

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
occupied Palestinian territory

Address: P.O. Box 38712 Jerusalem | Phone: +972 (0)2 5829962 / 5825853 | Fax: +972 (0)2 5825841
ochaopt@un.org | www.ochaopt.org

Humanitarian Monitoring Report – November 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) and 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).

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 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

In November ambulance operators, including PRCS, MoH and UNRWA, a total of at least 20 access incidents (compared to 47 in October 2004) in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF.

Water

Infrastructure in the oPt continued to suffer from frequent Israeli military operations. Such operations destroy or badly damage basic public infrastructure including water networks. Palestinians face severe difficulties accessing safe water. Furthermore, Palestinian Authority resources are being diverted into repairing damages rather than maintaining the water and sanitation network. Contamination of water supplies has increased as a consequence of degraded infrastructure. The use of tankered water and the inability of the Ministry of Health to monitor water quality have also increased.

Obstructions of movement for international humanitarian organisations

In November 2004, international relief agencies filed at least 12 reports (compared to 73 in October) 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.

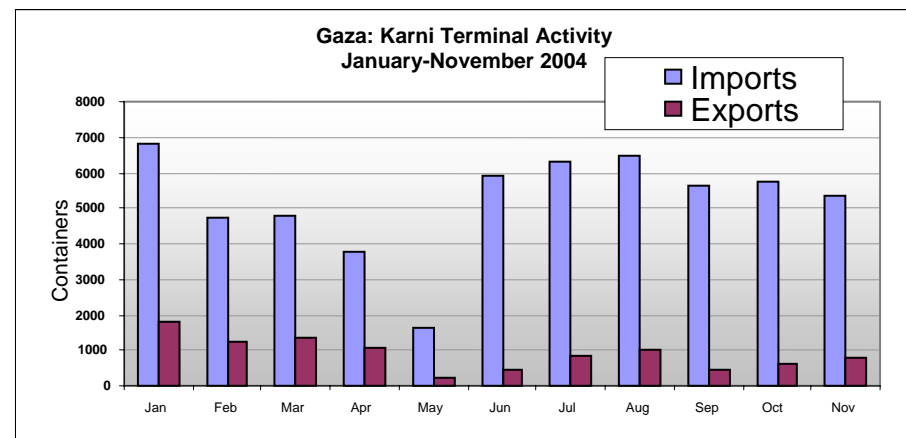
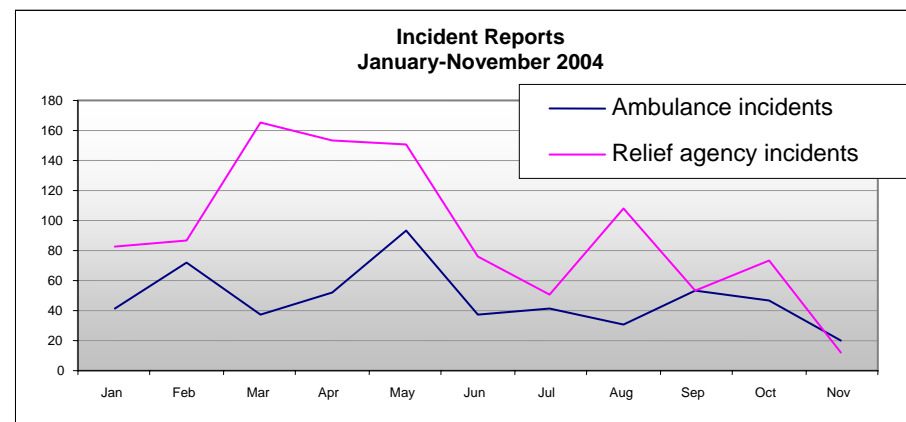
Additional commitments

There was a small reduction in the number of containers entering the Gaza Strip from Israel in November compared to October and September. Karni Terminal was closed between 11 and 16 November following Yasser Arafat's death. In spite of this closure, the number of containers departing the Gaza Strip in November was considerably higher than the October and September numbers.¹

Erez remained closed to Palestinians throughout November 2004. Also, Erez Industrial Zone continued to be closed for Palestinian labourers.

Access out of the Gaza Strip to Egypt via Rafah crossing continued to be limited for males aged between 16 and 35 years. Sufa crossing remained closed for Palestinians throughout November - the eighth consecutive month.

Movement of fishermen in the Gaza Strip remained subject to strict restrictions.



