palestinians living in Bani Suheila/Khan Yunis were affected as a result of destruction in the main line.</li> <li>• <b>18</b> incidents related to maintenance teams' movement restriction were reported due to permanent/mobile checkpoints, road barriers and curfew. In <b>8</b> incidents maintenance teams were delayed between 1-6 hours at checkpoints. In <b>9</b> incidents maintenance teams were denied access due to checkpoints and in <b>1</b> incident they were denied access due to curfew.</li> <li>• In August 2003, in <b>18</b> incidents water tankers movement was affected by checkpoints, road barriers. In <b>7</b> incidents water tankers were denied access: <b>4</b> incidents due to checkpoints and in <b>3</b> incidents because of road barriers. <b>11</b> cases of 1-6 hour delay: <b>8</b> incidents because of checkpoints and <b>3</b> due to road barrier.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. International Organisations</b></p> <p>3.1 Israel will fully facilitate the assistance activities of international organisations with particular reference to UNRWA. (GOI to Bertini Mission, 12-19 August 2002)</p> <p>3.2 Israel agreed to review and</p>	<p>3.1.1 Free access for all international staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and Gaza and at international crossings at all times.</p> <p>3.1.2 Free access for all Palestinian staff of</p>	<p>International relief agencies filed some <b>110 incident reports</b> (compared to <b>81</b> in July) in which the delivery of humanitarian aid and/or movement of relief personnel were obstructed by the IDF and the Israeli Border Police. The majority of reported incidents included delays and disrespect by the IDF of international organisations' mandates, privileges and immunities, in <b>33 cases</b> humanitarian access was denied.</p> <p>UNRWA - the largest humanitarian operator in the oPt – reported <b>96 incidents</b> of delay or denial of passage at IDF checkpoints (compared to <b>60</b> incidents reported in July): <b>72</b> incidents of delay <b>24</b> incidents in which staff members were denied access. In these incidents, 372 (compared to 154 in July) staff members were affected and UNRWA lost approximately 372 working hours.</p> <p>During August, there was a slight increase in the restrictions on movement of UNRWA staff. The average length of for those who were finally able to pass was more than an hour. The majority of access problems were encountered at IDF checkpoints around Jerusalem, particularly at al Walajah checkpoint. Some of the access denial cases included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 August – UNRWA identification cards were not accepted as valid</li> </ul>	<p>The number of delays or denials on international organisations movement at checkpoints increased following the 19 August. The end of August, therefore, operated under a different regime than the first two weeks.</p>

<p>strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the IDF to facilitate assistance activities (GOI to Bertini Mission, 12-19 August 2002)</p>	<p>international organisations throughout the West Bank and Gaza at all times.</p> <p>3.1.3 No delays/stoppage of international organisations' transport of development and humanitarian goods at any point (i.e. at international borders, borders between Israel and the West Bank or Gaza, within the West Bank or Gaza) at any time.</p> <p>3.1.4 Palestinian drivers (with either Jerusalem or West Bank ID) allowed to drive humanitarian transports for international organisations, in particular UNRWA, WFP and ICRC.</p> <p>3.2.1 Procedures established that provide direct access by international organisations to operational and command structures within the IDF</p>	<p>identification cards at Abu Hable checkpoint (Hebron), "for security reasons."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 04 August: OSO team came upon an UNRWA vehicle containing four staff members from the Relief Department were denied entry through the new checkpoint into Tulkarm. The soldiers also stated that it was not possible for the vehicle to pass through the old Taibe checkpoint into Tulkarm, as this entailed driving beyond the Wall, for which a permit for driving 'in Israel' was now required.</li> </ul> <p>Passage of international staff entering and leaving Gaza via Erez has remained relatively unhindered since early July. However, following the 19 August attack in Jerusalem. Movement for Palestinian staff in and out of Gaza, however, was not possible.</p> <p>The international NGO community reported <b>14</b> access incidents: <b>13</b> in the West Bank and <b>1</b> in the Gaza Strip. On <b>9</b> occasions NGOs reported outright access denials, <b>1</b> incident access was denied because the road was blocked with sand. On <b>2</b> separate occasions, NGOs were delayed for no apparent reason, and on <b>2</b> other occasions, NGO staff members were harassed verbally. Some of the incidents were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 August – IDF denied access to an NGO at Beit Furik checkpoint, and they were ordered to get back to Nablus.