

HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT- JULY 2003

Commitments made by the Government of Israel ("Gol") to Ms. Catherine Bertini,
Personal Humanitarian Envoy to the Middle East for the UN Secretary-General

The Humanitarian Monitoring Report is issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It is based on monthly performance matrices in relation to the commitments made by the Gol to the Bertini mission. This report draws on information from the Access, Closure and Information System (ACIS) and other data sources submitted by humanitarian agencies to OCHA. This report is provided to the Task Force on Project Implementation (TFPI) as a basis for discussions with the Gol and will be compiled and distributed monthly. It is also available on OCHA's website (www.humanitarianinfo.org/opt)

I. Context

On August 7 2002, the Secretary-General appointed Ms. Catherine Bertini as his Personal Humanitarian Envoy to address the humanitarian needs arising from the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian violence since September 2000. Ms. Bertini was requested to assess the nature and scale of the humanitarian needs in light of the ongoing situation, identify appropriate action to address these needs

while preventing further deterioration, and clarify the respective responsibilities of all actors with regard to these needs.

Ms. Bertini visited the region from August 12-19 2002, travelling both to the West Bank and Gaza. She met with representatives from the Gol and the Palestinian Authority (PA) along with UN agencies, NGOs, the ICRC and donors. The mission concluded that there is a serious humanitarian crisis and that it is linked to the ongoing conflict. In particular, the mission found that the security measures implemented by the Gol to safeguard its citizens from Palestinian attacks have contributed to the crisis.

These measures, including curfews, closures and roadblocks have led to a crisis of access and mobility, instigating a near-collapse of the Palestinian economy while also preventing a large part of the Palestinian population from accessing basic services such as health and education. Similarly, humanitarian service providers such as UNRWA and PRCS have experienced considerable difficulties in reaching their places of work and have been unable to provide assistance and services to beneficiaries.

The Bertini Commitments represent a minimum and specific set of humanitarian standards agreed to by the Gol. The Bertini Commitments are not a substitute for compliance with international humanitarian law as laid down in the Fourth Geneva Convention. The maximum waiting period of 30 minutes for an ambulance at a checkpoint for example, while an improvement on the situation in August 2002, falls short of the intent of international humanitarian legal standards.

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II. Commitments

Ms. Bertini obtained several commitments from the Gol during the period of the mission that were aimed at improving humanitarian access. The commitments were delivered in the context of health, water, immunities commonly enjoyed by international organisations and fishing rights. These commitments were accompanied by quantifiable "benchmarks" allowing them to be monitored. More specifically:

1. 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

2. 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

3. International Organisations:

- 3.1 Gol will fully facilitate the activities of international organisations with particular reference to UNRWA
- 3.2 Gol agreed to review and strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the IDF

4. Additional Commitments:

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

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

5 Additional comments: Additional comments on access and closures are attached in this report.

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| Commitment | Benchmarks | Actual Status | Remarks |
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| <p>1. Health:</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>1.2 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>West Bank: 28 incidents Palestinian ambulance operators and UNRWA reported a total of 28 humanitarian access incidents, in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF, and in one case by Israeli settlers (11 July, Sadet Yassouf). This represented a major decrease in comparison with June’s figure of 113. It is also the lowest level of obstruction to the delivery of first aid since December 2002, when OCHA began its humanitarian access tracking project.</p> <p>Gaza Strip: 1 incident With both the easing of internal restrictions and the absence of Israeli incursions in July, only one reported incident has been recorded in the Gaza Strip, with a PRCS ambulance being delayed for one hour at Tuffah checkpoint.</p> <p>Ambulance Access Denials: Of the 29 incidents reported, 3 included access denials – another improvement in comparison with 33 humanitarian access denials in June 2003:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 July – IDF stopped a PRCS ambulance transporting patients to their homes in Tubas. After 2.5 hours delay at the Beit Iba checkpoint the soldiers turned back the ambulance because they judged the conditions of patients not critical enough. • 6 July – A PRCS ambulance transporting two patients to Nablus was stopped at the Qalqilya DCO. One of the patients in critical condition (requiring emergency surgery) was arrested. • 17 July – A PRCS ambulance with two patients aboard was stopped at Za’em checkpoint east of Jerusalem. After a 75 minute delay, the ambulance was turned back. <p>Ambulance Delays: 20 of the 29 documented incidents included delays considerably in excess of the 30-minute limit, which ranged from 35 to 360 minutes. While the overall number of delays fell sharply, the average length of delays increased in July and reached 115 minutes or almost 2 hours. The following are some of the longest delays reported in July:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 July – An ambulance with a critically injured patient aboard (car accident) was held at the Beit Iba checkpoint for 6 hours. The reason given by soldiers was that the patient was not carrying an ID card, which had been lost during the car accident. ▪ 26 July – A PRCS ambulance transporting a 9 year old girl suffering from an | <p>With the notable exception of the Gaza Strip, the geography of ambulance incidents did not change in the West Bank: 15 of 29 (52 percent) incidents were reported in the Nablus Governorate. The Shave Shamron checkpoint accounted for over 20 percent of all July 2003 incidents in the oPt.</p> <p>In Gaza, the PA Ministry of Health in July 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 July, 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> |

