



UNITED NATIONS
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
occupied Palestinian territory

SITUATION REPORT
Gaza Strip – 18 July, 12pm

Key developments since the last report on 12 July¹:

- The Palestinian death toll now stands at 100 (including 16 children) since the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched military operations inside the Gaza Strip on 28 June. The number of Palestinians injured has climbed to 300.
- Two Israelis in Sderot were injured by Palestinian homemade rockets. Since 28 June, one IDF soldier has been killed and twelve Israelis have been injured.
- Since 28 June, Palestinians fired 177 homemade rockets towards Israel. The IDF fired over 1,000 artillery shells into Gaza, and the Israeli air force conducted 168 aerial bombings on Gaza.
- The Israel Air Force (IAF) bombed the office of the PA Ministry of National Economy on 15 July, damaging the building. On 17 July, IAF aircraft bombed the Ministry the Foreign Affairs in Gaza City injuring seven people and demolishing the building.
- Between 16 and 18 July, the IDF re-entered Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip. UNRWA premises were damaged during the incursion.
- Damage from the IDF incursion into Abu El Ajeen, east of Deir Al Balah (middle Gaza Strip), included the uprooting and destruction of 83 dunums of olives, almond, palm citrus trees and farmland, and damage to 9 houses and infrastructure.
- On 16 July, IDF tanks on the border east of Rafah shelled Sufa and As Shoka village, killing a 65-year-old woman. Approximately 530 Palestinians (72 families) from As Shoka relocated to an UNRWA school in Rafah following the latest round of violence.
- Kami crossing remains open since 4pm on 12 July for humanitarian and commercial imports. (Kami had previously been closed since 7 July and remains closed for exports).
- Nahal Oz energy pipelines remain open since 9 July for diesel, petrol and cooking gas.
- Rafah crossing reopened on Tuesday morning, for arrivals to allow the passage of hundreds of Palestinians trapped on the Egyptian side of the terminal since 25 June.
- Palestinians with dual nationalities, including 120 American nationals, continue to leave the Gaza Strip on the advice of their Embassies and Consul General Offices through Erez crossing.

Context Analysis:

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate in the Gaza Strip due to shortages of electricity and water, caused by the 28 June bombing by the Israel Air Force (IAF) of the Gazan power plant. Electricity supply to households and institutions remains severely depleted. Gazans are receiving on average, 6 – 8 hours of electricity per day and for most families living in urban areas 2 – 3 hours of water per day.

Palestinian Authority (PA) national and municipal services which have been financially struggling since the withholding of VAT transfers by the Government of Israel and the cutting of assistance by western donors, are unable to provide essential services to the population on the regular basis required. IAF air strikes continue to target PA institutions in the Gaza Strip. Gaza's high poverty (79% of households are living under the poverty line²) and unemployment (40%³) levels have sharply limited households' ability to buy supplies, fuel and water.

Developments in detail:
Military incursions

- Between 16 and 18 July, the IDF reentered Beit Hanoun from the north and eastern borders with Israel. (IDF forces had earlier withdrawn from the northern areas on 8 July, following a two-day incursion.) Seven Palestinians were killed and at least 27 injured during the incursion. One IDF soldier was also

reported injured by Israeli media. The IDF searched houses and arrested five Palestinians.

- At 5am on 17 July, IDF bulldozers demolished the boundary walls of the UNRWA clinic and three UNRWA schools in Beit Hanoun. The IDF also demolished one house and partially demolished another in the area.
- On 17 July, approximately 70 people, who had earlier evacuated their homes because of continued IDF artillery shelling along the border and taken shelter in an UNRWA school in Beit Hanoun relocated to another school in Jabalia because of the fighting. UNICEF has provided 24 baby hygiene kits to these families.
- The IDF withdrew from the middle area of the Gaza Strip following a two-day incursion (between 12 and 14 July). During the incursion, UNICEF provided through PRCS three 'family-water kits' including collapsible water holders, buckets, purification tablets and soap to 30 families in Wadi Salqa.

Crossing points and humanitarian access

- Movement through Erez crossing remains restricted for all persons except diplomats. All non-diplomats, including those working for the UN, require prior coordination with the Israeli DCL to both enter and exit the Gaza Strip. Five UN international staff trying to leave the Gaza Strip on 13 July were turned back by the IDF in spite of prior coordination. On the same day, a warning shot was fired at a UN vehicle as it approached the Israeli side of the crossing.
- Kami has remained opened since 4pm on 12 July for imports including humanitarian supplies. Between 11 and 16 July, WFP brought in 758 tonnes of wheatflour through Kami and was able to bring out 16 empty containers. WFP currently has 42 empty containers waiting to leave the Gaza Strip and 84 containers (2,000 tonnes) of wheatflour in Ashdod port in Israel which is destined for the Gaza Strip. Since 12 July, UNRWA has brought in 99 containers, while 62 empty containers have left the Gaza Strip.
- Rafah crossing reopened this morning, Tuesday, for arrivals only after being previously closed since 25 June. On 14 July, members of the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) blew a hole in the cement border fence to the west of Rafah crossing allowing hundreds of Palestinians to re-enter the Gaza Strip from Egypt. A similar attempt was made on the evening of 16 July, however Palestinian National Security Forces intervened and fired warning shots.

