



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
occupied Palestinian territory

Humanitarian Update – November 2004

Overview - CAP: 2005 humanitarian action plan – Donor contributions to the oPt - Commitments to Palestinian education – Humanitarian reports: Palestinian economic crisis, house demolitions, child soldiers – Events affecting the humanitarian situation: Rafah border crossing, Jenin incursion, At Tuwani violence against Palestinian children and internationals - Humanitarian monitoring briefs

Overview

In November, UN and international humanitarian organisations together appealed for more than US \$300 million to maintain their assistance to Palestinians. Aid agencies cannot expect, under current circumstances, to achieve substantial improvement in the living conditions of Palestinians if the current access restrictions and closures continue. Priorities therefore for humanitarian action in 2005 will be to prevent further decline of humanitarian and development indicators. *Please see below, Consolidated Appeals Process: 2005 humanitarian action plan for oPt*

On 11 November, Palestinian leader President Yasser Arafat passed away. He was 75. He was buried a day later in Ramallah following a state funeral in Egypt. A spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that Annan was “deeply moved to learn of the death”. He went on to say that now “both Israelis and Palestinians, and the friends of both peoples throughout the world, must make even greater efforts to bring about the peaceful realisation of the Palestinian right of self-determination.”

Consolidated Appeals Process: 2005 humanitarian action plan for oPt

Humanitarian agencies appealed for US \$302 million to maintain their assistance to Palestinians. Agencies, including OCHA, appealed for this amount because the humanitarian condition in the oPt continues to worsen and Israel, as the occupying power, is not fulfilling its obligation to provide welfare and protection of Palestinian civilians. The common action plan will best target the most needy Palestinians and identifies four focus areas for 2005: impoverishment and growing dependence on aid in the oPt; fragmentation of the Palestinian economy; areas of acute humanitarian need; and increased protection of civilians.

Since September 2000, poverty has increased from 21% to 47%; 34% of the Palestinian population is now unemployed; food quality and quantity have decreased; and 1.4 million Palestinians now receive food aid.

The Palestinian economy and society are becoming more fragmented: 50% of West Bank Palestinians receive inferior health services; and net enrolment in primary schools has fallen every year since 2000.

Humanitarian agencies have identified areas of acute crisis: in Gaza, 64% of the population is impoverished and 25% live in deep poverty – both numbers are expected to rise; unemployment in the Gaza Strip is 41%; and more than 24,000 people in Gaza have been made homeless because of house demolitions.

Furthermore, Palestinians civilians face increasing threats and there is a greater need for the protection of civilians. Since September 2000, 3,457 Palestinians and 989 Israelis have been killed. The number of children killed increased 25% compared to 2003 and 48% of Palestinian children experienced conflict-related violence or witnessed violence affecting a family member.

Humanitarian agencies expect that humanitarian needs will continue to gradually increase during 2005. However, aid agencies cannot expect, under current circumstances, to achieve substantial improvement in

the living conditions of Palestinians. Priorities therefore for humanitarian action in 2005 will be to prevent further decline of humanitarian and development indicators, increase awareness of the root causes of the crisis in the oPt, increase the participation of the population in humanitarian programming, build national capacity to provide services and increase coordination.

There has been no easing of the underlying causes of crisis. Access restrictions – closures, the Barrier and restricted roads - are the main causes of the current humanitarian situation. In the West Bank, closures currently consist of a combination of more than 700 checkpoints and physical barriers across roads, and the Barrier. In Gaza, Palestinian movement is tightly restricted at all border crossings and within the Strip movement is frequently restricted by two main checkpoints and other military infrastructure.

To respond to the crisis, humanitarian programming will focus on seven sectors: food security; infrastructure and emergency employment; psychosocial support; health; education; water; and coordination and support services. Projects, 83 priority ones, will be implemented in close cooperation with the Palestinian Authority Technical Ministries and Ministry of Planning.

The shift to humanitarian assistance has meant that less has been spent on development assistance, and opportunities for development have been lost; the World Bank noted two and a half years ago that providing emergency assistance rather than development aid was “a necessary adaptation to the crisis”.

Last year, humanitarian agencies appealed for US \$305 million, of which 46% was received as of October 2004. *To read the full report, please see: [<http://www.reliefweb.int>]*

Donor contributions to the oPt

On 12 November, A Saudi Arabian relief organisation donated US \$6.32 million to help the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) provide food assistance to hundreds of thousands of impoverished Palestinians.

The Saudi Committee for the Relief of Palestinian People donation is the first non-governmental support WFP has received from Saudi Arabia. It is intended to assist 200,000 Palestinian families. The money will be used to purchase nearly 9,000 tons of food including wheat flour, milk and canned meat. *For more information, please see: [<http://www.wfp.org>]*

The United States is channelling nearly \$4 million through 2006 to promote the development of information and communication technology in the Palestinian territory.

