



GAZA HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT

GAZA FUEL CRISIS – AS OF 17 APRIL 2008

KEY OBSERVATIONS

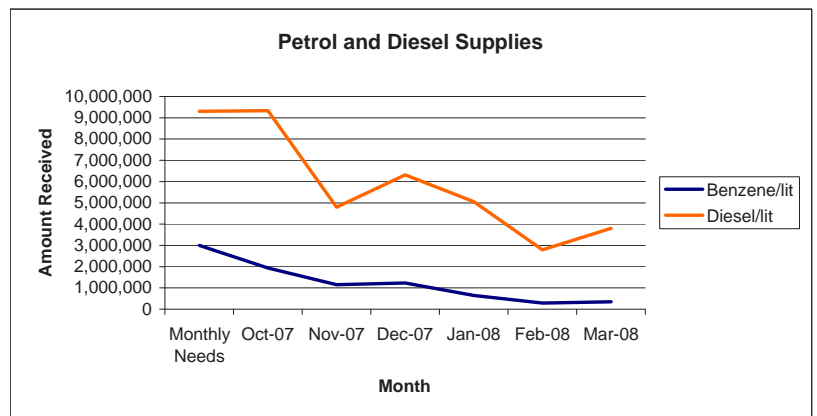
- The Gaza Strip is entirely dependent on Israel for fuel supplies. Since 28 October 2007, Israel has restricted fuel supplies to the Gaza Strip for both public and private use.
- Last week, fuel shortages were aggravated both by a strike by Gaza fuel distributors and the halting of all fuel supplies to Gaza from 10-15 April, following a Palestinian militant attack at Nahal Oz.
- Supplies of gasoline and diesel remain suspended. Limited deliveries of industrial gasoline for the Gaza Power Plant and cooking gas resumed on April 16.
- The fuel cuts have generated a 31% reduction in internally-generated electrical supply, resulting in daily power outages. It is also causing severe disruption to basic services, including water distribution, sewage treatment and healthcare. Up to 280,000 of Gazans currently receive water for only 3-5 hours every four days.
- Fuel shortages have caused a suspension of garbage collection in Gaza City (pop. 600,000) for the last two weeks, and of classes in the four major Gaza universities.

FUEL SUPPLIES

Gaza is completely dependent on Israel for all its supplies of fuel. Fuel enters Gaza via underground pipelines which cross the Israel-Gaza border at Nahal Oz. The fuel comes in four types:

- Industrial gasoline - exclusively for Gaza's power plant for the production of electricity;
- Gasoline - for vehicles;
- Diesel - for vehicles and back-up generators which are vital during Gaza's frequent electricity cuts;
- Cooking gas - also for vehicles in the absence of gasoline.

Before 28 October 2007, Gaza's fuel supplies were dictated by market forces and supply was related to demand. On 28 October, following a decision to declare the Hamas government a "hostile entity", Israel began reducing the supply of fuel to Gaza. The Israeli High Court of Justice authorized the fuel cuts in January 2008, in a decision criticized by Israeli and Palestinian human rights groups as condoning collective punishment.



Since then, there has been a steady decline in the amount of fuel allowed to enter Gaza. The decline has been particularly dramatic regarding gasoline and diesel supplies.

In March 2007, 8.8 million liters of diesel and 1.7 million liters of gasoline were supplied to Gaza. In March 2008, the figures were reduced to 3.8 million liters of diesel and 340,000 liters of gasoline, representing a reduction of 57% and 80% respectively.

On 7 April 2008, the Palestinian Gas Station Owners Association stopped collecting fuel from Nahal Oz in protest against the small amounts of fuel that Israel was allowing to enter Gaza.

Subsequently, Israel halted all fuel supplies to Gaza from 10-15 April, after two Israelis were killed by



Palestinian militants at the Nahal Oz fuel pipelines. On April 16, Israel resumed supplies of industrial gasoline and cooking gas but not diesel and gasoline.

There are currently 800,000 liters of diesel and 180,000 liters of gasoline in the Palestinian reserves at Nahal Oz which have not been distributed by the gas station owners. **These reserves would last less than a day.**

POWER SUPPLY

The fuel-powered Gaza power plant supplies Gaza with 28% of its power needs.¹ Due to the reduction in fuel, the Gaza Power Generating Company has had to reduce its power generation by 31% (55 megawatts instead of 80 megawatts). It currently receives 2.2 million liters per week while it needs a total of 3.5 million liters for full capacity production.

As a result, power cuts of up to three hours per day have been implemented everywhere in Gaza with the exception of Rafah which continues to receive power from Egypt. It is anticipated that power cuts will increase as demands increase due to the summer's heat.

Due to the recurrent power cuts, Gaza has had to increase reliance on back-up generators for power. Generators do not provide a sustainable solution to the lack of adequate power supply, as they are not meant to operate for long periods of time and are highly dependent on unavailable spare parts. In addition, generators require fuel to operate, which is difficult in light of the shortages of fuel and lack of funds to pay for what fuel is available.

HUMANITARIAN IMPACT

Fuel shortages affect all aspects of life. Without fuel, essential services cannot operate normally, including transportation, pumping and purifying drinking water, garbage collection, education, health care, food production and public administration. Gazans are also impacted due to the lack of fuel needed for refrigerators and other household appliances.

a. Health

WHO has reported that **fuel reserves at Ministry of Health (MoH) hospitals for emergency power generators are only 30% full - enough for one week of operation if cuts remain at current levels.** Though MoH hospitals are functioning normally at the moment, they remain sensitive to electricity cuts and some have been forced to reduce the number of elective surgical operations. In addition, 12% of MoH medical staff are reporting late to duty due to the lack of transport, resulting in the reduction of health servicing hours and the quality of medical attention due to the stress on demand.

b. Water

Since the beginning of April, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) has not received any of the 50,000 liters of fuel it needs. **130 out of its 137 water wells which are powered by emergency back-up generators do not have fuel to operate during power cuts.** As a result, between **15-20% of the Gaza population receives water for 3-5 hours every four days, impacting on daily hygiene.**

c. Sewage

All sewage treatment plants are out of fuel and rely exclusively on electricity. The lack of fuel also contributes to CMWU's inability to properly treat 60,000 cubic meters of sewage (including 10-20,000 cubic meters of raw sewage). The Utility has been forced to dump this amount of sewage daily into the sea since January, since raw sewage requires 14 days of continuous electricity to be fully treated. Should sewage continue to be dumped into the sea in the coming months, it is anticipated that health risks will increase both in Gaza and in Israel.



d. Municipal Service

Gaza Strip municipalities and village councils do not have enough fuel to collect solid waste regularly. In Gaza City, the largest municipality in the Strip serving a population of 600,000, rubbish was not collected between 23-31 March and has not been collected since 6 April. As a result, solid waste is accumulating around garbage cans and on pavements, creating a potential health hazard.

e. Education

Due to the lack of transport, students as well as educational staff are facing difficulties reaching their schools and universities. **Classes at the Gaza Strip's four main universities have been put on hold until the end of this week** as student and teacher absenteeism has reached as high as 15-20% because of fuel shortages.

END NOTES

- I. 63% of Gaza's electricity is provided directly by Israel and another 9% comes from Egypt through the border to Rafah. The fuel provided by Israel is paid for by deductions from overdue Palestinian tax revenues that Israel withholds, while the fuel provided directly to the Gaza Power Generation Company (GPGC) is paid for by the European Commission (EC).

PRIMARY PROBLEMS: