



Special Focus: The Gaza Strip after disengagement

This combined Humanitarian Update for November and December 2005 focuses on the situation in the Gaza Strip following the Israeli withdrawal from settlements, completed on 12 September (Box 1). Developments observed in the Gaza Strip after Israeli disengagement have been largely negative. This Special Focus analyses the factors contributing to the persistent humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, particularly linked with access.

Box 1: Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip and implications

On 12 September 2005, the IDF completed its withdrawal of personnel and equipment from the Gaza Strip. This marked the end of the unilateral Israeli disengagement that commenced on 15 August with the removal of Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip. It also marked the end of Israeli presence inside the Gaza Strip for the first time since the Six-Day War in 1967 (see maps p.2-3).

On 15 November 2005, an agreement was reached between the Government of Israel (GoI) and the Palestinian Authority (PA) "...facilitating the movement of people and goods within the Palestinian Territories and on opening an international crossing on the Gaza-Egypt border that will put the Palestinians in control of the entry and exit of people". The agreement also spoke of the movement of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank through Erez crossing and an increased flow of goods, especially exports.



Dugit settlement, Gaza Strip. Photo by Ossama Hatem, August 2005

The particularly concerning trend is the upsurge in violence within the Gaza Strip. Between 12 September and 31 December, 47 people have died in 97 internal clashes – a figure that exceeds the 33 fatalities resulting from Palestinian / Israeli confrontations.

Despite the physical Israeli withdrawal from inside the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian / Israeli conflict has continued with Palestinian militants firing at least 283 homemade rockets into Israel and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launching more than 124 air strikes in which fatalities or injuries were reported. For example, four Palestinians were killed and four others injured in an IAF air strike (targeted killing) on 14 December. The IDF have launched 544 artillery shells into the Gaza Strip during this period. Most recently, on 28 December, the IDF fired 30 artillery shells into open areas in Gaza North and conducted six air strikes, injuring one Palestinian. Ongoing violence within the Gaza Strip continues to have a distressing impact on the population, especially amongst children.

On 28 December, the IDF declared parts of northern Gaza Strip a "no-go" area through an enlarged buffer zone including the areas of the former evacuated Israeli settlements of Gaza North. The 250 Palestinian residents of Al Siafa (within the new buffer zone) as well as an estimated 4,750 Palestinians in surrounding villages are affected.

1. Palestinian internal movement

The immediate and positive consequence of Israeli withdrawal has been a dramatic improvement in Palestinian movement within the Gaza Strip. Prior to disengagement, IDF military installations, checkpoints, earth mounds and road blocks protecting the Israeli settlements restricted internal movement.¹ At times, the IDF closed the Gaza Strip at two strategic locations – Abu Holi checkpoint in the middle of the Gaza Strip and the Beach Road in the north – cutting the Gaza Strip into three and making interregional Palestinian movement impossible. Movement from north to south in the Gaza Strip is now possible in approximately 30 minutes, a journey that, in the past, could have taken many hours when movement was not prohibited. This has meant that critical movement such as referrals to tertiary hospitals, travel to schools and internal markets can now occur easily.



Rafah crossing opening day, Gaza Strip. Photo by Ossama Hatem, November 2005

An estimated 6,000 Palestinians that were once in six isolated enclaves can now move freely². Prior to disengagement, these communities had to move through IDF-controlled gates or checkpoints and access was only allowed on foot. Patients had to be transferred from one vehicle to another because ambulances, like other vehicles, were not allowed to drive through the gates or checkpoints. For example, for the first time since the establishment of the settlements in the Gush Katif bloc in the late 1970s, it is possible for the approximately 5,000 residents of Al Mawassi enclave to reach Khan Younis unhindered.

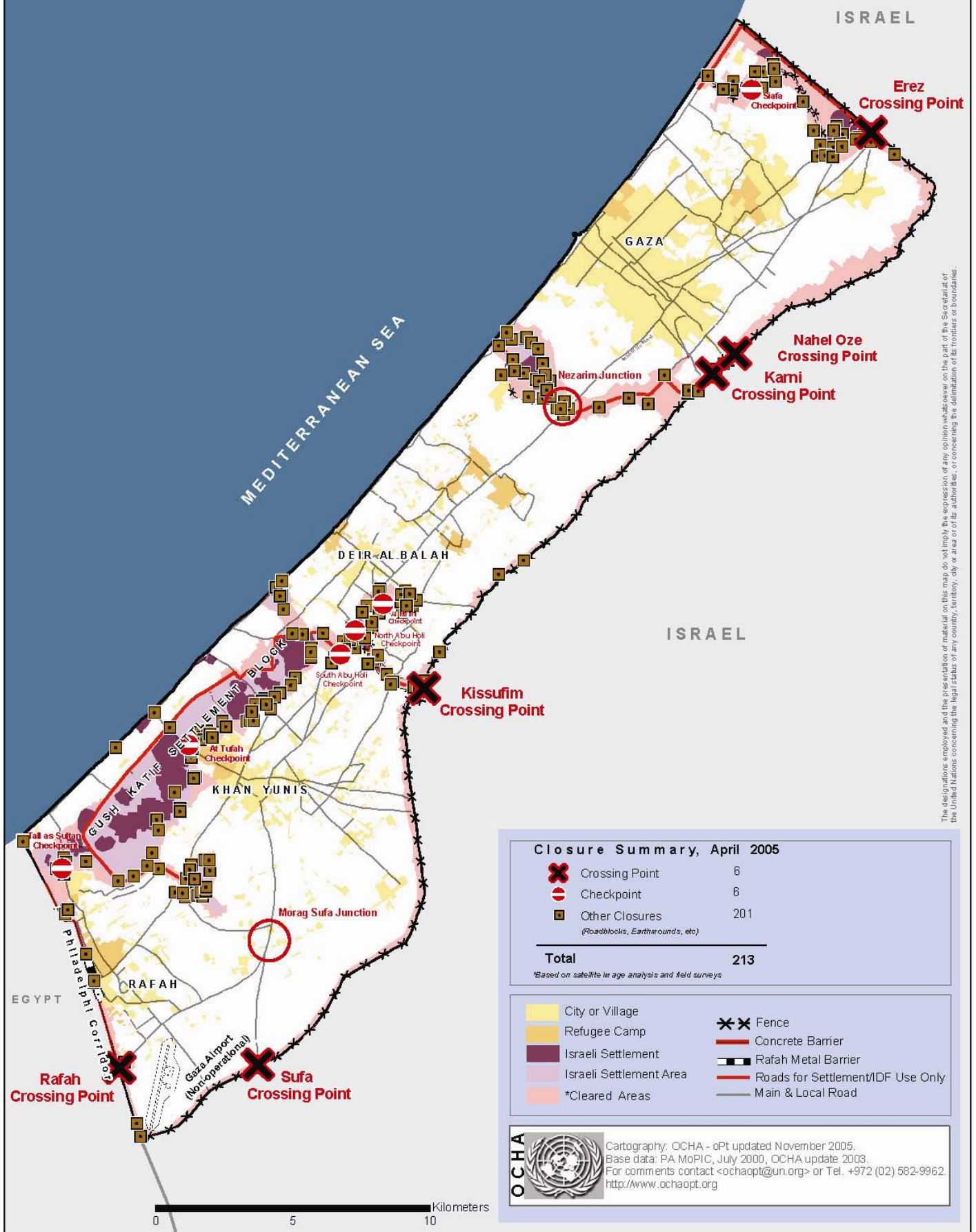
However, new humanitarian needs and challenges have been identified in these former enclaves:

- Access for Palestinian fishing has improved in Al Mawassi but the wharves are in need of repair³ and there is growing concern in Al Mawassi about the ability to export agricultural produce through Karni crossing.
- Currently, there is an oversupply of produce to the local markets in Khan Younis and Gaza City at significantly lower prices than could be fetched in Israeli markets.
- Schools in these enclaves were isolated and are now in need of a comprehensive education package including teacher training. With former residents having returned to these areas there is also a need to increase educational capacity.
- Land levelling prior to disengagement and delays in the removal of settlement rubble have stalled plans to develop agriculture on land formerly occupied by settlements.
- Al-Mawassi and Al Siafa are not connected to water pipelines and rely on water wells. Al Mawassi area was without water and electricity supply for 40 days following the Israeli disengagement due to Palestinian looting of infrastructure. Most of this has now been restored by the Palestinian Ministry of Power.

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Gaza Pre-Disengagement

August 2005



Closure Summary, April 2005

	Crossing Point	6
	Checkpoint	6
	Other Closures <i>(Roadblocks, Earthmounds, etc.)</i>	201
Total		213

*Based on satellite in age analysis and field surveys

	City or Village		Fence
	Refugee Camp		Concrete Barrier
	Israeli Settlement		Rafah Metal Barrier
	Israeli Settlement Area		Roads for Settlement/IDF Use Only
	*Cleared Areas		Main & Local Road

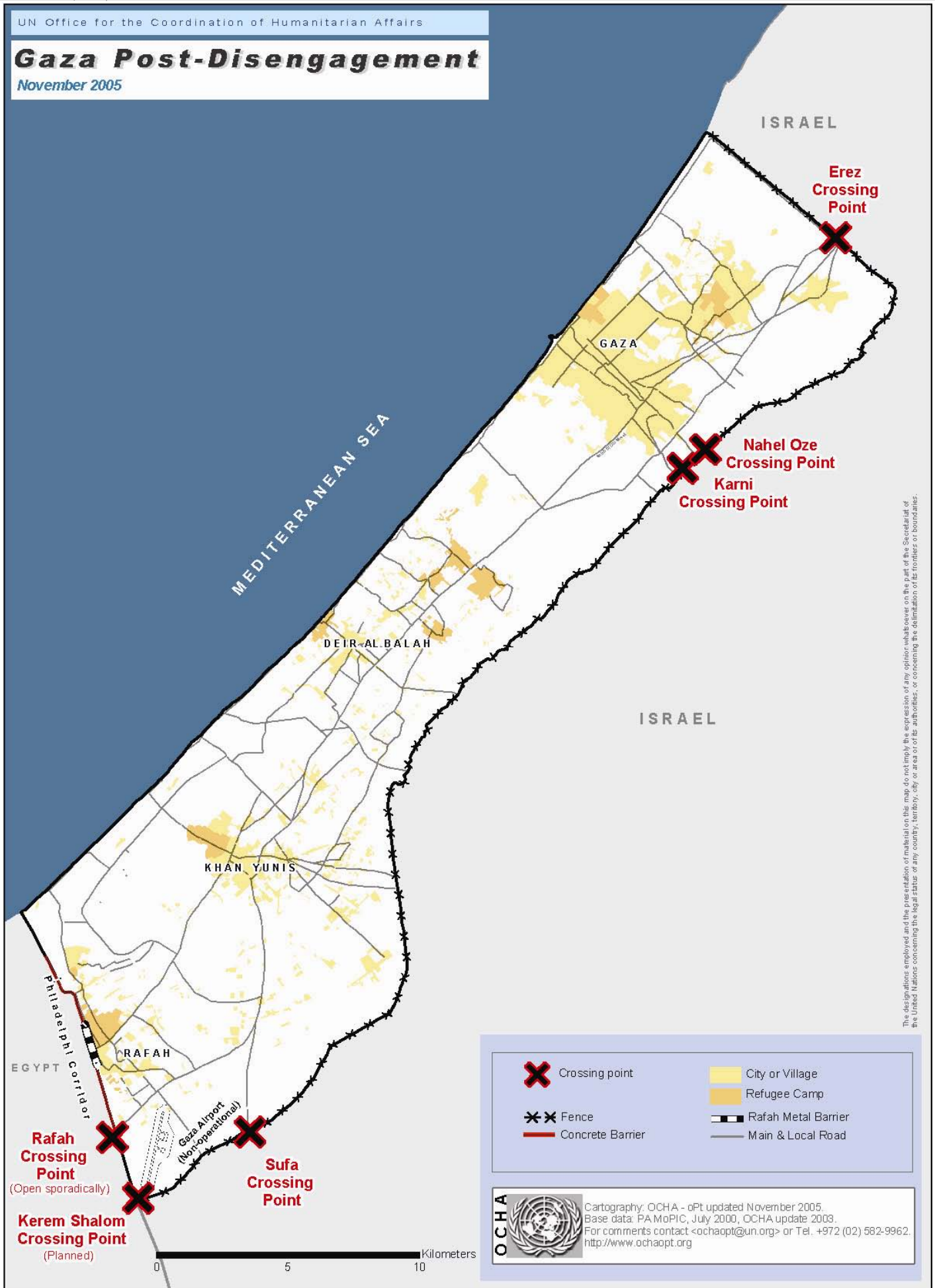
OCHA Cartography: OCHA - oPt updated November 2005.
 Base data: PA MoPIC, July 2000, OCHA update 2003.
 For comments contact <ochaopt@un.org> or Tel. +972 (02) 582-9962.
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UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Gaza Post-Disengagement

November 2005



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2. External movement for Palestinian goods and people

Movement out of the Gaza Strip remains tightly controlled⁴. Fences and concrete walls surround the Gaza Strip, air traffic is prohibited and sea access is restricted.

a. Access for Palestinian workers and merchants into Israel: Erez Crossing

Erez Crossing in the northern Gaza Strip is the sole access point for Palestinian workers and traders into Israel.⁵ In the first seven months of 2005, prior to Israeli disengagement, the average daily number of workers crossing into Israel was 1,787.⁶ Prior to the second *intifada*, this number was 21,617. For the same period, the average daily number of traders crossing was 158 (Figure 1).