Funded through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Palestine Information and Communications Technology Incubator opened in the Al-Sheikh Commercial Tower in the West Bank city of Ramallah in May and is seeking Palestinian entrepreneurs to partner with. *For more information, please see: [<http://www.picti.org>]*

Donor commitment to Palestinian education

Two million dollars was donated by US citizens to a project that will construct three new schools and expand or renovate eight others, adding 55 new classrooms, in the Jenin and Qalqiliya Governorates, USAID announced 9 November.

The project will also provide employment for an estimated 500 workers in the West Bank and will be implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), local authorities and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. *For more information, please see: [<http://www.usaid.gov/>]*

Tunisia is also committed to restoring education normalcy in the region. A Tunisian non-governmental organisation Children First announced in November that it was giving US \$65,000 to UNICEF in support of emergency education activities for Palestinian children. The donation is meant to enable 10,000 school children in grades 1 to 3 to continue their education despite closures and curfews. *For more information, please see: [<http://www.unicef.org>]*

The Japanese government also plans to give approximately \$4.8 million to UNRWA to support its three projects in the educational sector and to assist its general budgets in educational and other general fields. *For more information, please see: [<http://www.mofa.go.jp>]*

Recent published reports relevant to the humanitarian situation:

Palestinian economic crisis

Closures (as noted above) are a key factor behind the economic crisis in the West Bank, according to a World Bank report “Four Years – Intifada, Closures and Palestinian Economic Crisis” released 22 November.

In order to restore the economy, an easing of internal closures and facilitation of trade are needed. The World Bank states, “A radical easing of internal closures would bring growth to the Palestinian economy, but unemployment rates would still increase...Ending the Palestinian economic crisis depends on the ability of the private sector to trade in international markets. That means the opening of external borders.” *To read the full report, please see: [<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/>]*

House demolitions

Since the beginning of the second Intifada, the IDF has demolished 628 housing units, which were home to 3,983 persons, as punitive measures, according to B’Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.

In a report published in November, the centre states that in almost half the cases (47%) the sites were never home to anyone suspected in involvement in attacks against Israelis. On average, 12 innocent people lost their home for every person suspected of participation in attacks against Israelis.

Furthermore, contrary to IDF claims, B’Tselem states that the army does not give prior warning to Palestinians whose homes the IDF intends to demolish - only in 3% of the cases were occupants given prior notification.

B’Tselem states that harm suffered by families affects almost all aspects of life including the disruption of the family unit, sharp decline in the standard of living and feelings of dependence and instability.

In total over the last four years, Israel has demolished some 4,100 Palestinian homes in the oPt, which takes into account the above as well as demolitions carried out in “clearing operations” and demolitions that were carried out because of Israeli claims that units were built without permits. *To read the full report “Through No Fault of Their Own: Israel’s Punitive House Demolitions in the al-Aqsa Intifada”, go to: [<http://www.btselem.org/>]*

Child soldiers: Global report

On 17 November, The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers published “Child Soldiers Global Report 2004”, which covers the period from April 2001 to March 2004. The report is based on extensive research on child recruitment legislation, policy and practice in 196 countries.

The global report noted the following about Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. “Palestinian children became suicide bombers and took part in operations by armed groups. Israeli armed forces treated

children as combatants, shot those throwing stones or participating in demonstrations, and coerced them into becoming informants.” Furthermore, the report noted that Palestinian children were detained by Israeli forces under military provisions that failed to meet international standards. *To read the full report, please see: [*<http://www.child-soldiers.org/resources/global-reports>*]*

Events affecting the humanitarian situation in November

Rafah border crossings: Restrictions continue

For the last seven months, Israel has restricted passage for males aged 16 to 35 from Gaza through Rafah passenger terminal. In recent weeks, a small number of patients and students have received permits to cross into Egypt. However, such coordinated crossings are not sufficient to meet demand as they rarely exceed 50 crossings per day.

Jenin incursion

On 15 November, after more than a two-week entrenchment, Israeli forces withdrew from the northern West Bank town of Jenin and its nearby refugee camp. During the operation, eight Palestinians were killed, including two children, and about two dozen were injured. Fourteen Palestinians were arrested. No Israeli casualties were reported.

Israel said the operation was due to the “high number of alerts of imminent terror attacks and the strengthening of the terror infrastructure in Jenin.” *For more information, please see:* [\[http://www.mfa.gov.il\]](http://www.mfa.gov.il)

For more than two weeks, the IDF closed all main roads leading to the town and a number of alternative roads. At least two houses, one built by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), were demolished in Jenin refugee camp. Two business offices were also destroyed. In addition, several houses were occupied in Jenin and Jenin refugee camp, and residents were forced to leave. The occupation periods lasted between 10 hours and up to six days. Curfew was also imposed on the area for nearly two weeks.

At Tuwani violence against Palestinian children and internationals

For Palestinian children in Tuba, the daily trip to school in At Tuwani village, 2 kilometres away, has become increasingly problematic because of routine harassment by Israeli settlers from the illegal outpost of Ha’vat Maon. Local children, aged between 7 and 11, attending At Tuwani school, have needed to take an 8-kilometre detour travelling on foot or donkey.

