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OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS  
occupied Palestinian territory

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## Humanitarian Monitoring Report – October 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.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org)).

### 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 Strip coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles.
- Olive farmers will be allowed access to their fields.
- Increased shipments will be enabled at Karmi 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

In October 2004 ambulance operators, including PRCS, MoH and UNRWA, reported a total of at least 47 access incidents (compared to 54 in September 2004) in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF.

Furthermore, in October the IDF conducted one of the longest and most intense military operations in the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the second Intifada.

### Water

Water, sanitation and hygiene-related problems continue to increase in Palestinian areas. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), there was strong evidence of water-related diseases; inaccessibility to public health centres; lack of funds to pay for wastewater evacuation; a high percentage of families were unable to pay water bills; there was destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure; dependence on water tankers for fresh water; limited supplies of water or no access to water networks; and curtailed or completely cut off water supplies.

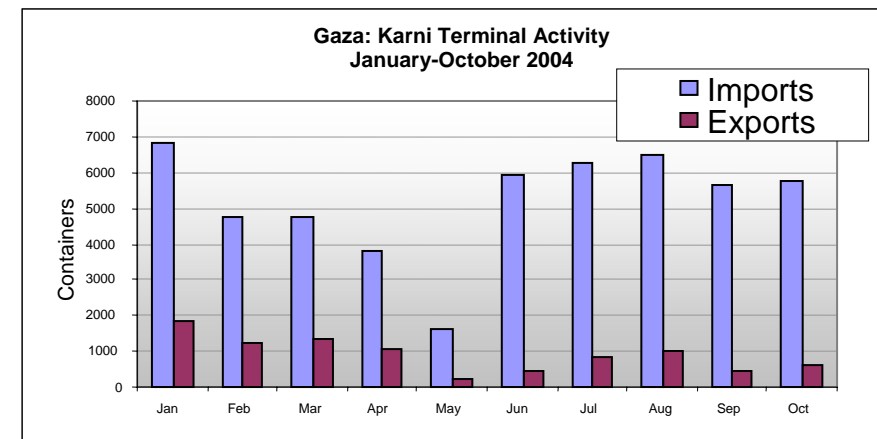
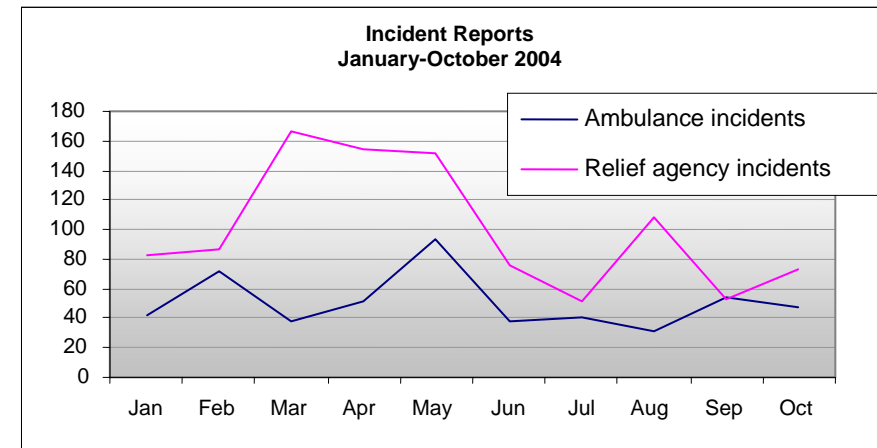
### Obstructions of movement for international humanitarian organisations

In October 2004, international relief agencies filed some **73 incident reports**, in which the delivery of aid and/or the movement of personnel were obstructed by the IDF or Israeli Border Police. Most incidents reported included delays and disrespect by the IDF of international humanitarian organisations' mandates, privileges and immunities.

### Additional Commitments

While the volume of trade had been increasing since May, as measured by the total number of containers entering and leaving the Gaza Strip, this trend reversed in September and improved only slightly in October. The share of exports as a percentage of total trade was half of that in August; exports accounted for 9.7% of terminal activity in October, compared to 7.7% in September.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, restrictions remain over a large stretch of the Gaza Strip coastline. Sailing is permitted up to six nautical miles from the coast. Since 19 October 2003, no fishing has been permitted from either Khan Younis wharf or Rafah wharf, both located inside Al Mawasi.