¹ 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>1. Health Palestinian ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at any checkpoints (government of Israel to Bertini mission, 12 to 19 August 2002) 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 (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 Palestinian Ministry of Health, PRCS, UNRWA and hospitals no longer report ambulance delays at checkpoints Mechanisms established and Palestinian public informed Explicit instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders 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: 20 incidents</i> In November 2004, Palestinian and UNRWA ambulance operators reported a total of at least 20 access incidents (compared to 47 in October 2004) in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF. <i>Ambulance Access Denials</i> Of the 20 incidents reported, at least three included humanitarian access denials. Included in the reports is the incident below. 25 November: A PRCS ambulance was denied access at the Huwwara checkpoint while transporting a woman in labour from Qalqiliya to Nablus. After the vehicle was searched, the ambulance was allowed to pass. However, the woman delivered in the ambulance. <i>Ambulance Delays</i> There were 15 documented incidents of delays, in excess of the 30 minutes. In one incident on 6 November an ambulance was delayed for four and a half hours and later was denied access at a checkpoint near Maale Adumim settlement. <i>Other Reports</i> In November 2004, two incidents were reported in which crews came under IDF attack (direct or indirect).</p>	<p>Access for ambulance operators and medical team improved during the month of November in comparison to previous months in 2004.</p>
<p>2. Water 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. (government of Israel to</p>	<p>Instructions issued to all checkpoints to facilitate the transfer of water tankers through all checkpoints The IDF removes barriers that prevent the access by water tankers to villages that rely on tankered water No reports on lack of water or delay/stoppage of water tankers at</p>	<p>In November 2004², the three main factors that continued to affect the existing critical water supply situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing closures/movement restrictions of maintenance teams and water tankers • significant reduction in water supply to Palestinian communities by the Israeli Merkorot company • damages/destruction of water distribution networks. <p>WaSH reported delays in water tankers transporting water to Palestinian communities</p>	<p>Infrastructure, including water networks, in the oPt continued to be damaged or destroyed during Israeli military operations. For instance, Qalqiliya city was affected directly by the damage of its main water line. Palestinians face severe difficulties accessing safe water.</p>

² 43 communities were surveyed during the month of November 2004 from a total of 643 communities. The incidents reported here relate only to 43 communities.

HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT – NOVEMBER 2004

<p>Bertini Mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p>	<p>checkpoints</p>	<p>in the following communities: Ijnisinia (Nablus Governorate), Qalqiliya and Sanniriya (Qalqiliya Governorate), Khallet Hamad (Bethlehem Governorate), Safa, Al Árrub, Beit Ummar, Beit Maqdum, Al Kum and Ar Ramadini (Hebron Governorate).</p> <p>Most of the communities suffered from a noticeable increase in the price of water, reflecting the effect of the closures on water transport. In some communities, tankered water is brought from unlicensed wells. Although, water prices are cheaper from these sources, it is not monitored, which might negatively affect the population.</p> <p>In November, water supplies by the Israeli company Mekorot were reduced in 29 communities out of 43 that were surveyed.</p>	
Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<p>3. Facilitation of International Humanitarian Organisations</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>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, 12-19</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>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 ID) allowed to</p>	<p>In November 2004, international relief agencies filed at least 12 reports³ 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><i>Access by UNRWA staff</i></p> <p>UNRWA⁴, the largest humanitarian organisation operating in the oPt, reported 11 incidents⁵ in November in which there were access problems at IDF checkpoints (compared to 67 in October).</p> <p><i>Other reports</i></p> <p>Other UN and international humanitarian NGO agencies filed one incident report in which staff members were assaulted.</p> <p>The movement of al Mawasi residents continued to be restricted. However, UNRWA operations' staff managed to access and facilitate the removal of waste and to identify possible locations for distributions of food to the refugees inside the area.</p>	<p>UN staff members continued to report incidents where IDF soldiers at checkpoints refused to cooperate with army District Coordination Liaison officers (DCLs) and/or accept the validity of UN identity cards, insisting instead that UN staff show their national passports or IDs.</p> <p>In November 2004, the IDF maintained the closures at Erez for Palestinians and the Erez Industrial Zone, which continued to affect the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.</p> <p>The IDF maintained the closure imposed on Seafa. Only six to seven people are allowed out</p>

³ These figures apply only to the humanitarian aid organisations that reported incidents at checkpoints to OCHA.

⁴ The number of incidents reported was low this month due to the UNRWA local employees strike.

⁵ These figures apply only to reported incidents involving UNRWA staff traveling in humanitarian agency vehicles, which is only a small fraction of UNRWA staff in the West Bank. Most staff members use either private or public transportation to report to duty.

HUMANITARIAN MONITORING REPORT – NOVEMBER 2004

<p>August 2002)</p> <p>Israel will improve the situation at checkpoints, including the deployment of more experienced IDF personnel</p>	<p>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>each day; families living in the area continue to lack freedom of movement in and out of the area.</p>
Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<p>4. Additional Commitments</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. Boats are permitted to travel up to 6 nautical miles from the coast and to an area between Deir El Balah in the central Gaza Strip up to Dugit settlement in the northern Gaza Strip.</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, fishing limits rarely exceed 400 metres.</p>	<p>Gaza fishermen are consistently denied the right to fish up to the 12 nautical mile limit, as was agreed by the Israeli government. Under the Oslo Accords, Gaza fishermen are entitled to fish as far as 20 nautical miles from the coast</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>The total number of containers entering the Gaza Strip from Israel and elsewhere in November 2004 was 5,331, a number slightly smaller than October (5,754) and September (5,661).⁶ Karni was closed between 11 and 16 November following Yasser Arafat's death.</p> <p>The number of containers departing the Gaza Strip in November was 793 units, a considerably higher figure than October (615) and September (475).</p> <p>Erez remained closed to Palestinians throughout November. Also, Erez Industrial Zone continued to be closed for Palestinian labourers.</p> <p>Access to travel via Rafah crossing continued to be restricted for males aged between 16 and 35 years.</p> <p>Sufa crossing remained closed for Palestinians throughout November 2004 for the eighth consecutive month.</p>	

⁶ 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.