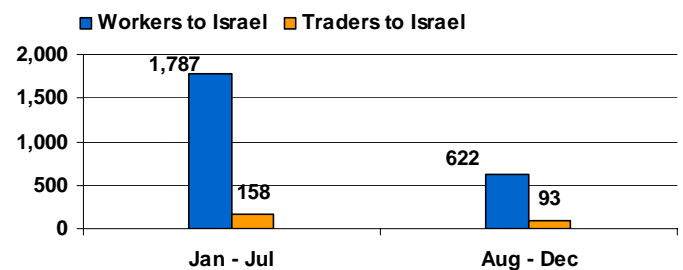
Numbers dropped significantly during and in the period following Israeli disengagement (August-December). The average daily number of workers crossing during this period was 622 and the average daily number of traders 93 (Figure 1). This decrease in labour flow was due to the almost complete closure of Erez Crossing for Palestinian movement during the Israeli withdrawal. The crossing was closed completely on 24 September after six Israelis were injured when Palestinian militants fired rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel. This closure lasted throughout October, coinciding with Jewish holidays, and ended on 13 November when Erez was re-opened.

In general between 13 November and 15 December, the number of workers and traders entering Israel increased significantly when the crossing was open.⁷ For example, almost 4,660 workers and 260 traders crossed Erez on 15 December – the highest number since the beginning of Israel's disengagement. This is reflected in the increased average daily number of workers crossing for November and December (Figure 2).

However, since 16 December, Erez Crossing has remained closed in response to Palestinian militants' firing of rockets from the northern Gaza Strip into Israel.

Erez Industrial Zone, the Israeli controlled industrial site located close to Erez Crossing, stopped working following the Israeli disengagement.

Figure 1: Erez Crossing – average daily labour movement (pre and post disengagement)



Source: Palestinian National Security Forces data

Figure 2: Erez Crossing – average daily labour movement (2005)

	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05	May 05	Jun 05	Jul 05	Aug 05	Sep 05	Oct 05	Nov 05	Dec 05
Workers to Israel	49	390	1,451	3,200	2,067	3,588	1,767	281	128	0	1,200	1502
Traders to Israel	17	70	158	224	103	362	175	168	120	0	104	73

b. Access for Palestinian fishing

There are four Palestinian fishing wharves in the Gaza Strip: Gaza, Deir al Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah (see map page 7). Palestinian access to the sea improved after the completion of the Israeli disengagement, particularly for the two southernmost wharves. Previously, Palestinian fishing was prohibited from the Khan Younis wharf and fishing from the Rafah wharf was subject to additional restrictions.⁸

Nevertheless, Palestinian fishing remains restricted by Israeli measures. Since January 2005, the Israeli authorities have permitted Palestinian fishing up to 10 nautical miles from the Gaza Strip coastline compared to six nautical miles previously. Under the Oslo accords, Gaza Strip fishermen are entitled to fish 20 nautical miles. Palestinian fishing is further prohibited one nautical mile north of the border with Egypt and one and a half nautical miles south of the border with Israel. Palestinian fishing was totally prohibited between 24 September and 6 October.

Following Israeli disengagement, Israeli naval vessels have fired seven times at Palestinian boats off the coast of the Gaza Strip resulting in two Palestinians deaths and two injuries. The circumstances of these incidents remain unclear.

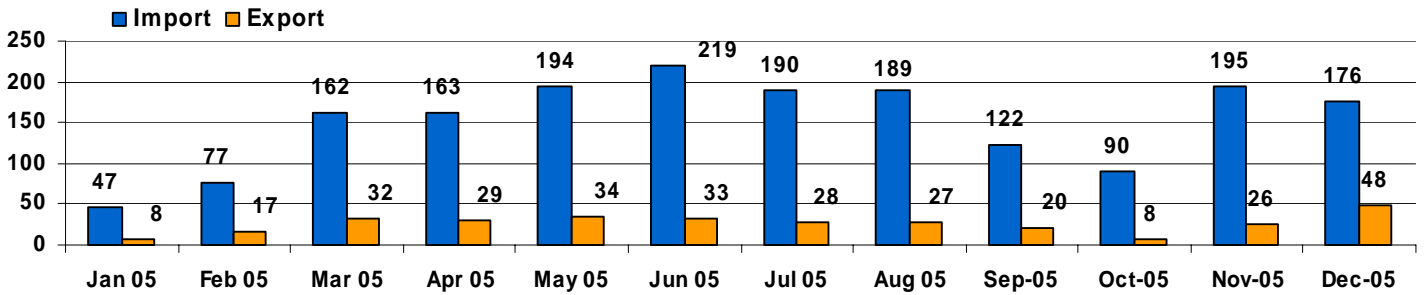
c. Gazan trade movement: Karni Crossing

Most imports into the Gaza Strip and all exports pass through Karni Crossing.⁹ Karni remained open during the Israeli disengagement and the flow of goods was similar in August 2005 to previous months. However, following Palestinian militants' firing of rockets from the northern Gaza Strip into Israel on 24 September, the crossing closed until 31 October resulting in a decreased flow of goods in September and October. During this closure period the crossing was open sporadically.¹⁰ In November and December the average daily truckloads of exported goods increased significantly compared to previous months (Figure 3).

The 15 November Agreement set an export target of 150 truckloads a day by the end of 2005 (Box 1). Movement in December is well below this figure. For exported goods, one major hindrance is that large volumes of Palestinian produce are required to be palletized to meet Israeli security concerns. Pallets are limited to no more than 100 cm in height and if canned goods, only 40 cm high. Palestinian authorities at Karni have requested advanced screening X-Ray equipment to allow containers and trucks to pass without these restrictions. Further, according to Palestinian sources, 22 of the 31 import and export channels at Karni are either exclusively for Israeli imports, or with Israeli priority where dual passage occurs. The capacity of Karni will need to be increased to reach the stated goal in the 15 November Agreement.

The average daily truckloads of imports remained fairly stable throughout 2005.

Figure 3: Karni Crossing – average daily truckloads (imports and exports)¹¹



Source: Palestinian Ministry of National Economy

d. Palestinians’ access internationally from the Gaza Strip: Rafah Crossing

Gazans travelling overseas pass through Rafah Passenger Crossing located on the Gazan border with Egypt. It remained open throughout the disengagement period under Israeli control. Israel closed the crossing on 7 September and throughout September, October and November it was opened sporadically.¹² This is reflected in the significantly lower average daily number of departures and arrivals during this period (Figure 4).