<sup>1</sup>Trade figures are reported by Palestinian officials at Karni to OCHA. These figures represent the most accurate figures available to OCHA at the time of publication.

Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<p><b>1. Health</b>                      Palestinian ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at any checkpoints                       (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, chemotherapy, etc) can quickly pass all checkpoints                       (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 Ministry of Health, 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 and the Gaza Strip: 47 incidents</i></p> <p>PRCS, MoH and UNRWA ambulance operators reported a total of at least 47 access incidents (compared to 54 in September 2004) in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF.</p> <p><i>Ambulance Access Denials</i>                      Of the 47 incidents reported, 11 included humanitarian access denials. Included in the reports were the incidents below.</p> <p>3 October: Al-Mawasi, a PRCS ambulance was denied access by the IDF at Al-Tuffah checkpoint, while en route to transport a woman in labour to a local Palestinian hospital. Forty-five minutes later the baby was born at the checkpoint inside the ambulance.</p> <p>5 October: Rafah, a PRCS ambulance was denied access by the IDF, in the Burj Zuroub area, while en route to evacuate a wounded person. The person, a 13-year-old girl, was later handed over by Israeli authorities, but was declared dead by Palestinian medical officials.</p> <p><i>Ambulance Delays</i></p> <p>There were at least 28 documented incidents of delays, in excess of 30 minutes. Many ambulance medical staff, not only experienced long delays, but were often subjected to vehicle or body searches or verbal abuse.</p> <p>9 October: Bethlehem, a PRCS ambulance was delayed by the IDF at Beit Jala (DCO) checkpoint, while en route to transport a sick person in critical condition, from Hussan village to a local Palestinian hospital. Shortly after arriving at the hospital, the patient was declared dead by hospital officials.</p> <p><i>Other Reports</i>                      In October, eight incidents were reported in which crews or medical equipment came under IDF attack (direct or indirect). The incidents include the following:</p> <p>4 October: Jabalyia, the Israeli Army opened fire toward a crowd of Palestinians and fired one tank round, which exploded near a PRCS ambulance, causing damage to the ambulance. The PRCS crew reported no injuries.</p>	<p>One of the most intense IDF military operations, “Days of Penitence”, began on 28 September and lasted 18 days. The stated aim was to push Palestinian missiles out of range of Israeli towns in the western Negev, and in particular Sderot, several kilometres east of the Gaza Strip, where Israeli citizens had been killed.</p> <p>For two weeks, IDF troops launched regular raids in densely populated refugee camps and civilian areas and fired on Palestinian targets from the air and ground, sealing off Palestinian neighbourhoods and restricting movement of civilians and emergency relief workers.</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>In Bruqin and Kafr ad Dik, two villages on the outskirts of Salfit, the only water supply is through tankers and access for tankers often is impaired by IDF restrictions.</p> <p><i>The Gaza Strip</i></p> <p>Some examples of the damage inflicted on sources supplying water to the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip are listed below. :</p> <p>25 October: Because of an Israeli military operation, the Gaza City wastewater treatment plant site was destroyed. The plant had been receiving wastewater from almost all Gaza City. When the employees tried to reach the site, they found the access road destroyed; also destroyed was the mainline that receives waste water, destruction of the only line that brings treated sewage toward the seashore. Many laboratory tools and scientific devices essential for the sewage treatment management were destroyed.</p> <p>Al Qaryah Al Badawiya area: the main water line was damaged, more than once. However, maintenance teams were able to make one damaged well function.</p> <p>The French-Palestinian project for the re-use of wastewater for agricultural purposes was damaged for a second time. Due to damage, it was not possible to operate the irrigation system at the site before maintaining the irrigation network. About 30 to 40% of the total area of the site had been destroyed.</p>	<p>In the West Bank the construction of the Barrier has led to the isolation of villages from major cities, leaving many localities with no access to livelihoods, basic amenities and services. Barrier construction has also led to the destruction of basic infrastructure, including roads and water pipes.</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</p>	<p>Free access for all international staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and at international crossings, at all times</p>	<p>In October 2004, international relief agencies filed some 73 incident reports<sup>2</sup> in which the delivery of aid and/or the movement of personnel were obstructed by the IDF or Israeli Border Police. Most incidents reported included delays and disrespect by the IDF of international humanitarian organisations' mandates, privileges and immunities.</p>	<p>In October, the level of internal closure in the Gaza Strip was one of the highest reported this year.</p>