</li> <li>• 25 August – MDM Nablus was informed that its dispensary situated in the Old City of Nablus was being occupied by the IDF. MDM team tried to access the dispensary three times during the day but access was denied. On 26 August, MDM could access the dispensary after one and a half hour delay and after coordination with DCO.</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>4. Additional Commitments</b></p> <p>4.1. The fishing zone for Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles</p>	<p>Extension of fishing zone fully implemented.</p> <p>No arrests or confiscation of fishing boats within the 12 nautical mile zone.</p>	<p>Palestinian fishing boats are now going out as far as the 10 nautical mile limit that the Israelis announced on 3 June. There had been an initial reluctance on the part of fishermen to venture out this far for fear of attacks, however this concern has now declined. As a result of seasonal factors however, fewer fishermen are dropping nets due to the smaller volume of catches at this time of year.</p> <p>In spite of the extension of the fishing range, boats are still unable to leave Al Mawasi Khan Younis while fishing out of Rafah is only permitted to residents of Al Mawasi Rafah. Non Mawasi Rafah fishermen thus have to fish out of boats from central and northern Gaza.</p>	<p>In spite of the Israelis now allowing boats to fish 10 nm off the coast, there is still a continuing failure to meet the 12 nm range that was originally agreed upon.</p>
<p><b>4.2. An increase in shipments at Karni crossing</b></p>	<p>Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing.</p>	<p>Karni was closed on 28 and 31 August, and this was reflected in a small reduction in the number of containers entering Gaza from the West Bank, Israel and Overseas. A total of 8,898 entered in August compared to 9,209 for July. The number of containers leaving Gaza showed a marked increase in August as against July, when 935 containers left as against 627 the previous month.</p>	<p>August saw a net increase in the total movement of containers, with a notable rise in the number of units leaving Gaza, which can be assumed to be of benefit to the local economy.</p>
<p><b>4.3. Increase in the number of work permits for workers in Israel</b></p>	<p>Quantifiable increase in the number of work permits being made available for workers in the West Bank and Gaza to work inside Israel</p>	<p>Following the attack in Jerusalem, there was an immediate closure of Erez crossing to Palestinian workers entering Israel. Erez was closed on 20 August and remained closed for the remainder of the month. This restriction had major financial implications for upwards of 12,000 workers per day who had been crossing into Israel for the first 19 days of the month.</p> <p>Erez industrial estate remained open through out the whole of the month with over 3,500 individuals per day reaching work. This is consistent with the range for June and July.</p>	<p>While there was no indication of Gazan involvement in the Jerusalem attack, workers there have felt the impact of the restrictions subsequently imposed by the Israeli authorities.</p> <p>With members of the extended families heavily dependent on these salaries, the loss of daily work has major financial implications for tens of thousands of Gazans.</p>
<p><b>5. Additional comments on access and closure</b></p>	<p>Israel will improve the situation at checkpoints, including the deployment of more experienced IDF personnel.</p>	<p>While the perpetrator of the attack had no association with Gaza, the Israeli authorities subsequently closed Netzarim junction on 21 August thus once again necessitating a detour via the Beach road for all travel south of Gaza city.</p> <p>Abu Houli checkpoint which remained open throughout July and the first half of August has faced periodic closures since the attacks in Jerusalem. It was closed on 21 August and was thereafter subject to partial closure on 27 and 29 August, in</p>	

		<p>the latter case being closed from 14.00-19.10.</p> <p>In spite of Abu Al Ajin road reportedly being “re-opened” by the Israelis from 16 July, it has remained closed. Priority is given on the Qussifim road to a small number of settlers meaning Palestinian vehicles have needed to wait while travelling on Abu Al Ajin road.</p> <p>In spite of the greater freedom of movement for international staff entering Gaza, those for the first time, were still experiencing delays, as their details had to be forwarded by the IDF at Erez for approval by the internal security.</p> <p>The situation at Al Mawasi enclaves and Siafa remains unchanged. While international agencies report that access in and out of the enclaves remains easier, the Israeli authorities still insist on prior coordination and continue to impose a “back to back” principle where the delivery of food aid is concerned. Such a condition is entirely unacceptable given the logistics of attempting to transfer tons of food aid from one vehicle to another at the side of a checkpoint.</p>	
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