

Joint statement of United Nations organizations on the fuel situation in Gaza

Jerusalem, 15th April 2008 - United Nations humanitarian and development agencies working in the occupied Palestinian territory (1) are gravely concerned about the limited fuel supplies in the Gaza Strip which are having a severe impact upon daily life for the population, and UN operations. Israel's announcement that it will resume deliveries of fuel to the power plant is a positive step, but is insufficient to address the severe shortages of fuel used for transport and generators. The current absence of fuel at petrol stations has meant that normal transportation has ceased; many students have been unable to get to school, and many health professionals have been unable to get to hospitals and clinics. There have been difficulties transporting essential items such as food throughout Gaza.

Israel ceased supply of all fuel supplies to Gaza following the attack on the Nahal Oz fuel terminal on 9th April. Prior to that 3.8 million liters of diesel fuel and 340,000 liters of benzene were transferred from Israel into Gaza for the month of March. This amount was inadequate to fulfill Gaza's requirements and compares with over 8.8 million liters of diesel and 1.7 million liters of benzene that was supplied a year previously in March 2007. The Israeli restrictions prompted the Gaza Petrol and Gas Station Owners Association to suspend supply, to protest at the effects of the limitations. As a result, existing stores of diesel and benzene, which are only adequate for two days usage, have not been distributed.

The current situation is a threat to the health and well-being of the population of the Gaza Strip, fifty six per cent of whom are children. The work of the United Nations organizations in Gaza has been severely hampered affecting schools, health facilities, and food distribution.

UN organizations call for a cessation of all acts of violence, including attacks such as the one on Nahal Oz, and for the immediate resumption of flow and distribution of fuel supplies sufficient to allow for Palestinians to go about their normal daily lives.

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Note

(1) United Nations Special Coordinator's Office (UNSCO), United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)