

OCHA

Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

occupied Palestinian territory

humanitarian

UPDATE

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Overview

The international community moved quickly in response to the destruction left in the wake of the seven week Israeli incursion into northern Gaza. The US Government announced on 2 July, a \$30 million “Quick Impact Aid Package” divided equally for Gaza and the West Bank to fund road repairs, street clean up campaigns, agricultural reclamation, and other labour intensive projects.

The bulk of the money will go to the northern areas of Beit Hanoun (which suffered most damage by the latest IDF incursion beginning 15 May) Beit Lahiya and Jabaliya. The EC has promised an additional 30 million euros for Gaza. Again, while most of this money will be concentrated in the north, some funding is promised to southern Gaza which has suffered the most extensive house and land destruction in the Gaza Strip over the last two-and-a-half years.

A worsening situation in Nablus – West Bank

While the general situation has eased in Gaza, in the Nablus Governorate it is quite the opposite. A series of new moves in the past two weeks – including significant land acquisitions, restrictions on truck movements and a new settler outpost – are likely to worsen the humanitarian situation of the area and have caused real concern to Nablus residents.

... land confiscation

Land expropriation and settlement expansion continued in the Nablus area. An expropriation order was issued by the IDF on 2 July that will annex some 1,500 dunums of agricultural land.¹ The land belongs to the village of Lubban ash-Sharqiyah located in the southern Nablus governorate, north of the Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Levona and west of Eli settlement (see map on page 6).

As yet, the IDF has not provided a map detailing the exact extent of the confiscated land to the villagers, the village council, or to the Governor of Nablus. According to the Governor, the IDF civil-military office offered to show him a map but only if he is willing to sign a document in Hebrew. To date he has refused.

The IDF has, however, pointed out the confiscated area to the villagers and the village council. According to the villagers and the head of the village council, the area comprises all of their farmland in the valley. The residents of Lubban ash-Sharqiyah are clearly shocked by the confiscation order and are fearful for their future as their income is now entirely derived from agriculture.

An elderly lady from Salem village (adjacent to Nablus city), Fayza Eissa (80), was found dead on 10 July in a trench only a few hundred meters from the IDF-manned gate at Deir al Hatab. She had been missing since visiting friends in Nablus on 13 June. When she returned home IDF soldiers refused to allow her to cross the gate, the only access to her village. She decided to "illegally" jump over one of the IDF-built trenches that surrounds Salem and apparently fell while trying to get over to the other side. Her corpse had partly been eaten by dogs.

The order has fuelled speculation in the Nablus area that the confiscation may be part of a larger plan to connect Eli and Ma'ale Levona settlements to Rehelim and Ariel settlements (Eli is already connected with Shilo and Shvut Rahel settlements) to form a continuous settlement belt, thereby cutting the northern West Bank in two.

... a new settler outpost

A new settler outpost was established on 8 July, comprising three caravans, on farmland belonging to the village of Salem near the Beit Furik checkpoint.

... a new checkpoint for trucks opens at Awarta

On 9 July, the IDF established a new checkpoint at Awarta for commercial vehicles entering or leaving Nablus city from the south. Trucks are now no longer permitted to enter or leave Nablus through the Hawwara checkpoint. Instead, a back-to-back system has been established at Awarta where goods must be unloaded on one side of the checkpoint and uploaded onto a different truck on the other side.

The new system will function in a similar manner to the Beitunia checkpoint (Ramallah) and the access gate to Qalqiliya city. But it represents a significant backward move in terms of easing the effects of closures on people living in the Nablus area. Inevitably it will add to transport time and, therefore, increase the price of goods for a town already facing 68% unemployment, according to the Governorate of Nablus.

¹ 1 dunum equals 1,000 square meters – 0.25 acre

The Nablus checkpoints that control all movement in and out of the town have always been problematic for humanitarian work. Since OCHA began collecting the figures on ambulance movement in January this year, Nablus accounted for between 50-65% of all delays and denials in the whole West Bank. In June, for example, 54 humanitarian incidents (out of a total of 113 in the West Bank and Gaza) were reported in the Nablus Governorate. The average length of ambulance delays at IDF checkpoints in June was 94 minutes.

... road destruction

The IDF badly damaged the road between the villages of Tallouza and Badhan on 3 July, ripping up the road and widening trenches – the second time in two months that this road has been destroyed by the IDF. Electricity was also cut temporarily, but makeshift repair was carried out by the villagers. The water pipe was also repaired by the villagers but has not yet reached full capacity to the affected villages. More significantly, the destruction of the road makes it impossible for the Nablus Municipality to carry out maintenance at the main water station in the Governorate, Badhan 1, which is only accessible through this road.

