



## Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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## Humanitarian Monitoring Report – July 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, UNRWA and NGO ambulance operators reported a total of 41 humanitarian access incidents (compared to 38 in June 2004) in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations was delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF. Delays represent more than 60% of the reported incidents. However, 10 incidents were reported in which crews came under IDF attack.

Furthermore, both PRCS and MoH reported significant difficulties operating inside Beit Hanoun; neither PRCS ambulances nor MoH ambulances could reach some areas, including the area around As Sika, to deliver health care services and/or evacuate patients.

### Water

UNRWA reported that in Beit Hanoun, Gaza, water and electrical supplies were cut due to the damages caused by the movements of Israeli armoured vehicles. It was also reported that IDF troops destroyed water and sewerage networks in the west of Beit Hanoun. The health situation is alarming because of the ongoing Israeli military operation in Beit Hanoun. There is an increase of incidence of dermatological and diarrhoeal diseases resulted from water shortage. In addition, areas in the West Bank also experienced water shortages.

### Facilitation of International Humanitarian Organisations

The prolonged incursion into Beit Hanoun raised considerable security concerns for UN and NGO staff working inside the area, and also for those moving back and forth to the nearby Erez Terminal. Furthermore in July, 56 UN staff were directly affected by eight separate shooting incidents in north eastern Gaza. No injuries were reported. UNRWA, the largest humanitarian organisation operating in the oPt, reported 51 access problems at IDF checkpoints. IDF incursions in the Rafah, Khan Younis and Zaitoun areas resulted in continued extended closures of crossing points between the Gaza Strip and Israel. Movement within the Gaza Strip was interrupted by simultaneous closure.

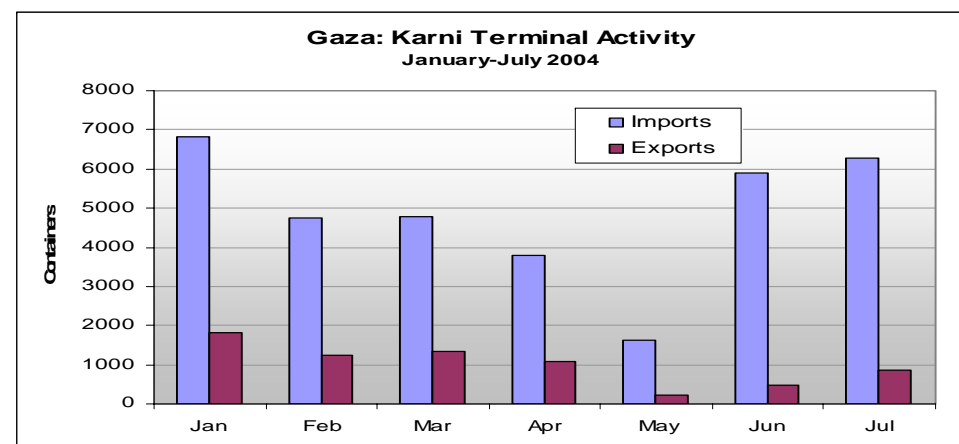
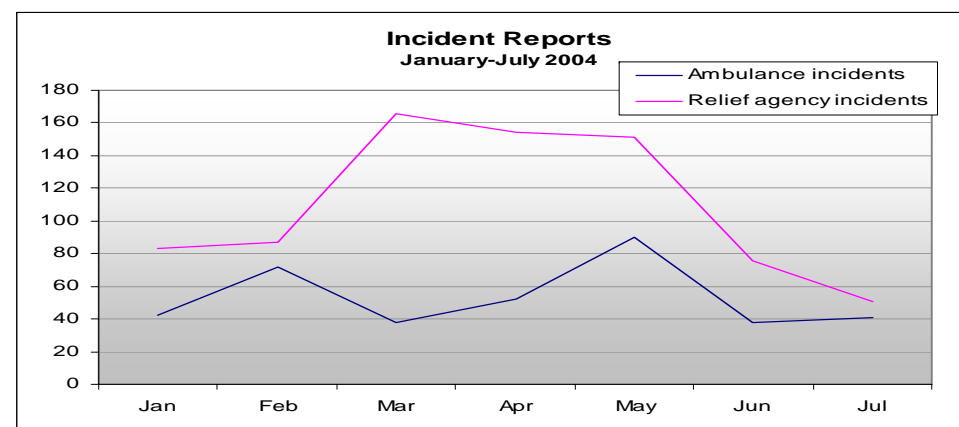
### Additional Commitments

While the movement of commercial products out of Gaza has increased since May, it is significantly lower than movement between January and April 2004. During the first four months of 2004, Palestinian exports represented between 20% and 22% of terminal activity: imports and exports. This figure was 7.3% in June and 12% in July.

For a second consecutive month, Erez Terminal and industrial zone were open to Palestinian workers (following a 43-day closure between 18 April and 30 May).

While many Palestinian workers have been able to resume their work, the number of workers is significantly lower in comparison to earlier months – the losses to the local economy are enormous.

