



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
occupied Palestinian territory

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

2-8 February 2011

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 8 FEBRUARY

9 February: Israeli forces demolished six residential shelters and 21 animal pens in Khirbet Tana village in the Nablus governorate, which is located in an area defined by the Israeli military as a “firing zone”; 106 people were displaced or otherwise affected. This is the third time since January 2010 that this community has suffered extensive demolitions.

West Bank

Nine Palestinians injured by Israeli forces

Nine Palestinians were injured this week by Israeli forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, a significant decrease compared to at least 84 injured in the last two weeks. Thus far in 2011, five Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank and 127 have been injured, compared to no fatalities and 91 injured in the same period of 2010.

Six of this week’s injuries occurred during clashes that erupted between Israeli forces and Palestinians protesting against Israeli settler activities in the Silwan neighborhood of East Jerusalem; one injury was caused by a rubber-coated metal bullet and five due to inhalation of tear gas. Also in Silwan, the Israeli authorities issued an order extending the seizure of the roof of a Palestinian building, located next to the Beit Yonatan settlement, until August 2012. This post, which has been permanently staffed since October 2010, is contributing to rising tensions in the neighborhood. This week, three children (aged between 8 and 15) were arrested in search and arrest operations in Silwan.

This week’s other injuries occurred in the village of Beit Ummar (Hebron governorate); one in the context of a demonstration against restrictions on access to land and two during clashes that occurred in the course of two search and arrest operations. An Israeli border policeman was also injured with a stone this week, during clashes that took place between Palestinians and Israeli forces in the vicinity of the Barrier in Beit Ijza village (Jerusalem governorate).

During the week, Israeli forces uprooted five olive trees and erected a tent on Madama village (Nablus governorate) land during a raid and declared the area a “closed military zone”. The troops dismantled the tent and left the area four days later. Overall this week, Israeli forces conducted 92 search and arrest operations throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the same as the weekly average of such operations during 2010.

No settler-related casualties or property damage and no demolitions reported

During the reporting period, no incidents involving Israeli settlers that resulted in Palestinian injuries or property losses were recorded. This follows a particularly violent week during which, two Palestinian youths were killed by Israeli settlers in separate incidents. In an incident of settler intimidation this week, masked Israeli settlers from the Havat Ma’on settlement outpost (Hebron governorate) chased a group of 12 Palestinian schoolchildren, who were en route to home from their school in At Tuwani village, after

Israeli forces, who are supposed to escort the children, were late. The children were forced to take a long detour to reach their houses to escape the settlers. Israeli soldiers began escorting the children in 2004, following repeated attacks by Israeli settlers. This academic year, settlers have attacked the children twice.

Also this week, no demolitions of Palestinians structures were recorded in either East Jerusalem or Area C. Since the beginning of 2011, 29 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank, displacing 70 people, including 40 children.

New settlement activity approved in Sheikh Jarrah

On 8 February, the local Jerusalem Planning and Building Committee approved plans for the establishment of two new settlements in the Qubaniyat Im Haroun area of Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem. Such a step will lead to the eviction of a number of Palestinian families living in the area. Before implementation the plan needs to be approved by the Jerusalem District Planning Committee. Owing to its strategic location, Israeli settler groups have in recent years made persistent efforts to take over land and property in Sheikh Jarrah in order to establish new settlements in the area. As a result, over 60 Palestinians have lost their homes and another 500 remain at risk of forced eviction, dispossession and displacement in the near future.

Court orders Israeli authorities to accommodate thousands of students in East Jerusalem

This week, the Israeli High Court of Justice ruled that, within five years, the Israeli government must provide classrooms to accommodate all Palestinian children willing to study in public schools. The Court also ruled that if this decision is not fully enforced within the established timeframe, the government will cover the tuition fees of those children referred to private schools due to lack of space. According to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, which submitted the petition to the court, more than 40,000 Palestinian pupils in East Jerusalem have turned to private schools, which charge high tuition fees, while approximately 5,300 others have dropped out of school altogether. This ruling follows previous ones, in which the court ordered the Jerusalem Municipality to build over 640 classrooms, of which 300 have been constructed.