Electricity

- Palestinian households across the Gaza Strip are still experiencing major disruptions to their daily lives as a result of intermittent power supplies arising from the IAF air strike on the Gaza power station on 28 June.

Fuel

- Nahal Oz pipelines have now been open since 9 July for diesel, petrol and cooking gas (following a closure between 5 and 8 July).
- UNDP with the support of German funds provided fuel to the Gaza municipality to allow it to restore its municipal services for water, waste water and solid waste disposal. Refuse is now being collected from street corners in Gaza City. The Gaza municipality requires at least 15,000 litres of fuel per day to meet its obligations. UNRWA will also assist the Gaza municipality with fuel requirements for water and bulldozers at the landfill site.
- On 17 July, five water wells in the Gaza Strip (Gaza City (2), Deir el Balah (2) and Wadi Gaza) ran out of fuel and stopped operating. On 18 July, three water wells in Gaza City ran out of fuel. The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) has been in discussions with European interlocutors involved with the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) to provide fuel⁴. In the interim, the CMWU is relying on the ICRC to provide fuel for its 132 water wells. The ICRC distributed a total of 57,000 litres of fuel to CMWU between 13 and 17 July.

Water and sanitation

- On 17 July water supplies, in Beit Hanoun were affected by the IDF incursion - five water wells were inaccessible. UNRWA conducted emergency water distributions on 17 and 18 July (30,000 litres) to vulnerable families in the eastern areas of Beit Hanoun, following coordination with the Israeli DCL at Erez.
- WHO has reported that Al Nasser Paediatric hospital in Gaza City has insufficient quantities of water for its daily needs. This is because of the continuing problem of the electrical and water networks remaining unsynchronised.
- A container of spare parts for network maintenance was received by CMWU on 13 July following coordination with the Israeli DCL for passage through Erez crossing. CMWU currently has no outstanding containers of liquefied chlorine or spare parts waiting to enter the Gaza Strip.⁵

Health

- Regular water sampling is taking place by the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) in conjunction with the CMWU to ensure water quality is not being jeopardised by the current interruptions to supplies.
- International organisations have continued assistance to families affected by the earlier two-day incursion into At Tatra area, west of Beit Lahia, between 6 and 7 July. UNICEF distributed 45 recreational kits including toys to families and ICRC provided food and hygiene kits to seven families in the area.

Food

- Fishermen have now been unable to access the seas since 25 June meaning there are no longer fish stocks in the local market place.
- WFP reports that the main food security concern remains local purchasing power and not food availability as food has recently entered the Gaza Strip. Very few people are bringing home enough money to cover their families' basic food needs. Any increases in prices of basic commodities and vegetables (as have been seen in past weeks) have a severe impact. Vegetable shops are reporting that their customers have reduced vegetable purchases by 50% due to inflated prices, resulting from the current operation.

Shelter and land

- As a result of the IDF incursion into the Abu El Ajeen area east of Deir Al Balah (middle Gaza Strip), 83 dunums of olives, almond, palm and citrus trees and farmland were uprooted and destroyed. Nine houses as well as infrastructure (roads, water pipes, electricity and telephone polls) were damaged.
- In the Abu El Ajeen area to the north of Al Qarara, 20 dunums of olives and palm trees were uprooted by the IDF. Another 50 dunums of farmland were destroyed and two houses partially damaged.

Coordination

- Since 25 June, UN agencies, the ICRC and humanitarian NGOs continue to hold regular coordination meetings to monitor sectoral needs and coordinate response. A UN interagency meeting as well as a food sector meeting chaired by WFP were held on 12 July. A water sector meeting chaired by UNICEF was held on 17 July. A health sector meeting chaired by WHO is scheduled to take place at 1:30pm on 19 July.

Notes

¹ This is the seventh Situation Report issued by OCHA in the June/July 2006 period. The previous reports were published on 21, 27, 30 of June and 4, 6 and 12 July and are available on www.ochaopt.org.

² IJED Palestinian Public Perceptions Poll No. 10. The poverty line for the reference household (two adults and four children) is \$2.70/day as calculated by PCBS.

³ PCBS Labour Force Survey, Q1 2006.

⁴ An agreement has been reached for fuel to be provided to the QMMU through the TIM for the next six months and discussions continue in relation to covering the costs of spare parts. Three fuel depots will be established in north, central and southern Gaza and will have a capacity of 450,000 litres.

⁵ The QMMU has acknowledged the success of the recent coordination of supplies facilitated on its behalf by the World Bank with the Israeli DOL at Erez.

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