



## Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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## Humanitarian Monitoring Report – June 2004

The Humanitarian Monitoring Report is produced monthly 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. The report is provided to the Task Force on Project Implementation (TFPI) as a basis for discussions with the government of Israel. It is available on the website ([www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt](http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt)).

### Context

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan 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.

This report monitors the humanitarian commitments made by the government of Israel to Ms Bertini during a mission to the region from 12 to 19 August 2002. It concluded that there were serious humanitarian problems linked to the ongoing conflict and, specifically, to the measures implemented by the government of Israel to safeguard its citizens from Palestinian attacks.

These security measures, including curfews, closures and roadblocks, led to a crisis of access and mobility, instigating a drastic decline in the Palestinian economy. A large part of the Palestinian population has difficulty accessing basic services such as health and education. Humanitarian service providers such as UN agencies, NGOs, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) ambulances, have experienced problems providing assistance and services to beneficiaries.

### Commitments

#### Health

- Ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at checkpoints.
- Mechanisms will be set in place to ensure patients seeking critical medical services (child delivery, dialysis, chemotherapy) can pass all checkpoints quickly.

#### Water

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

#### Facilitation of International Humanitarian Organisations

- The government of Israel will fully facilitate the activities of international organisations, with particular reference to UNRWA.
- The government of Israel agreed to review and strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

#### Additional Commitments

On previous occasions, the government of Israel 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
- Olive farmers will be allowed to access their fields.
- Increased shipments will be enabled at Karni crossing in the Gaza Strip.
- The number of permits for Palestinian workers in Israel will be increased.

*The Bertini Commitments represent a minimum and specific set of humanitarian standards agreed to by the government of Israel. The Bertini Commitments are not a substitute for compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) 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 provisions of IHL.*

## Executive Summary

### Health

Palestinian and UNRWA ambulance operators reported a total of 38 humanitarian access incidents (compared to 93 in May 2004) in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations was delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF. Of the recorded incidents in June, 11 involved denials of access, 20 involved delays, six were reports of shooting/damage to an ambulance and one involved a situation where a medical crew was detained for two days.

The Rafah Terminal remained closed to all Palestinians between 16 and 35 years of age, a situation that is ongoing. At the Rafah Terminal, ambulances must transfer patients through the “back-to-back” method, in which patients are transferred from the rear of one vehicle to the rear of another. Due to closures and other restrictions imposed at the Rafah Terminal, the number of patients crossing there has reduced significantly. However, some restrictions were eased on emergency medical cases for treatment in Israel.

### Water

A preliminary UN inter-agency assessment indicated that between 10 and 40% of Rafah's water network was damaged during the Israeli May 2004 incursion by security forces in Gaza. The poor state of Rafah's infrastructure caused public health problems even before recent demolitions occurred.