In addition, the movement of Gaza fishermen remained subject to strict restrictions. Restrictions remain in place over a large stretch of the Gaza coastline. Boats are permitted to travel 6 nautical miles from the coast, and to an area between Deir El Balah in central Gaza to the south of Dugit settlement in northern Gaza.



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: 41 incidents</i></p> <p>Palestinian, UNRWA and NGO ambulance operators reported a total of 41 humanitarian access incidents (compared to 38 in June) 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 41 incidents reported, five included humanitarian access denials.</p> <p><i>Ambulance Delays</i></p> <p>There were 26 documented incidents of delays in excess of 30 minutes, including the incident below.</p> <p>8 July: a PRCS ambulance was delayed for five hours while transporting a patient from Beit Hanoun to Kamal Odwan hospital in Beit Lahia.</p> <p><i>Other Reports</i></p> <p>In July, 10 incidents were reported in which crews came under IDF attack (firing at and/or physically abusing crews or medical equipment). Such examples are listed below.</p> <p>9 July: A PRCS ambulance was subjected to IDF gunfire, while en route to transport a patient in critical condition from Beit Hanoun to a local Palestinian hospital. The PRCS medics returned to the Beit Hanoun clinic. However, the patient reached the clinic in serious condition and was later pronounced dead.</p> <p>10 July: A PRCS ambulance was subjected to Israeli Army gunfire, while en route to evacuate injuries in Abdul Hamid street (Jabalia, Gaza Strip). The PRCS medics left the area and headed to find an alternative route. On the way, the PRCS ambulance was subjected to direct Israeli Army gunfire for a second time. The PRCS medics sustained no injuries in either incident</p> <p>27 July: A PRCS ambulance was subjected to Israeli Army gunfire, while attempting to evacuate a 13-year-old injured youth at Salah al Dein Gate area at the Egyptian border south of Rafah.</p> <p>In addition to the 41 incidents, there were also reports of a hospital coming under IDF gunfire.</p> <p>22 July: Nasser MoH hospital in Khan Younis came under IDF gunfire. As a result one patient was injured in the arm while inside the ward. The hospital was subject to IDF gunfire again on 25 July, light damage sustained to the boundaries and internal walls was reported.</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 has reduced significantly.</p> <p>Since 18 July, MoH ambulances have been denied access to and from Rafah Terminal transporting Palestinian patients from the Gaza Strip for further treatment abroad.</p> <p>UNRWA received reports of continuing difficulty by medical staff to access the UNRWA health point in Nassaria.</p> <p>Both PRCS and MoH report experiencing significant difficulties operating inside Beit Hanoun; neither PRCS ambulances nor MoH ambulances could reach some areas, including the area around as Sika, to deliver health care services and/or evacuate patients.</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><i>West Bank</i></p> <p>Beit Liqya, Kharbatha al Misbah and other villages in the southwest Ramallah area faced severe water shortages. Mekorot, the Israeli water undertaking, reduced the supply of water. Because of the low pressure, water did not reach many households on higher elevations. In addition, because of shortages in the village, Kharbatha al Misbah village council cut off the water supply to a nearby Bedouin community of about 150 people.</p> <p>27 July: villagers in At Tuwani, south Hebron, received from the IDF 80m<sup>3</sup> of drinking water following the contamination of one of the sources of drinking water for the community by nearby Israeli settlers from Ma'on Settlement on 14 July.</p> <p><i>Gaza</i></p> <p>UNRWA reported that in Beit Hanoun, water and electrical supplies were cut due to the damages caused by the movements of Israeli armoured vehicles. It was also reported that IDF troops destroyed water and sewerage networks in the west of Beit Hanoun.</p>	<p>The health situation is alarming because of the ongoing Israeli military operation in Beit Hanoun, UNRWA reported. There is an increase of incidence of dermatological and diarrhoeal diseases resulted from water shortage.</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 any point (that is, at international borders,</p>	<p>The prolonged incursion into Beit Hanoun raised considerable security concerns for UN and NGO staff working inside the area, and also for those moving back and forth to the nearby Erez Terminal. UN staff providing relief supplies inside Beit Hanoun had warning shots fired at them from IDF positions, despite prior coordination with the IDF. On as Sika Street in Beit Hanoun on 21 July, OCHA staff twice had warning shots fired at them from an IDF snipers position in spite of having received permission from the DCL to enter the street.</p> <p>In July, 56 UN staff were directly affected by eight separate shooting incidents in north eastern Gaza. No injuries were reported.</p> <p>UNRWA, the largest humanitarian organisation operating in the oPt, reported 51 access problems<sup>1</sup> at IDF checkpoints. There were 46 incidents in which vehicles were delayed and five incidents in which access was refused. The agency lost more than 215 working hours as a result, with an average of more than three staff members involved in each incident. One such incident is listed below.</p> <p>Between 1 July and 28 July, UNRWA teachers, health staff, engineers and students reported lengthy delays at the Abu Houli junction lasting for as long as two hours. The</p>	<p>IDF incursions in the Rafah, Khan Younis and Zaitoun areas resulted in continued extended closures of crossing points between the Gaza Strip and Israel, UNRWA wrote. Movement within the Gaza Strip was interrupted by simultaneous closure of both Netzarim/Coastal Road Junction and Abu Houli/Gush Qatif Junction. UNRWA vehicles and staff were still subjected to various degrees of searches conducted by IDF personnel, particularly at the checkpoints into Al Mawasi and Dugit/Alai Sinai settlement (Seafa) restricted zones, the agency reported. Most delays to UNRWA services occurred at the Abu Houli/ Gush Qatif checkpoint, at the entry to Al Mawasi (Toufah checkpoint), and at the entry to the</p>