Gaza Strip

17 Palestinians injured in air strikes and near the fence

This week, Israeli forces injured 17 Palestinians throughout the Gaza Strip, including 13 injured in the course of air strikes, which resumed after a two weeks lull. Since the beginning of 2011, three Palestinians (two civilians) and one Israeli soldier have been killed in the context of Israeli-Palestinian violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel, and 29 Palestinians (27 civilians) and four members of the Israeli forces have been injured.

On 8 February, at midnight, the Israeli Air Force launched several air strikes targeting an under construction plastics factory inside the Gaza City, and a military base and an open area in Khan Younis. As a result, 13 Palestinians, including eleven civilians (four are children) were injured, and a number of houses, a Ministry of Health drug storage facility, where most of the drugs were burnt, and a school were damaged.

Also this week, in three separate incidents, Israeli forces injured four Palestinian workers collecting rubble and scrap metal in the vicinity of the fence, bringing the total number of Palestinian workers injured near the fence since the beginning of 2011 to nine. In 2010, 52 Palestinians were killed and 189

others injured in similar contexts near the fence. Such incidents occur in the context of Israeli restrictions on access to areas up to 1,500 metres from the fence (17 percent of Gaza Strip's territory). Also, on two occasions, Israeli forces launched an incursion with bulldozers and tanks a few hundred meters into Gaza and withdrew after conducting land leveling.

Access restrictions continued to be enforced on fishing areas beyond three nautical miles from the shore; in one incident (on 6 February), Israeli naval forces opened fire at Palestinian fishing boats, resulting in no injuries or damage to the boats.

A number of rockets were launched by Palestinian armed factions targeting southern Israel, resulting in no injuries or damage to property.

Update on the humanitarian impact of Egypt's events on Gaza

Tunnels: Operations resumed

Since 6 February, the transfer of goods through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border has resumed at near-previous levels. This follows a significant decline in tunnel activity during the previous week following developments in Egypt, which impeded the transferring of goods to the border area through the Sinai Peninsula. Fuel that entered this week allowed almost all the 120 fuel stations throughout the Gaza Strip to resume normal operations; prior to 29 January, some 100,000 litres of petrol and 600,000 litres of diesel, including for the power plant, were reportedly transferred per day to Gaza through the tunnels.

Rafah Crossing closure continues

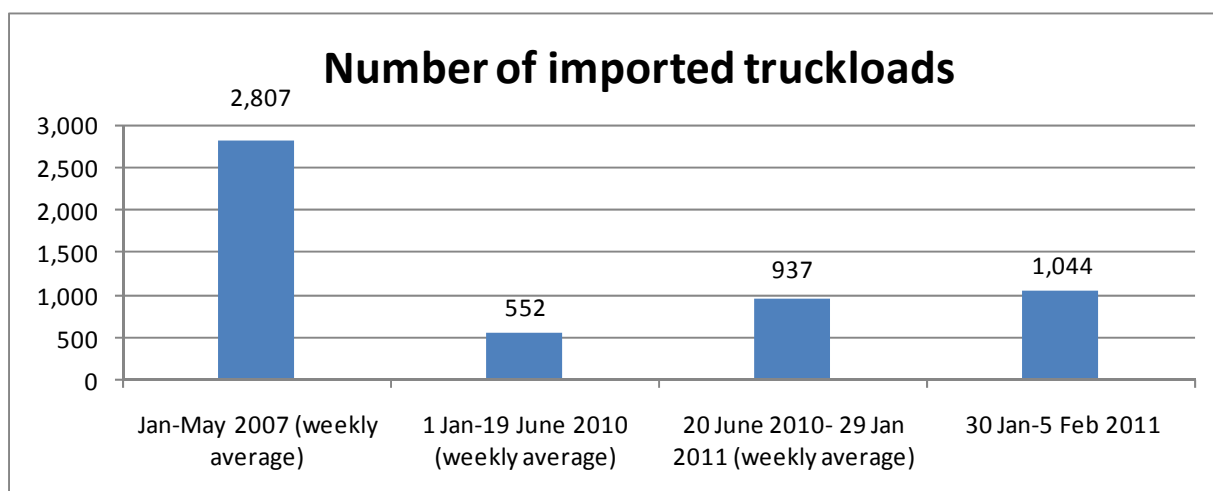
The Rafah Crossing, controlled by the Egyptian authorities, has remained closed since 30 January. According to the Crossings and Border authorities in Gaza, it is estimated that a few thousand authorized travellers, are waiting to either exit or enter Gaza through Rafah. Since the closure, no patients have left the Gaza Strip through the crossing, compared to a monthly average of 500 patients who usually exit per month, mainly those with chronic diseases, but also those who have had permits refused by the Israeli authorities to leave through Erez Crossing. Since June 2010, a daily average of around 360 people have crossed through Rafah in each direction, compared to 650 people who crossed each way in the first five months of 2006, before the partial closure of the crossing.