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

<p>mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</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>Free access for all Palestinian staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip 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, borders between Israel and the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, within the West Bank or the Gaza Strip) at any time</p> <p>Palestinian drivers (with either Jerusalem or West Bank IDs) 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>UNRWA, the largest humanitarian organisation operating in the oPt, reported 67 incidents<sup>3</sup> of delay or denial of passage at IDF checkpoints (compared to 47 in September), of these incidents 62 involved delay and in five incidents staff members were denied access.</p> <p>UNRWA operations were severely disrupted by one of the longest and most intense IDF military operations "Days of Penitence". For example, access to regular services at UNRWA's clinic in Beit Hanoun was affected by the restrictions on movement resulting in a drop in the daily out-patient attendance from approximately 400 to 500 patients per day to 200.</p> <p>Other UN agencies and international humanitarian NGOs reported six incidents in which staff members were delayed, denied or assaulted.</p>	<p>International staff members working for UN agencies have been subject to new movement restrictions when travelling back and forth across Erez. Since 22 September 2004, UN international staff, with the exception of diplomatic passports holders, have not been permitted to cross Erez in vehicles. The IDF has advised UN staff that they can cross by foot. However, this contravenes UN security rules.</p> <p>NGOs were also not permitted to drive across Erez; they had to travel on foot – and from 26 September NGOs have not been permitted by the IDF to cross on foot. Because of this, staff from several international NGO's could not enter or leave the Gaza Strip. These restrictions continued in October.</p>
Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<p><b>4. Additional Commitments</b></p> <p>The fishing zone for Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza Strip 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 Strip coastline. Sailing is permitted up to six nautical miles from the coast, and to an area between Deir El Balah in the central Gaza Strip area up to Dugit settlement in the northern Gaza Strip area.</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 the Rafah wharf without the authorisation of the Israelis,</p>	<p>Gaza Strip fishermen are denied the right to fish up to the 12 nautical mile limit, as was agreed by the Israeli government. Under the Oslo Accords the range was up to 20 nautical miles.</p>

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

		fishing limits rarely exceed 400 metres.	Over-fishing has occurred in areas where fishing is permitted, resulting in a decline in the quantity and quality of fish caught. Additionally, the number of fishermen in the Gaza Strip has mushroomed following the ban on Palestinians working in Israel. Those who returned to the Gaza Strip hoping to find work in the industry instead found themselves unemployed.
<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
An increase in shipments at Karni crossing	Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing.	<p>Karni was closed for four days in October. The amount of commercial traffic as measured by the number of containers entering and leaving the Gaza Strip improved marginally since September.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>While the quantity of imports and exports as measured by containers increased from September and October, the totals fall below July and August figures. The number of containers entering the Gaza Strip from Israel and elsewhere in October was 5,754 units, compared to 5,661 in September. In July and August the figures were 6,290 and 6,477 respectively. The quantity of exports rose in October to 615 containers, compared to 475 in September. While this shows an improvement on the previous month, it falls considerably short of the 859 and 1,020 units respectively that left the Gaza Strip in July and August.</p>	In a humanitarian operation, UNRWA reported that 339 containers filled with basic food supplies, including flour and milk powder for children, entered the Gaza Strip through the Sufa crossing. The operation, which began on 12 October, was a joint initiative of the IDF, the District Liaison Office and UNRWA in the Gaza Strip. The operation was based on humanitarian needs and took place in advance of the month of Ramadan.
Increase in the number of work permits workers in Israel	Quantifiable increase in the number of work permits being made available for workers in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to work inside Israel	<p>Since the end of August, no Palestinian workers have been allowed to enter Israel or the Erez industrial zone.</p> <p>In October, a total of 5,166 permits were issued for workers and 226 permits for traders aged 35 and older including 2,000 permits to stay overnight. However, as noted above no workers and/or traders were allowed to enter.</p>	<p>Significant periods of closure occurred at Erez during 2004.</p> <p>While such measures are taken by Israel on the grounds of its security, the affects on the individual workers and the wider local economy are immense.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Trade are figures reported by Palestinian officials at Karni to OCHA. These figures represent the most accurate figures available to OCHA at the time of publication.