<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>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>	<p>number of field staff and students delayed in the reported incidents varied from between two and to more than 350 persons.</p>	<p>Palestinian area between Dugit and Alai Sinai settlement (Seafa).</p> <p>Responding to prevailing insecurity in Gaza, Peter Hansen, commissioner-general of UNRWA, relocated some staff to Jerusalem on 29 July, while pledging that the move would not hamper the provision of aid or services to refugees in need. In a statement, he said that "recent worrying developments - including the extensive Israeli military operations in Beit Hanoun and increased unpredictability and insecurity faced by UN staff in crossing into and out of the Gaza Strip at Erez", were behind the decision.</p> <p>One week prior to the relocation of staff, the security level in Gaza was raised from Phase III to IV. Phase IV is one level short of evacuation.</p>
Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<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 in place over a large stretch of the Gaza coastline. Boats are permitted to travel 6 nautical miles from the coast, and to an area between Deir El Balah in central Gaza to the south of Dugit settlement in northern Gaza.</p> <p>Since 19 October 2003, no fishing has been permitted from either Khan Younis wharf or Rafah wharf, both located inside Al Mawasi. While a small number of boats periodically leave Rafah wharf without Israeli authorisation, fishing limits rarely exceed 400 metres.</p> <p>Due to these restrictions, most of the registered fishermen<sup>2</sup> from the Al Mawasi area, 473 from Khan Younis and 310 from Rafah, have relocated their boats and nets to the Deir El Balah wharf to avoid the closed area.</p>	<p>The Israeli government has not allowed Gaza fishermen unrestricted access to a fishing zone of up to 12 nautical miles.</p> <p>The situation has progressively deteriorated as the enforcement of restrictions includes arrests, confiscations and occasional targeting of boats with gunfire by the Israeli navy.</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>In July, there was an increase in the volume of commercial imports and exports, measured by the total number of containers, passing through Karni.</p>	<p>In terms of imports, the volume of trade measured by the number of containers is comparable, if not better than figures seen for the first quarter</p>

<p><i>Additional Commitments continued</i></p>		<p>Karni was closed for two working days in July. (In June, it was open the entire month, with the exception of weekends. In May, there was a full closure between 11 and 30 May.) The number of containers entering Gaza from the West Bank, Israel and elsewhere was higher in July than June. In July, 6,290 containers were processed for entry compared to 5,909 units for June and 1,626 for May. The figures for April, 3,802, and May were considerably lower on account of the new security measures introduced at Karni in the wake of the suicide attack at Ashdod port in March.</p> <p>Exports are increasing. The number of containers leaving Gaza in July was 859 units compared to 469 for June. The number in May was 239. While there has been a considerable increase in exports over a two month period, export figures fall far short of the figures for December 2003 and January 2004.</p>	<p>of the year.</p> <p>While the movement of commercial products out of Gaza has increased since May, it is significantly lower than movement between January and April 2004.</p> <p>During the first four months of 2004, Palestinian exports represented between 20% and 22% of terminal activity. This figure was 7.3% in June and 12% in July.</p> <p>Humanitarian assistance provided by UNRWA and the World Food Programme remains curtailed because of the Israeli authorities unwillingness to allow the release of empty containers from Gaza to Israel. In the absence of containers leaving Gaza and the accumulation of holding charges by commercial Israeli companies, there is unwillingness on the part of both agencies to bring in more containers. As a result, UNRWA had still not gone ahead with a food distribution planned for June.</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>For a second consecutive month, Erez Terminal and industrial zone were open to Palestinian workers (following a 43-day closure between 18 April and 30 May). The terminal and industrial zone remained open in spite of the IDF incursion into Beit Hanoun which lasted throughout July.</p> <p>The number of workers entering Israel remained low throughout the month compared to earlier in 2004. However, July daily figures were higher than daily figures in June. For example, 1,544 workers crossed into Israel on 28 July compared to the previous month's high of 631.</p> <p>The industrial zone was open throughout July. In June, it was closed from 9 to 13 June and 28 to 30 June. However, the number of daily workers in July did not exceed 648 on any one day.</p>	<p>While many Palestinian workers have been able to resume their work, the number of workers is significantly lower in comparison to earlier months – the losses to the local economy are enormous.</p> <p>Thousands of individuals who were previously providing a source of income to the local economy are no longer working. Furthermore, there is little or no likelihood of alternative employment.</p>