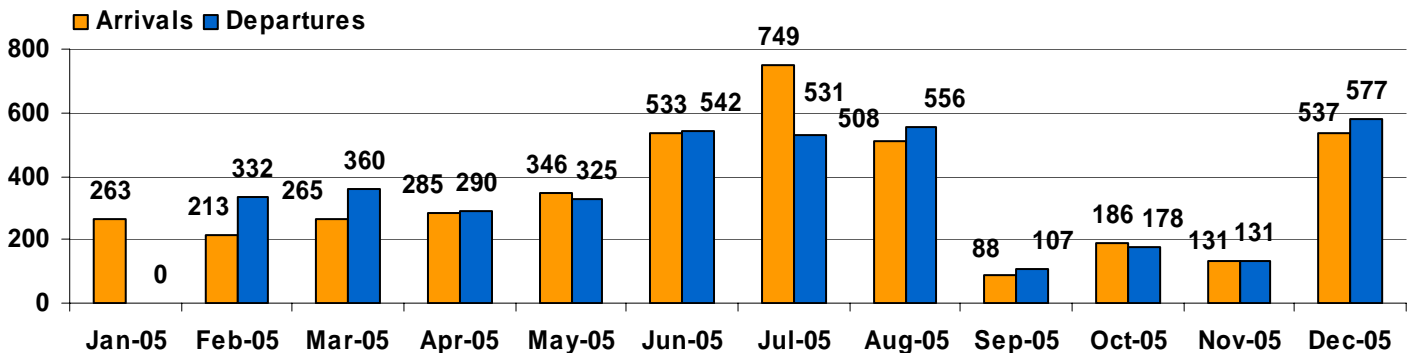
As part of the 15 November Agreement, Rafah Crossing was to be reopened. On 26 November the crossing began operating under joint Palestinian/Egyptian control with the presence of European Union (EU) monitors. An initial contingent of 20 EU monitors allowed the crossing to be operational for limited hours - a maximum of five hours a day (from 11:00am to 4:00pm). However, the average daily number of arrivals and departures for the last five days of November increased significantly to 397 daily arrivals and 758 daily departures, the highest this year.

Beginning on 18 December the operational hours of Rafah Crossing increased to eight hours a day (from 8:00 am to 4:00pm). Increased operating hours lead to the average daily number of arrivals and departures through the terminal in the month of December climbing to 537 and 577 persons respectively (Figure 4). These numbers are expected to rise further when Rafah Crossing is opened 24 hours / day – the target date being late January 2006 in time for the return of the Muslim pilgrims from the Hajj.

On 30 December Rafah Crossing was closed for seven hours and EU monitors were evacuated to Kerem Shalom after dozens of groups of PA officers forcibly shut it down.

The Kerem Shalom crossing in Israel, bordering the Gaza Strip and Egypt, will operate as an additional crossing point for imports mainly from Egypt, and for non-Palestinian identification card holders arriving to the Gaza Strip from Egypt. This crossing is currently not operating and a final agreement on the crossing between the PA and the Gol is yet to be reached.

Figure 4: Rafah Passenger Crossing - average daily arrivals and departures (2005)



Source: Palestinian Passport and Border Police

e. Other access issues

The 15 November Agreement stated that construction of a seaport in the Gaza Strip can commence but is not expected to be operational within two years. The Palestinian airport in the southern Gaza Strip has been closed since the outbreak of second *intifada* and its runway was destroyed by the IDF in 2002. The 15 November Agreement mentions an “understanding of the importance of an airport...” Discussions between the PA and Gol will continue on this matter. A component related to movement of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank was also included in the 15 November Agreement. Bus convoys were supposed to start 15 December but have yet to commence. Discussions were suspended following a Palestinian suicide bombing in Netanya (Israel) on 5 December.

2. Former settlement areas

The rubble from houses demolished by the IDF prior to their departure from the settlements in the Gaza Strip will be removed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with funds from Israel. On 22 December UNDP announced that it had received a US 25 million grant from the Gol for the clearance and rehabilitation of the settlement areas. No rubble has yet been removed with the result that the development of these areas is on hold. UNDP has committed itself to quickly begin the project so that development of these areas can begin by June 2006.

3. Buffer zone

During the second *intifada*, the IDF progressively cleared a 150 m area of land on the eastern border inside the Gaza Strip. Despite disengagement, on 11 September, the IDF announced that Palestinians should maintain a distance of at least 150 m from the perimeter fence in the north and eastern areas of the Gaza Strip. The range of this buffer zone is in certain locations up to 500 m. The lack of clarity among Palestinians on the width of the buffer zone has led to IDF shooting towards Palestinians on several occasions and is directly affecting the ability for Palestinians to access and farm their land within this zone. The total buffer zone area – if calculated at 150 m wide – is 9 km² or about 2.5% of the total Gaza Strip area. On 18 September 2005, land clearing resumed in the northern parts.



Declared buffer zone by IDF, based on leaflet and map distributed by IAF on 28 December 2005 in the Gaza Strip

On 28 December, the IAF dropped leaflets over the Gaza Strip calling on residents not to enter a new demarked area. The IDF mapped a “no-go” or enlarged buffer zone including the areas of the former evacuated Israeli settlements of Gaza North. The map produced by the IDF indicates that approximately 8,700 dunums of land (870 ha) is included within this area. The 250 Palestinian residents of Al Siafa (within the new buffer zone) as well as an estimated 4,750 Palestinians in surrounding villages are affected. Al Siafa residents who have stayed in the community have severely limited their movement, including no movement after dark. Critical movement to schools and markets is being made during the daylight hours and only on certain roads. Residents in surrounding areas are being impacted through the IDF enforcement of the “no-go” area with air strikes and artillery shelling and are not able to access their agricultural land inside the area.