### Facilitation of International Humanitarian Organisations

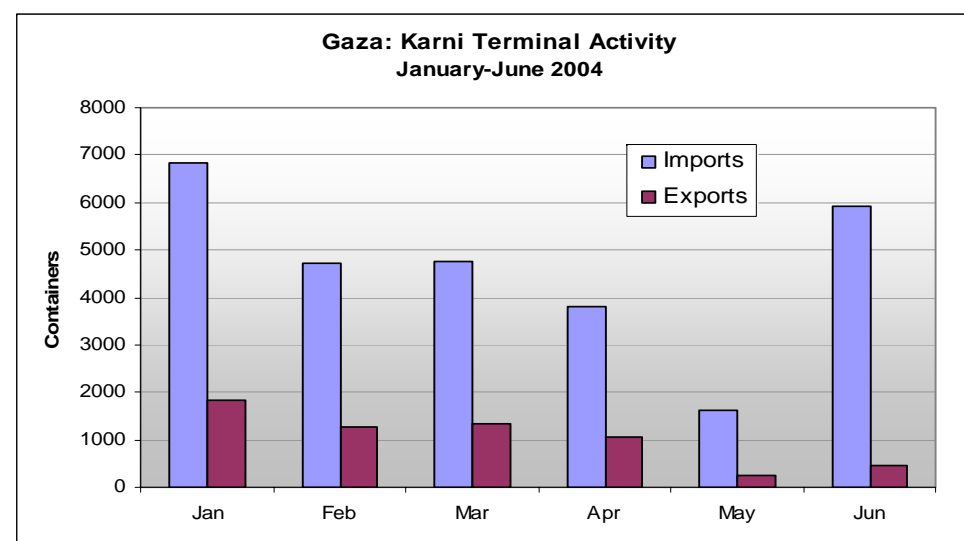
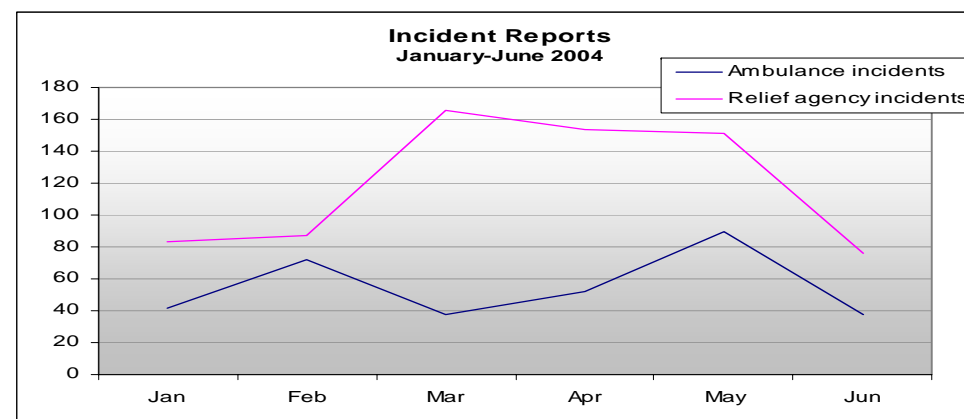
In June, international relief agencies filed some 76 incident reports, compared to 151 in May, in which the delivery of aid and/or the movement of personnel was obstructed by the IDF or Israeli Border Police. Most incidents reported included access delays or denials of access by the IDF of international organisations' mandates, privileges and immunities.

### Additional Commitments

Restrictions remain over a large stretch of the Gaza coastline. Boats are permitted travel up to 6 nautical miles between Deir El Balah and to the north of Gaza City. However, since 19 October 2003, no fishing has been permitted from the Al Mawasi coast to the south of Deir el Balah.

While there has been a notable increase in the volume of exports leaving Gaza, imports still remain at significantly low levels when compared to the first quarter of 2004. And while Erez reopened in June for the longest period since March, the number of workers entering Israel and the industrial estate are now in the hundreds compared to the thousands crossing in the first quarter of the year.

The accumulative effect of such a prolonged closure when compounded with the potential number of lost working days represents a significant loss of income to the local economy.



Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<p><b>1. Health</b></p> <p>Palestinian ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at any checkpoints</p> <p>(government of Israel to Bertini mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p> <p>Effective mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that Palestinians seeking critical medical services (child delivery, dialysis, chemo-therapy, etc) can quickly pass all checkpoints</p> <p>(government of Israel to Bertini mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p>	<p>Instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders concerning maximum time for ambulance delay at checkpoints</p> <p>Palestinian MoH, PRCS, UNRWA and hospitals no longer report ambulance delays at checkpoints</p> <p>Mechanisms established and Palestinian public informed.</p> <p>Explicit instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders</p> <p>No more reported instances of Palestinians in need of critical medical services being denied passage at checkpoints</p>	<p><i>West Bank &amp; Gaza: 38 incidents</i></p> <p>Palestinian and UNRWA ambulance operators reported a total of 38 humanitarian access incidents (compared to 93 in May 2004) in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations was delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF.</p> <p><i>Ambulance Access Denials</i></p> <p>Of the 38 incidents reported, 11 included humanitarian access denials, including the following:</p> <p>22 June: a PRCS ambulance was denied access to evacuate bodies of two killed men shot and killed by the IDF in Beit Hanoun</p> <p>30 June: due to the closure of Abu Houli check point, MoH and PRCS ambulance operations between Gaza South and Gaza middle-north ceased completely.</p> <p><i>Ambulance Delays</i></p> <p>There were 20 documented incidents of delays, in excess of the 30 minutes and as long as 4 hours and 30 minutes, including the following:</p> <p>2 June: a PRCS ambulance was delayed for 1 hour 20 minutes at Al Tuffah checkpoint when it was transporting a toddler from Al Mawassi to Naser hospital in Khan Younis.</p> <p><i>Other Reports</i></p> <p>In June, six incidents were reported in which crews came under IDF attack (firing and physically abusing paramedics). Included in the six incidents are the following:</p> <p>23 June: a PRCS ambulance came under IDF gunfire in the eastern part of Beit Hanoun when it was trying to evacuate an injured man who later died</p> <p>30 June: a MoH ambulance was hit by five bullets while attempting to evacuate casualties from Beit Hanoun.</p> <p>In addition, a medical crew was detained for two days.</p>	<p>At the Rafah Terminal, ambulances must transfer patients through the “back-to-back” method, in which patients are transferred from the rear of one vehicle to the rear of another. Due to closures and other imposed restrictions at the Rafah Terminal, the number of patients crossing there reduced significantly.</p> <p>The PRCS stated that during June, Israeli Army has continued to violate International Humanitarian Law and fundamental human rights, by restricting freedom of movement to PRCS ambulances and its medical teams. Delays, denial of access and arbitrary searches had a negative impact on the sick and wounded in the West Bank, including Nablus, Tulkarm and Qalqiliya, and in Gaza.</p>

Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<p><b>2. Water</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>(government of Israel to Bertini Mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p>	<p>Instructions issued to all checkpoints allowing for the easy transfer of water tankers through all checkpoints</p> <p>The IDF removes barriers that prevent the access by water tankers to villages that rely on tankered water</p> <p>No reports on lack of water or delay/stoppage of water tankers at checkpoints</p>	<p>The ICRC reports hostilities were particularly intensive in the Gaza Strip between January and June 2004 with frequent Israeli air strikes and large-scale house demolitions and damage to vital water and sanitation infrastructure. A preliminary UN inter-agency assessment indicated that between 10 and 40% of Rafah's water network was also damaged during the Israeli May 2004 incursion by security forces in Gaza, according to OCHA.<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>The poor state of Rafah's infrastructure caused public health problems even before recent demolitions occurred. Additional damage during IDF incursions in May to water and electricity lines, roads and public buildings, compounds problems caused by weak infrastructure, according to UN agencies. The agencies note that due to the repeated incursions and ensuing destruction, there are limited funds for upgrading and developing the existing networks. All available funds are channeled into immediate repair work, leaving little for long term infrastructure development.</p>
Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<p><b>3. Facilitation of International Humanitarian Organisations</b></p> <p>Israel will fully facilitate the assistance activities of international organisations with particular reference to UNRWA</p> <p>(government of Israel to Bertini mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p>	<p>Free access for all international staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and Gaza, and at international crossings, at all times</p> <p>Free access for all Palestinian staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and Gaza at all times</p> <p>No delays/ stoppage of international organisations' transport of development and humanitarian goods at</p>	<p>In June 2004, international relief agencies filed some 76 incident reports<sup>2</sup> (compared to 151 in May) in which the delivery of aid and/or the movement of personnel was obstructed by the IDF or Israeli Border Police. Most reported incidents, 54, were delays. In 21 cases, humanitarian access was denied, and in one incident an UNRWA staff member was detained for two days.</p> <p>UNRWA, the largest humanitarian organisation operating in the oPt, reported 72 incidents<sup>3</sup> of delay or denial of passage or detention of staff at IDF checkpoints.</p> <p>International humanitarian NGOs reported four access incidents, in which staff were delayed or denied access.</p>	<p>UN staff members continued to report incidents where IDF soldiers at checkpoints refused to cooperate with the District Coordination Liaison Office, and/or accept the validity of UN ID cards, insisting instead that staff show national passports or other ID cards.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Water incident reports are not comprehensive for the month of June, but rather highlight areas of concern and continuing trends.

<sup>2</sup> These figures apply only to the humanitarian aid organisations that reported incidents at checkpoints to OCHA.

<sup>3</sup> These figures apply only to reported incidents involving UNRWA staff travelling in humanitarian agency vehicles, which is only a small fraction of UNRWA staff in the West Bank. Most staff members use their private or public transportation to report to duty.