... more incursions

There were almost daily IDF incursions into Nablus City in the last two weeks. These included:

- **3 July** – The IDF entered the Rafidia district with a tank and three armoured vehicles arresting seven students. The operation led to clashes in the area. No injuries were reported;
- **4 July** – The IDF arrested three members of the Fatah movement in Nablus city;
- **14 July** – The IDF entered the Tallaat Esso area in the centre of Nablus with a tank and several armoured jeeps. Clashes with armed Palestinians lasted for four hours leading to the arrest of three Palestinians.

Better news in Gaza

The withdrawal from Beit Hanoun as a result of the Sharon-Mahmoud Abbas negotiations has greatly improved access within Gaza especially with the removal of the roadblock at the Netzarim Junction (closed since March 2002) and the easing of the traffic flow at the Abu Houli junction. However, the main north-south transport route, the Salaheddin Road, continues to be blocked in two places – beside the Kfar Darom settlement (closed since October 2000) and further south next to Morag settlement.

Palestinian police have resumed policing operations in a number of cities and towns, including Beit Hanoun (Gaza) and in Bethlehem on the West Bank. And in Jenin, police started patrolling the city in fifteen jeeps on 12 July.

... but more restrictions on enclaves located near Israeli settlements

Gaza's enclaves continue to face particular problems. OCHA field staff, for example, reported that on 7 July a bulldozer and two accompanying tanks constructed sand barriers that block the only vehicle access road for the families living in the "enclosed area" bordering Morag settlement. The IDF also erected an observation tower next to Morag settlement on 12 July, and added two new observation posts at the Netzarim junction and in Khan Younis next to Al-Mawasi.

In the past two weeks additional conditions have been imposed on the remaining 36 families living in Seafa village – between Dugit and Alei Sinai settlements. Surrounded by an electric fence (built in October 2002), the only access in and out of the area is a single IDF controlled gate. Palestinian residents are officially permitted to move in and out just twice daily – and only on foot. Previously, the IDF had allowed supplies to be brought in twice weekly by licensed donkey carts. But on 9 July, OCHA was informed by the head of the Seafa community that this practice has been discontinued and that residents will now have to carry in all supplies by hand.

A recent OCHA report (1 July) has a detailed assessment with maps of the checkpoints and settlements inside the Gaza Strip. It also highlights the enclosed areas, such as Seafa and Al-Mawasi (see: http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/docs/UN/OCHA/Gaza_withdrawal).

WARNING: West Bank water crisis looms

Despite good rainfall this winter, water problems are already emerging, still early in the summer. For many areas, shortages and contaminated water is preventable, much of it caused by the destruction of water pipes.

The Jenin area, as the Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG) documents, totally lacks functioning water networks so that local communities depend on purchasing water from private tanks. Tankered water is taken from a limited number of private filling points that are not authorised and therefore not monitored by the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA). With water tankers facing long queues at filling points and checkpoints, the price of water has increased.

The situation has become particularly bad in Rantis village (west Ramallah Governorate), for example, where people are receiving only 11 litres per person per day, below the Sphere Project's minimum requirement of 15 litres per person per day that is specified for those facing disaster situations. A number of water-borne diseases have been reported in Rantis.

The Sphere Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response

www.sphereproject.org/handbook/watsan.htm

Minimum Standards in Water Supply and Sanitation

Water supply standard 1: access and water quantity

All people have safe access to a sufficient quantity of water for drinking, cooking and personal and domestic hygiene. Public water points are sufficiently close to shelters to allow use of the minimum water requirement.

key indicators

- At least **15 litres of water per person per day** is collected.
- Flow at each water collection point is at least 0.125 litres per second.
- There is at least 1 water point per 250 people.
- The maximum distance from any shelter to the nearest water point is 500 metres.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

According to UNHCR's emergency guidelines, the minimum amount of **water required for survival is 7 litres per refugee per day, which should be increased to 15 to 20 litres per day as soon as possible** (www.unhcr.ch/)

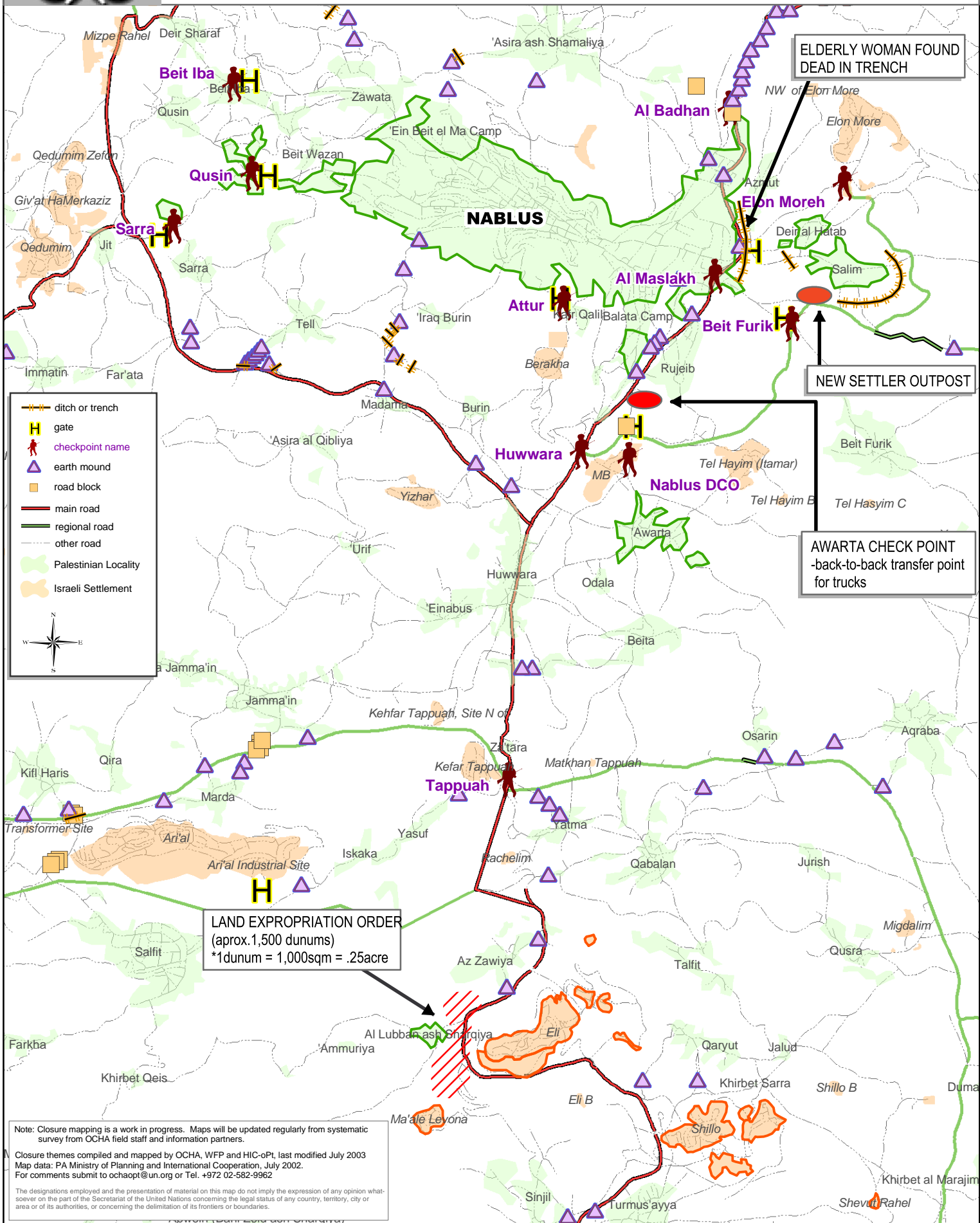
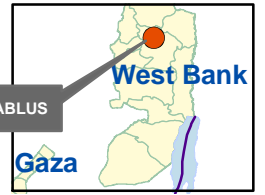
Statistics 1-15 July 2003

Total number of Palestinian deaths	5
Total number of Palestinian injuries	18
Total number of Israeli deaths	2
Total number of Israeli injuries	4
Total number of ambulances denied access	3
Total number of ambulances delayed between 1-6 hours	13
Physical attacks/abuse against ambulance crews	4
Detention of ambulance drivers	2
Detention of patients	1



Nablus Region Closure West Bank

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Humanitarian Update Map 1-15 July 2003



Note: Closure mapping is a work in progress. Maps will be updated regularly from systematic survey from OCHA field staff and information partners.

Closure themes compiled and mapped by OCHA, WFP and HIC-oPt, last modified July 2003
Map data: PA Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, July 2002.
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