4. Internal and external violence after the disengagement

Fighting between Palestinian families and between factions increased in the weeks leading up to the disengagement and after the IDF withdrawal on 12 September. More than 97 violent incidents involving families, militant factions and PA police forces have occurred between 12 September and 31 December. These incidents include gunfights, kidnappings, beatings, house burnings, threats and theft. Forty-seven Palestinians have been killed in the clashes and at least 298 were injured (Box 2, Figure 5).¹³

Box 2: Gaza violence post-disengagement in figures

Palestinian Internal fighting

- 97 reported violent incidents
- 47 Palestinians killed
- 298 Palestinians injured

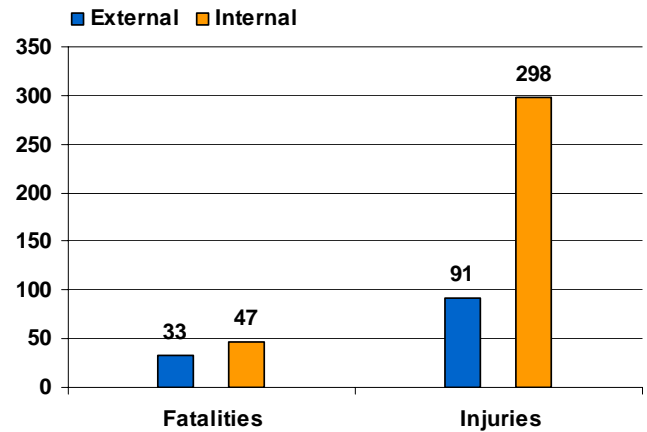
Palestinian Militant Attacks against Israel

- 283 qassam and other home made rockets fired into Israel
- 13 Israelis injured

Israeli Attacks against the Gaza Strip

- 124 IAF air-to-ground missile attacks
- 544 IDF artillery shelling
- 7 IDF naval vessel firing at sea
- 70 (approx) IAF sonic booms
- 33 Palestinians killed
- 91 Palestinians injured

Figure 5: Palestinian casualties due to internal and external violence (12 September – 31 December)

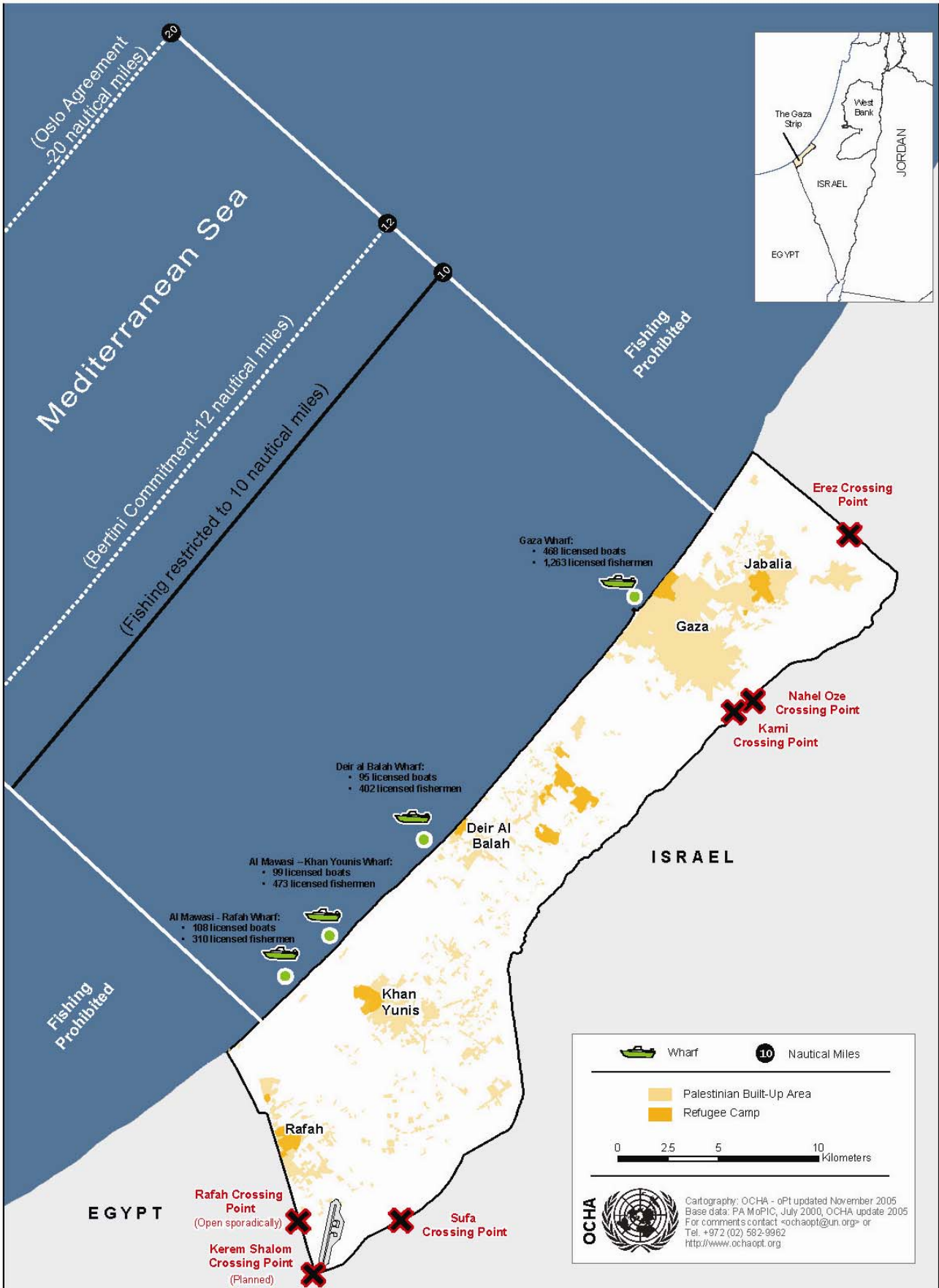


Source: OCHA oPt monitoring

Following the IDF withdrawal on 12 September, Palestinian militants have fired at least 283 homemade rockets towards Israel from the Gaza Strip. Approximately 124 air-to-ground missiles were fired from IAF helicopters or F16 fighter jets, mostly targeting infrastructure in the Gaza Strip such as building and roads as well as wanted Palestinians travelling in vehicles. IDF tanks fired more than 544 artillery shells, predominantly targeting the northern areas. Israeli naval vessels have opened fire on seven occasions at Palestinians at sea. These confrontations resulted in 33 Palestinians being killed and 91 injured. 13 Israelis were injured.

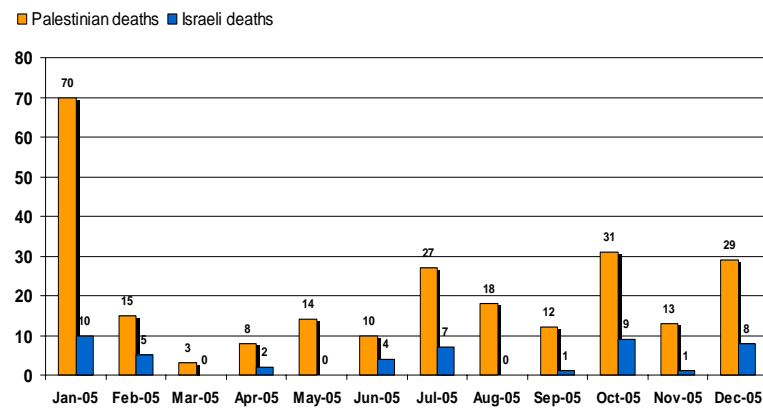
In addition to these IAF strikes, F16 fighter jets conducted around 70 low flyovers, breaking the sound barrier over the Gaza Strip. This use of sonic booms by the IAF caused physical damage and had psychological effects on Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. On 28 December, the IDF announced an aerial siege on northern area of the Gaza Strip where the settlements were previously located. Gunboats patrol the northern area and tanks are located on the border.

