

	<b>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</b> <b>OCHA Closure Update</b> <b>occupied Palestinian territory</b>
	<b>30 April - 11 Sept 2008</b>

## Executive Summary

1. During the reporting period, the Government of Israel took more steps aimed at easing internal movement for Palestinians in the West Bank than it had during the prior reporting period. These steps included the removal of one staffed checkpoint, the removal of another 100 unstaffed obstacles, of which only 25 were significant and counted by OCHA, and the easing of movement through three main routes. These actions are positive and welcomed yet their impact is limited geographically.

2. In its latest survey completed on 11 September, OCHA observed 630 closure obstacles blocking internal Palestinian movement, including 93 staffed checkpoints. This figure represents a net increase of 3 percent, or 19 obstacles, compared to the figure reported at the end of the previous reporting period (29 April 2008). This total does not include 69 obstacles located in the Israeli controlled section of Hebron City (H-2).

3. This survey also found that almost three quarters of the main routes leading into the 18 most populated Palestinian cities and towns in the West Bank are either blocked or controlled by an IDF checkpoint. Moreover, almost half of the secondary routes into these areas, established over time as alternatives to the main routes, are also blocked or controlled by a checkpoint.

4. The closure obstacles constitute only one of several layers of a complex system of movement restrictions. Therefore, their total number and geographical distribution at a given time, although indicative, does not capture the entire scope of the system. Other layers of this system include, but are not restricted to, prohibitions on access to vast areas of the West Bank combined with a permit regime, restrictions on the use of main roads, random checkpoints, curfews, and age and gender restrictions.

5. The Israeli authorities continued investing large sums of money in transportation-related infrastructure in the West Bank. This included the construction of the so-called "fabric of life" roads and the expansion of IDF staffed checkpoints located on key internal routes. Some of this infrastructure has eased the movement of Palestinians and ensured transportation contiguity between communities that were physically disconnected. However, this came at the price of further entrenching a system of restrictions, which excludes Palestinians from significant parts of the main road network and restricts their movement on other parts.

6. Incidents of blocked humanitarian access continued, in particular at the 'Tunnels' checkpoint, located on the main route between the southern West Bank and East Jerusalem. Most incidents involved demands by Israeli security personnel to search UN vehicles (busses in particular) forcing UN staff to reroute and causing hundreds of lost staff hours and additional costs.

7. In reflecting on the policy implemented for the last eight years, one can note that what was once justified by the Israeli authorities as a short-term military response to violent confrontations and attacks on Israeli civilians, appears to be developing into a permanent system; a system, which is fragmenting the West Bank territory and affecting the freedom of movement of the entire Palestinian population.

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