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| | | <p>acute case of kidney malfunction was held at the Shave Shamron checkpoint for 180 minutes.</p> <p>Harassment of Ambulance Crews: July 2003 saw a considerable decline in the harassment of ambulance crews. However, there were three incidents including 1 July – Shave Shamron/Nablu where , paramedics were verbally and physically abused and 12 July, Jannat/Jenin, where the IDF arrested one of the PRCS paramedics.</p> | |
| <p>2. Water</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 August 2002)</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>2.1.3 Absence of any reports on lack of water or delay/stoppage of water tankers at checkpoints.</p> | <p>In July, no unmanned barriers were removed. In addition to the ongoing closures, three additional factors in July further aggravated the already critical water supply situation in the West Bank and Gaza:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant reduction in water supply to Palestinian communities by the Israeli Merkorot company • Damages/destruction of water distribution networks • Continued construction of the separation wall – “the Wall” <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 (e.g. in Taffuh villages/Hebron 95 percent of the population cannot afford the water bills).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59 West Bank and Gaza villages were monitored by the WaSh1 project in July 2003. Of these, 9 communities in the Gaza Strip with a population of 169,400 faced severe shortages as a result of destruction of water networks and wells by the IDF in June and July 2003; • The Merkorot company, that controls a large percentage of Palestinian water resources, significantly reduced water supply to the West Bank and Gaza. Some 106,000 Palestinians in 18 of the surveyed communities faced critical water shortages as a result of the suspension (e.g. village Deir Razih/Hebron) or reduced water supply by Merkorot (e.g., 95 percent decline in Al Bira/Hebron, 80 percent in Dahiyat Sabah Al Kheir/Jenin); • Several communities experienced both a reduction in the Merkorot supply and destruction of water infrastructure: e.g., Nuseirat refugee camp/Gaza; Deir Al Balah/Gaza, Azmut, Deir Al Hatab and Salim – all in the Nablus | <p>The closure and restriction of movement remains one of the most serious but resolvable causes of the water problem in Palestinian towns and villages dependant on tankered water. IDF roadblocks, ditches, earth mounds, gates and other barriers on primary roads and entrances to Palestinian residential areas, force water tankers to take more circuitous and often unpaved routes. The water tankers eventually reach the villages but the re-routing results in higher transport costs transferred onto the Palestinian consumer. With the purchasing power of the Palestinian population drastically reduced, many Palestinians cannot afford to pay for the expensive water. Removing the IDF barriers positioned at the entrances and on the roads leading to Palestinian towns and villages, is an important element in enabling Palestinians access to a viable water supply.</p> <p>An increasing number of the West Bank and Gaza communities lack adequate water. The average number of litres supplied per person per day has dropped - in 31 of the 59 communities</p> |

¹ In July, 59 villages were monitored by WaSh, a consortium of international and Palestinian NGOs. There are 708 communities in the oPt, 643 of which WaSh has monitored this year.

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| | | <p style="text-align: center;">Governorate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of the separation wall on water supply is already observed several villages: e.g., Umm ar Rihan/Jenin, Jayyous/Tulkarem. The water supply to Umm Rihan has been affected by the Shakeed checkpoint, ongoing wall construction and an 80 percent decline in the Merkorot supply. | <p>in July it was 39.5 litres per person per day (i.e. 60.5 litres less than what WHO considers an optimal level).</p> <p>Several rural communities were supplied with as little as 11 litres of water per person per day in Rantis /Ramallah and 18 in Al Midya/Ramallah. The current water supply situation in the oPt constitutes a “high level of health concern” in accordance with WHO’s definition².</p> |
| <p>3. International Organisations</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 strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the IDF to facilitate assistance activities (GOI to Bertini Mission, 12-19 August 2002)</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 international organisations throughout the West Bank and Gaza at all times.</p> <p>3.1.3 No delays/stoppage of international</p> | <p>International relief agencies filed some 81 incident reports (compared to 302 in June) 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 8 cases humanitarian access was denied compared to 81 in June 2003.</p> <p>UNRWA - the largest humanitarian operator in the oPt – reported 60 incidents of delay or denial of passage at IDF checkpoints: 52 incidents of delay, six incidents in which staff members were denied access, and two incidents in which staff members were detained). In these incidents, 154 staff members were affected and UNRWA lost approximately 157 working hours.</p> <p>During July, movement of UNRWA staff around the West Bank remained relatively difficult despite the removal of some checkpoints. The average length of delay for those who were finally able to pass, was more than an hour. The majority of access problems were encountered at IDF checkpoints in the northern West Bank, particularly at Al-Kafriyat checkpoint south of Tulkarem. Some of the access denial cases included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 July: An UNRWA bus from Ramallah was denied access to Jerusalem and had to take another route; 23 July: The IDF denied passage for an UNRWA health team vehicle travelling from Ramallah to Beit Illo, forcing the health team to walk across the checkpoint to the village; | <p>The reduction in violence and the partial withdrawal of the IDF from Gaza and Bethlehem resulted in greater humanitarian access for international humanitarian organisations in July. However, the movement of the national staff of relief agencies, particularly that of UNRWA, continued to be severely hindered in the West Bank.</p> <p>In the Gaza Strip, international and national staff in July experienced the greatest freedom of movement both externally and internally in over 2 years, particularly the unrestricted access at the north-south intersection of Abu Houli.</p> <p>Passage of international staff entering and leaving Gaza via Erez has been to a large extent unhindered for both NGO and UN staff. The extensive delays experienced at Erez by international staff from 26 April and the subsequent “list” system, are no longer being encountered, except in a few cases.</p> |