THE GAZA STRIP: ACCESS FOR PALESTINIAN FISHING - November 2005

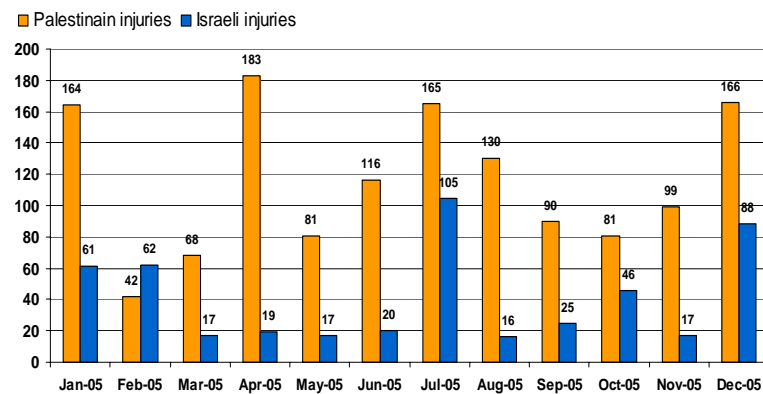


II. Monitoring Issues¹⁴

Casualties: Palestinian and Israeli Deaths

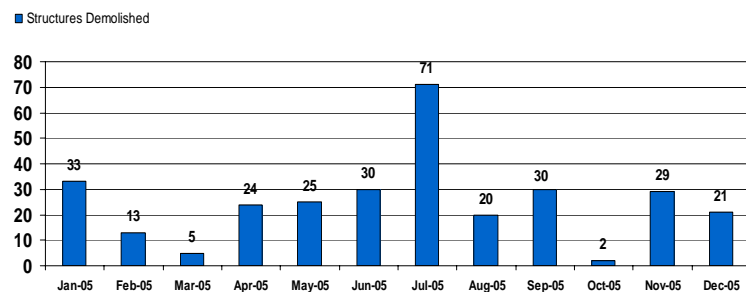


Source: OCHA Weekly Briefing Notes



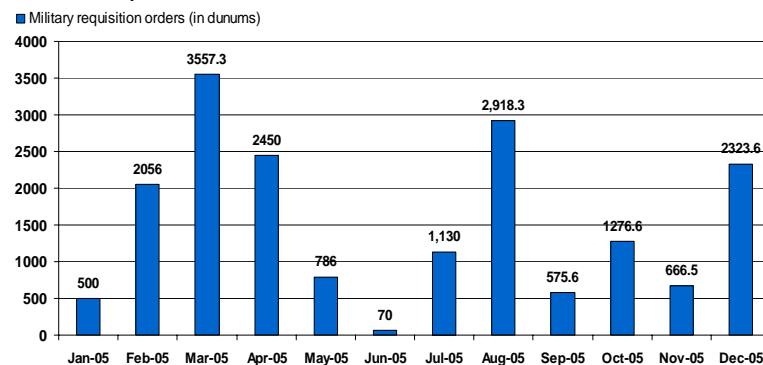
Source: OCHA Weekly Briefing Notes

Structure Demolished



Source: OCHA Weekly Briefing Notes

Land Requisition Orders



Source: OCHA Weekly Briefing Notes

In the period between 2 – 30 November 2005, 13 Palestinians were killed and 99 injured. One Israeli was killed and a further 17 injured. Most of these fatalities and injuries occurred during IDF search and arrest campaigns, clashes with Palestinian militants and confrontations with Palestinian stone throwers in the West Bank. Casualty figures in November 2005 were lower than reported in the previous month (October) and comparative to monthly figures reported since February 2005.

In the period between 1 December 2005 – 3 January 2006, 29 Palestinians were killed and 166 injured. Eight Israelis were killed and a further 88 injured. Two internationals were also injured during a demonstration against the construction of the Barrier in the West Bank. This period was marked by two Palestinian suicide bombings in Israel (Netanya) and at a 'flying checkpoint' in the West Bank (Tulkarm governorate) causing both Israeli and Palestinian deaths and injuries. Violence escalated again in the Gaza Strip in December 2005 with high numbers of Palestinian fatalities and injuries reported in IAF air strikes (including targeted killings), IDF artillery shelling, while Palestinians reportedly attempted to cross into Israeli through the border fence and when IDF naval vessels opened fire at Palestinian fishermen off the Gaza Strip coast. Clashes between IDF soldiers and Palestinians continued throughout the West Bank, especially in the northern areas resulting in Palestinian and Israeli casualties. Palestinians and Israeli casualty figures in December 2005 were amongst the highest reported in 2005.

Structures demolished

Between 2 – 30 November 2005, 29 structures were demolished by the Israeli military in the West Bank and a further two partially damaged. Half of these demolitions were in the Jerusalem governorate for reportedly being built without permits. The number of structures demolished is higher than in October 2005.

Between 1 December 2005 – 3 January 2006 a further 21 structures were demolished by the Israeli military in the West Bank for reportedly being built without permits (13 of the demolitions in Jenin governorate). Eight structures were damaged, six of these during IAF air strikes and IDF artillery shelling in the Gaza Strip. During this period, infrastructure (including bridges, roads and electrical transformers) in the Gaza Strip was also damaged, particularly in the northern areas by the IDF.

Land requisitions/levelling

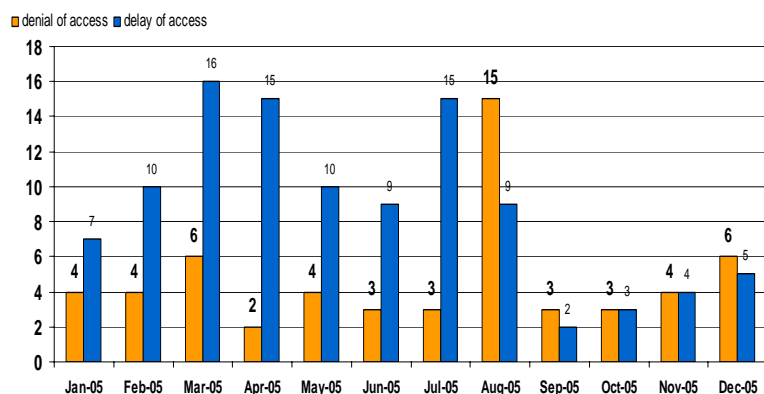
In the period of 2 – 30 November 2005, IDF military orders requisitioned 666.5 dunums (66.7 hectares) of West Bank land. The military orders were predominantly issued for the construction of the Barrier in Ramallah/AI Bireh (Deir Qaddis), Bethlehem (AI Khadr) and Hebron (Dura and Abd Dhahiriya) governorates. Military orders requisitioning Palestinian land were also issued for building new IDF infrastructure including an observation tower and a road 'security fence' in the northern West Bank (Jenin, Salfit and Nablus governorates).