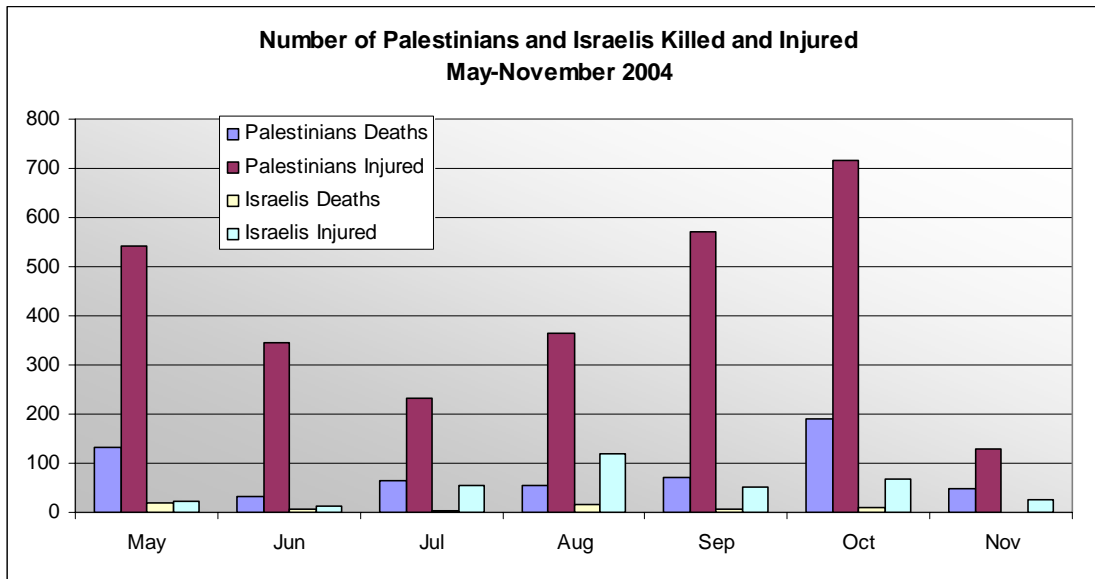
In an effort to protect the children, international human rights activists have accompanied them on their daily walk to school. However two activists, US citizens, were seriously injured when they were attacked by masked men with chains and batons on 29 September. Further attacks on the children and their companions occurred on 9 October. An Italian human rights activist and two researchers from Amnesty International were assaulted by settlers. *For more information, please see:* [\[http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/\]](http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/)

The Israeli Police is currently investigating the matter, and together with the IDF have started providing armed escorts for the Palestinian children. Despite the police and army presence, the attacks or threat to the safety and security of the children have not been reduced. The IDF has informed the UN that it is committed to providing security for the children ensuring they safely reach school.

Such a situation is likely to impact the willingness and capacity of the children to attend school. Furthermore, access to education in the area is extremely problematic - the school in At Tuwani is the only educational facility available in this area south of Hebron – and attendance rates and dropouts in the area are reported by the Directorate of Education to be some of the worst in the Hebron Governorate.

Monthly snapshot of humanitarian monitoring issues

Casualties – Between 3 and 30 November, 50 Palestinians were killed, and at least 129 were injured. One Israeli was killed and 27 were injured in the same period.¹



Incidents involving ambulances/medical teams – There was one incident of an ambulance or medical team being denied access, and eight incidents of delays. In one incident, included in the eight, a Palestinian woman gave birth inside a PRCS ambulance while waiting at Huwwara checkpoint, Nablus District.

Curfews – There were at least nine incidents of curfew reported between 3 and 30 November.

Demolitions/people displaced – At least 99 structures were demolished in the oPt, most of which were living accommodations. However, included in the 99, were 10 greenhouses, a water well, at least 35 Bedouin housing structures, and several multi-storied buildings. Seven structures were partially destroyed and another eight were damaged to a lesser extent.

Land levelling and requisitions – At least 334 dunums (33.4 hectares) were levelled and an additional 350 trees were uprooted. However, there were additional reports of land levelling where it was not possible to estimate the amount of land involved. In addition, there were at least four requisition orders received during the reporting period as well as number of stop construction orders and demolitions orders. *For more details, please see Humanitarian Briefing Notes at: [<http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/>]*

Sources: OCHA, FCU, PRCS, UNRWA, IDF, MoFA, Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, PCHR

For more information on humanitarian monitoring issues, go to OCHA Updates at: [<http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/>]

This update will be produced regularly by OCHA oPt to capture the main events and trends of humanitarian developments in the territory. OCHA invites UN agencies, international organisations, NGOs and donors to submit contributions for future issues.

An Arabic will be made available on the OCHA website: [<http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/>]

¹ Chart reflects monthly reporting periods. For example, November figures reflect casualties between 3 and 30 November.