<p><i>Facilitation of International Humanitarian Organisations continued</i></p> <p>Israel agrees to review and strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the IDF to facilitate assistance activities</p> <p>(government of Israel to Bertini mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p> <p>Israel will improve the situation at checkpoints, including the deployment of more experienced IDF personnel</p>	<p>any point (that is, at international borders, borders between Israel and the West Bank or Gaza, within the West Bank or Gaza) at any time</p> <p>Palestinian drivers (with either Jerusalem or West Bank ID) allowed to drive humanitarian vehicles for international organisations, in particular UNRWA, WFP and ICRC</p> <p>Procedures will be established that provide direct access by international organisations to operational and command structures within the IDF</p>		
<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<p><b>4. Additional Commitments</b></p> <p>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 of fishermen or confiscation of fishing boats within the 12 nautical mile zone</p>	<p>Restrictions remain over a large stretch of the Gaza coastline. Boats are permitted to travel up to 6 nautical miles between Deir El Balah and to the north of Gaza City. However, since 19 October 2003, no fishing has been permitted from the Al Mawasi coast to the south of Deir el Balah.</p> <p>A small number of boats do leave the Rafah section of Al Mawasi. However, this is without Israeli authorisation and fishing is limited to 300 to 400 metres distance from shore.</p>	<p>Due to impositions placed by the Israeli government over a large section of the Gaza Strip, fishermen lose up to a third of the total coastline in terms of potential catches, while at the same time they are not allowed to reach the 12 nautical mile zone in those areas in which they are permitted.</p>
<p>An increase in shipments at Karni crossing, Gaza Strip</p>	<p>Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing</p>	<p>Following a prolonged closure in May, Karni reopened on 31 May and was closed for the remainder of the month, except for weekends.</p> <p>There was an increased flow of commercial traffic with respect to commercial goods entering Gaza from the West Bank, Israel and overseas. For example, there was a substantial increase in the number of containers entering Gaza in June 5,909 units compared to 1,626 units in May. The June figure is the highest since January this year</p>	<p>While there has been a notable increase in the volume of exports leaving Gaza, imports still remain at significantly low levels when compared to the first quarter of 2004. The ratio of exports to imports in January was approximately 1:3.5 while the figure for June was 1:12.</p>

<p><i>Additional Commitments continued</i></p>		<p>(6,826) and considerably more than April (3,802).</p> <p>The significant increase in imports is not matched by the flow of exports. While the number of containers leaving Gaza in June was 469 - nearly double the figure of 239 in May - still remains far short of 1,073 and 1,340 for April and March respectively.</p> <p>The notable reduction in the level of exports is a consequence of new security procedures introduced at Karni following an attack at Ashdod on 14 March, a double suicide bombing in the southern Israeli port area that killed 10 people. Immediately after the attack, all movement of export containers on the Palestinian side of the terminal was prohibited as the Israelis believed the Ashdod bombers left Gaza in such a container. Thereafter, all transfer of goods out of Gaza had to take place on open-backed pallets which could not exceed 40 centimetres in height. This figure was later raised to 100 centimetres.</p> <p>In addition in May, large cement blocks were placed at short intervals around the Palestinian side of the terminal, approximately 10 metres away from the freight channels. As a result, vehicles can no longer move back and forth to the freight holding areas; all movement is now dependent on forklift trucks which can enter the 10-metre zone at certain points, and accompanied by a maximum of four support workers.</p> <p>Since 27 June, a maximum of 10 containers a day is now permitted to leave Gaza, with the open back pallet/forklift process remaining the principal means for departing freight.</p>	<p>In terms of the local economy, the obvious imbalance between imports and exports represents a net outflow of income to Israeli and overseas suppliers.</p> <p>While the increasing number of goods entering Gaza is a positive sign, it needs to be balanced by an outflow of merchandise in order to inject money into the local economy and increase the levels of disposable income.</p> <p>Although the security measures introduced by Israel are there to protect its citizens, it is clear that they have a direct affect in curtailing any expansion of the Gazan economy if sustained over a long term.</p>
<p>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>Erez was open from 1 to 27 June and then closed from 28 until 30 June - following the rocket attack by Palestinian militants from northern Gaza which killed two Israelis in Sderot. On 29 June, Israeli forces entered Beit Hanoun to the south of the Erez Industrial Estate.</p> <p>Up until 27 June, both workers and traders were allowed into Israel. No workers had previously been able to enter Israel since 17 April. The number of workers remained low throughout the month with a maximum of 631 crossing into Israel on 23 June. The number of traders ranged between 25 and 47 persons. No workers or traders younger than 35 years of age were able to cross into Israel.</p> <p>The industrial estate was also closed between 28 and 30 June, and for a further five days from 9 to 13 June. The numbers of workers entering the estate on a daily basis in June ranged from 147 to 679. This was down markedly on the numbers working there in the first half of April when anywhere up to 3,300 workers were crossing daily.</p>	<p>While Erez reopened in June for the longest period since March, the number of workers entering Israel and the industrial estate are now in the hundreds compared to the thousands crossing in the first quarter of the year.</p> <p>The accumulative effect of such a prolonged closure when taken with the potential number of lost working days represents a significant loss of income to the local economy.</p>