



Gaza Strip Inter-Agency Humanitarian Fact Sheet

February 2008

Following Israel's complete closure of the Gaza Strip crossings in January, restrictions on the movement of commodities into Gaza continued. Fuel supplies to the Gaza power plant were restricted to 2.2 million liters per week. The plant's production was reduced to 55 megawatts (full capacity: 80 megawatts), causing daily eight-hour power cuts everywhere in Gaza except for Rafah, which receives its power from Egypt. Queues for diesel and petrol became a regular occurrence as the supply of diesel and petrol were restricted to 700,000 liters and 70,000 liters per week respectively for the entire Gaza Strip. The distribution of fuel was further complicated by protests by the Association of Gazan Gas Station Owners. Hostilities in February were limited, except for a surge at the end of February which continued into March.

PROTECTION (UNRWA/OCHA)

- A total of 207 rockets and 243 mortars were fired from Gaza towards Israel and IDF installations in Gaza. The IAF conducted 26 airstrikes on different targets in the Gaza Strip.
- The IDF conducted a total of 9 searches and 121 arrests in Gaza.
- On 15 February, a massive explosion of a disputed nature in Al Bureij camp killed eight people and injured 80. The dead included five children and one woman, while 20 children and 23 women were seriously injured. A total of 39 houses were severely damaged and another 300 were damaged.

	Conflict Related				Other (including internal violence)			
	Injuries	Deaths	Women Deaths	Children Deaths	Deaths	Injuries	Women Deaths	Children Deaths
Palestinian	143*	67	0	10	15	91	1	7
Israeli	0	1**	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Including 17 children and nine women

** Israeli civilian killed by a rocket on Sderot.

HEALTH (WHO)

- Hospitals and Primary Health Care (PHC) clinics in Gaza had to limit their services to emergency interventions due to the power cuts and shortage of fuel for emergency generators and vehicles. The Gaza European Hospital suspended all elective surgical operations during the month of February. In addition, 32 out of the Gaza's 56 Ministry of Health (MoH) PHC clinics suspended diagnostic and dental services for the duration of the power cuts (all month).
- Of the 841 patients who applied for permits to cross Erez for medical treatment outside of Gaza, 22 (2.6%) had their applications denied and 155 (18.4%) had their applications delayed for more than 14 days.



- Of the 664 (80%) patients who were granted permits during February to cross Erez, 15 patients were interrogated by the Israeli authorities at Erez checkpoint. Five out of the 15 patients were denied permission to cross and had to return to Gaza.
- As a result of the complicated referral process, four patients died in February after being denied permits to cross Erez: a 65 year-old female with cardiac problems died on 10 February; a 53 year-old female suffering from renal problems died on 11 February; a 77 year-old female with neck cancer died on 11 February; and a 34 year-old female who had suffered from a stroke died on 11 February.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL

- Following the explosion in Al Bureij camp, screening by UNRWA counselors indicated that 314 UNRWA school children were exposed to the traumatic event, 214 of them showing potential for developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- Among non-school children, 35 were found to suffer from bedwetting and 85 indicated experiencing fears and nightmares. An additional 60 children were diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder in the affected area.

WATER AND SANITATION (UNICEF)

- Due to the fuel restrictions, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) received only 13% of its fuel needs in February 2008 (19,500 liters), compared to 37% in January 2008 (55,800 liters).
- Following a three-day shortage of chlorine, during which 400,000 people were at risk of contaminated water, CMWU received 135,000 liters of chlorine covering its needs until mid-April 2008.
- Due to electricity cuts and the low voltage of CMWU's only generator, 40 million liters of partially treated sewage from the Gaza City waste water treatment plant and 10-20 million liters of raw sewage continued to be dumped into the sea every day in February.

- CMWU produces 5.5 millions cubic meters of water per month. The efficiency of Gaza's water networks has gone from 70% in June 2007 to 55% in February 2008 due to the lack of materials and spare parts needed to maintain the networks. At 0.5 NIS per m³ of drinking water, this represents about \$350,000 worth of water wasted every month.

FOOD (WFP/UNRWA/WHO)

- Moving non food items into Gaza continued to be a major problem for all humanitarian agencies. In February, UNRWA had seven trailers of general cargo (non food items) loaded and ready to ship. The trailers were refused entry to Gaza and were stranded for three days prior to being unloaded. The final transportation cost for these trailers was more than \$16,000, and the items remain in the West Bank Field Office in Jerusalem.
- Fuel shortages in the Gaza Strip limited mills' output capacity, hampered the productivity of bakeries, reduced the use of pumps for the agricultural sector and affected traders' food supply distribution mechanisms.
- The amount of imported commercial and humanitarian foods entering the Gaza Strip reached only 61% of basic needs during the reporting period 21 January-9 March 2008.
- The proportion of humanitarian food assistance imports over the total imports between 21 January and 9 March was 51%.
- Frozen meat and lentils were available in small quantities in North Gaza and Gaza City; Shortages of fresh meat, frozen fish and garlic were reported in Middle and South Gaza; No cattle imports have been allowed in Gaza Strip since mid December.
- Import levels consistently well below requirements for the past 8 months have led to high market prices and to the flourishing of hoarders and black markets which in turn has depleted Gazans' ability to purchase basic goods at affordable prices, pushed consumers to buy on credit and reduced households' and retailers' stocks.



- Market prices: February market data showed a steep increase in the price of vegetables due to the frost. The price of chicken increased by 10% compared to January while the price of fresh meat decreased from 56 NIS/Kg to 50 NIS and the price of frozen meat increased from 16 NIS/Kg to 18 NIS/Kg in February compared to January.
- UNRWA piloted a School Feeding initiative in thirty-two of its schools run under the auspices of its Schools of Excellence Programme. Under the pilot, two sandwiches per day are provided to more than 27,000 students in the 32 lowest achieving schools which are located along the border with Israel, in inner city Gaza or in the heart of the refugee camps. The aim is to address the needs of students who arrive hungry to school each day with a mindset neither open nor conducive to learning.

Participation

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), World Food Programme (WFP), and World Health Organization (WHO)