Between 1 December 2005 – 3 January 2006 a further 2323.6 dunums (232.4 hectares) of West Bank was requisitioned by the IDF. This included 1965 dunums (19.7 hectares) of land

requisitioned for the construction of the Barrier in Hebron governorate (Iminezel and Hameeda-An Najada). Other requisition orders (totalling 358.6 dunums/35.9 hectares) were issued for the building of further IDF infrastructure throughout the West Bank including an IDF training area in Salfit governorate, observation towers in Nablus and Tubas and a road 'security fence' in Hebron.

Land levelling and construction of the Barrier continued in Qalqiliya, Salfit, Ramallah/Al Bireh, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron governorates in November and December 2005.

Ambulance Incidents¹⁵



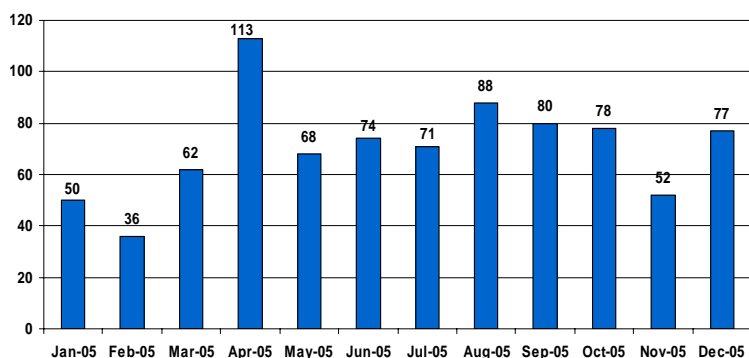
Source: PRCS

Ambulance incidents

The number of reported incidents involving denials and delays (in excess of 30 minutes) at IDF checkpoints for Palestinian ambulances providers remained lower in November 2005. Four denials of access and four delays of access were reported by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in the West Bank.

In December 2005 PRCS reported six denials of access at IDF checkpoints and a further five delays in access throughout the West Bank. Two of the reported incidents occurred at checkpoints around Jerusalem (Qalandiya and Az-Za'ayem) while PRCS ambulances were attempting to transport women in labor to hospitals in East Jerusalem. In both cases the PRCS ambulances were denied access through the checkpoints and the women were forced to cross the checkpoint by taxi or on foot (one of the women delivered her baby in the waiting PRCS ambulance at the other side of the checkpoint).

Humanitarian Access



Source: Access and Closure Information System (ACIS) and UNRWA monthly reports

Humanitarian access¹⁶

In November 2005, international organisations reported 52 access incidents throughout the West Bank. UNRWA filed 51 reports in which the delivery of aid and/or the movement of personnel were obstructed by the IDF or Israeli Border Police. The incidents predominately occurred at those checkpoints at entrances to Jerusalem and at gates in the Barrier.

Erez crossing was closed for Palestinians between 17 – 19 November and during this period international organisations required additional permission to exit the crossing.

In December 2005, 77 access incidents were reported throughout the West Bank. UNRWA filed 74 of the reports, 25 of which occurred at entrances to Jerusalem.

Access for water transporters / tankers¹⁷

IDF closure measures and the Barrier in the West Bank continue to have a severe effect on water transport; closures can result in the inability of water tankers to reach their destination. According to a WaSH MP survey in 2005, 200 hundred Palestinian communities are not connected to water networks and in 11 other communities over half of the households are not connected to a network.

Palestinian olive harvest¹⁸

In September 2005 the olive harvest began in the West Bank and continued throughout the month of November. OCHA reported a number of incidents in November in the West Bank for Palestinian farmers trying to access their land during the olive harvest. The incidents primarily involved Palestinian farmers in the northern West Bank not being able to access their land in the closed areas (areas between the Barrier and the 1949 Armistice Line or 'Green Line') due to denial of permits or the closure of Barrier gates. Settler violence related to the olive harvest was also reported including two separate incidents of Israeli settlers destroying olive trees owned by Palestinians in Nablus governorate (approximately 160 trees affected).

III. New humanitarian reports

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics Press Release: Impact of Israeli Measures (July – September 2005). PCBS released the results of their 14th round of survey on the impact of Israeli measures on the economic conditions of the Palestinians households (3rd Quarter 2005). Median monthly income in the oPt has decreased from NIS 2,500 (USD 536) before the *intifada* to NIS 1,500 (USD 322) in the 3rd Quarter 2005. Available monthly family income, delay of payment of bills, reducing expenditure or borrowing from individuals still represents the main coping households' strategies. 28.2% of interviewed households reported that they received humanitarian assistance during 3rd Quarter 2005, of which 16.1% in the West Bank and 55.2% in the Gaza Strip. Food still represents the 1st priority of the Palestinian households (45.3%) followed by the need for money (19.1%) and work (15.2%). See [<http://www.pcbs.org>].

PA - Quarterly Economic and Social Monitor. Palestine Monetary Authority (PMA), Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) released their third quarterly monitoring report in 2005. The report monitors economic indicators including labour market, investment and public finance in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (2nd Quarter 2005). Social indicators including tourism, higher education and health were also examined. See [<http://www.mas.org.ps>].

The World Bank Group – West Bank and Gaza Update. The World Bank released their quarterly publication in November which included a discussion of the need for continued legal and judicial reform in the oPt in terms of the judiciary, legislature, security services as well as anti-corruption initiatives and the establishment of courts. The publication also discussed recent economic developments and hypothesised that modest economic recovery that began in 2003 may continue to extend into 2005 in the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, however, due to external closure, growth stalled and, quite possibly, declined. As a result of external closures nearly 100,000 Palestinians workers have lost their jobs in Israel since September 2000. In terms of fiscal developments, budgetary support from the international community to the PA has fallen well below expectations. See [www.worldbank.org/we].