² Access to water – WHO standards: Zero access (quantity collected often below 5 l/c/d); Basic access (average quantity unlikely to exceed 20 l/c/d); Intermediate access (average quantity about 50 l/c/d); Optimal access (average quantity 100 l/c/d and above) www.who.org.

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| | <p>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> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 July: An UNRWA West Bank staff member was denied passage at Hizme checkpoint because the Border Police would not allow him to drive a UN vehicle in Jerusalem without a special driving permit; • 25-26 July: Surda checkpoint remained closed to all vehicles, including those of UNRWA. <p>United Nations Agencies operating in the oPt (other than UNRWA) filed one access incident report in July 2003. The international NGO community reported 20 access incidents: 16 in the West Bank and 4 in the Gaza Strip. On 2 occasions NGOs reported outright access denials (31 July – Tayasir, 17 July Hebron). This is in contrast with 59 incident reports filed by UN Agencies and international NGOs in June 2003.</p> <p>In the Gaza Strip, UNRWA is now allowed regular entry to Al Mawasi/Swedish Village. However, UNRWA's food trucks continue to be denied entry into Al Mawasi. UNRWA was still not permitted to bring in construction materials to carry out rehabilitation of shelters and sanitation facilities, nor has entry of the UNRWA mobile dental clinic been approved.</p> | <p>International agencies are not permitted to bring humanitarian supplies directly into Al Mawasi. Supplies must undergo a back-to-back transfer at the IDF gate post to the west of Tuffah barrier, while also being x-rayed. This situation has persisted for over 2.5 years.</p> <p>International agencies are reporting an increase in the number of Palestinian staff able to enter Gaza from the West Bank, where prior coordination is undertaken with the IDF.</p> <p>The liaison and coordination mechanisms with the IDF Liaison Offices in the West Bank functioned smoothly and the locally stationed Liaison officers have been generally forthcoming in solving access problems at checkpoints.</p> |
| <p>4. Additional Commitments</p> <p>4.1. The fishing zone for Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza</p> | <p>Extension of fishing zone fully implemented.</p> <p>No arrests or</p> | <p>Palestinian fishing boats in July went 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 declined. As a result of seasonal factors however, fewer fishermen were dropping nets due to the smaller volume of catches at this time of year.</p> | |

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| <p>coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles</p> | <p>confiscation of fishing boats within the 12 nautical mile zone.</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 was only permitted to residents of Al Mawasi Rafah.</p> <p>Warning shots were fired by an IDF gun boat at fishing boats in the Deir El Balah coastal area on 19 and 21 July. No injuries were reported.</p> | |
| <p>4.2. An increase in shipments at Karni crossing</p> | <p>Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing.</p> | <p>Karni was open every working day in July, in comparison to April and May when it was closed for prolonged periods, and to June when it closed for 4 days following the attack at Erez on 8 June.</p> <p>The extended opening period was reflected in the number of containers entering Gaza from the West Bank, Israel and overseas sources with a total of 9,209 containers for July compared with 4,087 for June. In terms of exports from Gaza, 627 containers left Karni in June as compared to 1166 in July.</p> | |
| <p>4.3. Increase in the number of work permits for workers in Israel</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>During July there was a week-on-week increase in the number of Palestinian workers allowed to enter Israel (no Palestinian workers were able to enter Israel from Gaza between 9 and 29 June, following the attack on 8 June). During the first full working week, the numbers ranged between 10,693 and 11,162; by the last week of the month the range was 11,183 to 13,347 workers per day.</p> <p>The numbers of Palestinians working in the Erez industrial estate in July is consistent with the trends from June, with around 3,500 individuals per day reaching their place of work.</p> | |
| <p>5. Additional comments on access and closure</p> | <p>Israel will improve the situation at checkpoints, including the deployment of more experienced IDF personnel.</p> | <p>The mobility of the general population of the Gaza Strip improved considerably during July. The external crossings at Erez, Rafah, Karni and Sofa were all open, and the internal roadblocks at Netzarim Junction/Salah Ed-Din road, the coastal road at Netzarim T-junction and Abu Houli-Gush Qatif road were open for most of the time, with unannounced closures significantly decreased in comparison to the previous month. The opening on 30 June 2003 of the Netzarim Junction, after having been closed since 13 September 2002, has resulted in a significant improvement in traffic flow between the northern and middle areas of the Gaza Strip.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unrestricted movement of traffic at Abu Houli junction/Gaza ensured | <p>While the closure regime in the West Bank remains pervasive and the mobility restrictions comprehensive, in July 2003 there was a slight relaxation in the enforcement of closures in some areas.</p> <p>This is seen in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the removal of checkpoints and unmanned barriers at Abu |

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| | | <p>that Palestinian staff could move freely between most areas of the Gaza Strip. However, this can not be achieved by Salah El Din road alone, which remains blocked around Kfar Darom settlement;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In spite of Abu Alajin road being "re-opened" by the IDF from 14 July, it remains in effect closed, given that priority is given to settler traffic on Qissufim road which is constant, and thus the road remains permanently closed by a barrier overseen by an IDF observation tower. Palestinians do not even consider taking this road, thus amounting to de facto closure; • On 2 July, the Israeli-imposed age restrictions at Rafah- Egypt crossing were lifted. Previously, from 7 January 2003, 16-35 year olds had not been allowed to cross. • On 27 July, the IDF eased the restrictions at the Al Toufah checkpoint (to Al Mawasi) to allow men over 23 and all women with their children to cross. In addition, men between 16 and 23 could cross with prior coordination with the IDF. Previously, only married men over 30 and married women over 25 were allowed to cross. • On 27 July, Tel El-Sultan checkpoint (to Al Mawasi) was reopened without restrictions for magnetic card holders on foot and without goods. (In mid-2002 residents of Al Mawasi were issued with magnetic cards so that their passage in and out of the enclave could be regulated and monitored by the IDF.) <p>In contrast, the situation remained critical in Seafa- a Palestinian enclave in northern Gaza. Seafa residents reported to UN staff that, in the period from the 29 June ceasefire up to 20 July, the IDF had severely restricted the movement of goods in and out of Seafa. During this period, Palestinian residents were allowed to export their</p> <p>agricultural produce only two days per week, whereas previously they used to export them on a daily basis using restricted vehicles such as carts and trailers. In addition, no import of goods had been allowed by the IDF during the three week period. In the past Palestinian residents had been permitted to import on two days per week essential goods such as petrol for their generators and fertiliser for their production. However, during this specific period not even food was allowed in.</p> <p>In the West Bank the removal of Surda and Ein Arik roadblocks (Ramallah area) was the sole IDF redeployment having a major impact on the mobility of persons and goods.</p> <p>Other improvements were designed to ease flow. For example, the Etzion checkpoint located between Bethlehem and Hebron was reorganised: experienced soldiers were deployed, the IDF check procedures relaxed, movement of</p> | <p>Houli, Surda, 'Ein Arik, Nokdim, Yatta and Samua;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the announced lifting of age and gender limits for Palestinians travelling within the West Bank and Gaza; and between Gaza and Egypt; • the authorisation of licensed public transportation between limited West Bank locations (subject to IDF clearances); • the deployment of experienced IDF staff/facilitators; • the improved procedures and order at some of the checkpoints; • the decrease in the reported numbers of detention at the checkpoints and ID confiscation from Palestinians. <p>More than 380 roadblocks remain in the northern West Bank alone.</p> <p>The improvements seen in July 2003 need to be seen in this context and their impact limited in terms of improving the general economy. For example, by removing the Surda and 'Ein Arik roadblocks the IDF enabled a more or less free circulation persons and goods within parts of the Ramallah Governorate, while the elaborate net of remaining checkpoints continued to isolate the Governorate from the rest of the West Bank. A high frequency of roaming checkpoints has further undermined these developments.</p> <p>In addition, the official announcement to lift age limits was not systematically applied by the IDF checkpoint staff.</p> |
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| | | Palestinians was authorised between Bethlehem and Hebron without clearances and work permits, removal of the "punishment cage" previously used to detain those attempting to bypass the checkpoint. | |
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