The Rafah Crossing was partially re-opened in early June 2010 after being closed for three years, following the Hamas takeover of Gaza. It operated initially six days a week until December 2010, when operating days were reduced to five days. Access continues to be limited to authorized humanitarian cases, including patients, students studying at universities abroad, and people holding foreign passports.

Crossings with Israel: No wheat grain entered

During the reporting period (2-8 February), no wheat grain entered the Gaza Strip through the conveyor belt at Karni Crossing. However, by the end of the week, there were in Gaza sufficient stocks of wheat to cover needs for 14 days, which constitutes only half the amount normally held in reserve by Gazan mills. On the other hand, entry of aggregate through this crossing resumed, allowing UNRWA to resume three building projects (out of 26 approved projects), which were stopped on 23 January due to the lack of gravel. Shortage of wheat grain, animal feed and gravel has become a recurrent problem in recent months due to the limited opening of this facility, normally 2 days a week.

This week, a few shipments of strawberries and cut flowers, along with one truckload of sweet peppers were allowed out of Gaza. Since the beginning of the season, from 28 November until 5 February, a total of 223 truckloads of strawberries (361 tonnes; 192 truckloads), cut flowers (4.4 millions stems; 28 truckloads), and sweet peppers (6 tonnes; 3 truckloads) have been allowed to leave Gaza. Since the imposition of the blockade in June 2007, only 483 truckloads of exports (mainly strawberries and cut flowers) have left Gaza, compared to a monthly average of 1,086 in the first five months of 2007. The 8 December 2010 announcement by the Israeli authorities to allow additional types of exports (e.g. agricultural products, furniture and textiles) from Gaza remains largely unimplemented.



Daily power cuts remain up to 6 hours; cooking gas shortages continue

Due to the existence of fuel reserves, the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) has been able to keep operating two electricity turbines, producing a total of 60 megawatts (MW) of electricity, which is 70 percent of the estimated needs. This is despite the irregular operation of the tunnels, which since early January are used for the transfer of fuel (diesel normally used for vehicles) to the GPP. The majority of the population has continued to experience power cuts of 4 to 6 hours a day, down from 8 to 12 hours per day during past months. However, some parts of Gaza City and Khan Younis experienced up to 12 hours cuts during part of the week, due to the malfunctioning of two feeding lines transferring electricity purchased from Israel.

This week, there was a decline in the amount of cooking gas that entered Gaza (622 tonnes), compared to last week (888 tonnes). This quantity of gas is approximately half the estimated required weekly amount of 1,200 tonnes. According to the Gas Stations Owners Association, due to increased winter demand, a rationing scheme introduced in November 2008 remains in place, with less than 10 out of 28 cooking gas stations partially operating at any given time, with priority given to hospitals, chicken hatcheries, and bakeries. The primary reason for cooking gas shortages remains the limited capacity of the Kerem Shalom crossing, which lacks a storage facility on the Palestinian side; such a facility existed at the Nahal Oz crossing, which was closed by the Israeli authorities at the beginning of 2010.



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Issues throughout the oPt

New package of “easings” announced

In a press conference held on 5 February, the Representative of the Middle East Quartet Office, Tony Blair, and the Israeli Prime Minister, Biniamin Netanyahu, announced a new package of measures “to improve the conditions and living standards of the Palestinian people.” Regarding the Gaza Strip, measures included the approval in principle of additional construction projects, including a desalination plant, the expansion of Gaza exports (a measure already announced on 8 December 2010 and not yet implemented) and the launching of a pilot project for the import of building materials by the private sector, among others. In the West Bank, the Israeli authorities committed to issue West Bank IDs to 5,000 Palestinians registered as residents of Gaza, to “fast-track” permit requests for the construction of schools and clinics in Area C, and to encourage Palestinian projects in East Jerusalem “that abide by municipal regulations.”