Reports of the Secretary-General – Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and protection of civilians in armed conflict. The Secretary-General released his latest report [A/60/539-S/2005/701] on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The report focused on the situation since Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the “window of opportunity” that remains open to revitalise the Middle East peace process. The report highlighted that the PA must continue reform efforts of the security sector and that Israel has failed to make progress on the implementation of its core commitments under the Road map including settlement expansion and lack of action on removing illegal outposts. The report also highlighted continued concern over Israel's construction of the West Bank Barrier and that

together with Israeli settlement activity constitutes a key challenge to the fulfillment of the Road map's goal of a two-State solution.

The fifth report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict [S-2005/740] seeks to identify emerging trends that affect the lives of civilians. The report also discusses areas where relevant Security Council resolutions have had an impact as well as measures and actions that the Security Council can take to strengthen their response. The report discusses the oPt in particular in the context of access to vulnerable populations.

See [www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep05.htm].

Palestinian Monitoring Group – New Bethlehem Terminal. The Negotiation Affairs Department released a special report on the new Bethlehem Terminal (Gilo). The report notes that the new terminal has been constructed inside the oPt yet the complex and procedures resemble an international border crossing. The report discusses the new procedures at the terminal and the negative impact that the terminal is likely to have on the Palestinian economy, in particular Bethlehem's tourism industry. See [www.nad-plo.org].

IV. Humanitarian assistance to the oPt

'Humanitarian Appeal 2006' launched. The Secretary-General launched the worldwide Humanitarian Appeal for 2006 and called for USD 4.7 billion in funding for humanitarian emergencies in 26 countries including the oPt. The Consolidated Appeal in the oPt was subsequently launched on 8 December calling for USD 215 million in response to the humanitarian crisis after a consultative process with UN operational agencies and participating non-Governmental organisations (NGOs). For more information see [www.humanitarianappeal.net].

UNRWA Emergency Appeal 2006 launched. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) launched their humanitarian appeal for the sixth consecutive year appealing to donors to fund an emergency programme for the oPt. The appeal for USD 95 million details UNRWA's contribution to the CAP launched in the oPt. The appeal focuses on measures which alleviate poverty associated with high unemployment through emergency employment programmes, food distribution and limited cash assistance. For more information see [www.unrwa.org]. Earlier in December 26 countries pledged approximately USD 73.5 million for the 2006 budget of UNRWA at a meeting of the General Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee for Voluntary Contributions.

AHLC Informal Meeting. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee held an informal meeting in London on 14 December 2005 which was attended by representatives from the PA, Gol, the Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, UN and the donor community and chaired by the Government of Norway. The meeting discussed the Palestinian economy in 2005, Palestinian economic and political reforms and looked ahead to 2006 and support to the PA's Medium Term Development Plan. A number of background papers were presented at the meeting. For more information see [www.lacc.ps].

¹ As of April 2005, there were 212 closure obstacles within the Gaza Strip.

² Palestinian enclaves in the Gaza Strip were isolated Palestinian communities in close proximity to Israeli settlements or settlement roads. These settlements were particularly affected by internal closures.

³ Due to the prohibition of use of Khan Younis wharf and the additional restrictions at the Rafah wharf, as well as Palestinian looting in the immediate aftermath of the Israeli withdrawal, the wharves are in need of repair; the estimated cost of repair is USD 675,000 for the Khan Younis wharf and USD 460,000 for the Rafah wharf. The ICRC has assisted in maintenance of fishing boats at the wharves.

⁴ Rafah crossing is no longer controlled by Israeli authorities. It was closed by Israel on 7 September.

⁵ Palestinian workers could enter Israel at Sufa crossing until 30 May 2004.

⁶ The average daily Palestinian labour movement through Erez crossing is calculated excluding weekends i.e. Fridays and Saturdays.

⁷ Erez crossing was again closed in this period (between 5 – 11 December) following a suicide bombing in Netanya that killed five Israelis and injured 58 others.

⁸ Fishing was limited to eight nautical miles off the coastline and three kms north of the wharf along the coastline and two nautical miles north of the Egyptian border. Fishermen, boats, equipment and catch were searched by the IDF and only three traders were allowed to enter Al Mawassi to purchase the catch.

⁹ The other commercial crossings in the Gaza Strip are Rafah, Sufa and Nahal Oz. Rafah has been closed for commercial goods since 7 September. Some goods also enter the Gaza Strip through Erez crossing.

¹⁰ Karni crossing re-opened on 10 October but closed again on 12, 13, 17 and 24 October. On 27, 28 and 30 October the crossing was only open for imported food supplies. Between 3 – 5 November, Karni crossing was closed due to a security threat.

¹¹ The average daily number of truckloads of import/exported goods is calculated on the basis of 30 days per month.

¹² The crossing was opened for a number of hours on 23 September; 3, 11 – 12, 23 – 24 and 30 October; and 8, 9, 15 and 16 November. Thousands of Palestinians also moved from the Gaza Strip into Egypt and back in the days after the IDF withdrew on 12 September. This movement was stopped by PA forces from 17 September.

¹³ Included in these numbers are the 19 Palestinian fatalities and 130 injuries resulting from the premature explosion of a qassam rocket in a Hamas rally in Jabalia camp in the northern Gaza Strip.

¹⁴ OCHA monitors a number of indicators related to the protection of civilians in our Weekly Briefing Notes. OCHA is also tasked with monitoring the specific commitments given by the Government of Israel to Ms Caroline Bertini in August 2002 in her capacity as Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the UN Secretary-General. Ms Bertini's mission was in response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation and was to assess the nature and scale of the humanitarian needs and to clarify the respective responsibilities of those actors involved. The Government of Israel made and/or confirmed a number of humanitarian commitments to Ms Bertini during her mission. Since this time OCHA has produced monthly reports monitoring the Government of Israel's actions in relation these commitments. The monitoring of the Bertini Commitments is now included in the Monitoring Section of the Humanitarian Update.

¹⁵ Government of Israel Bertini Commitment (2002): (1) Palestinian ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at any checkpoints; and (2) Effective mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that Palestinians seeking critical medical services (child delivery, dialysis, chemotherapy etc) can quickly pass all checkpoints.

¹⁶ Government of Israel Bertini Commitment (2002) - Facilitation of International Organisations: (1) Israel will fully facilitate the assistance activities of international organisations with particular reference to UNRWA; (2) Israel agrees to review and strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the IDF to facilitate assistance activities; and (3) Israel will improve the situation at checkpoints, including the deployment of more experienced IDF personnel.

¹⁷ Government of Israel Bertini Commitment (2002): Problems related to water deliveries to Palestinian towns and villages will be addressed to ensure that daily water deliveries in proper quantities can be supplied by Palestinian water tankers.

¹⁸ Government of Israel Bertini Commitment (2002)(confirmed during the Bertini mission): Facilitation of the Palestinian Olive Harvest.