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Protection of Civilians Weekly Report

16 – 22 July 2008

No significant improvement in the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip

Since the 19 June ceasefire agreement one month ago, the number of casualties has significantly declined, but there has not been a significant improvement in the humanitarian situation. About 95% of Gaza's local industry remains closed. Imports of goods were 26% of the level prior to the Palestinian elections in January 2006 and the total ban on exports from the Strip continues. Current imports are limited to selected humanitarian items, mostly food commodities and shortages of raw materials and supplies continue. Only six percent of the monthly need for cement has been met.

Fuel imports remain restricted, whereby 21% of petrol and 45% of diesel imported prior to the elections is available. This has resulted in substantial power cuts (4-5 hours/day), reduced water supply, and the continued dumping (since January 2008) of over 60 million litres of untreated and partially treated sewage into the sea. Garbage collection trucks have been grounded due to the lack of fuel, resulting in the accumulation of 600 tonnes of garbage on Gazan streets. No one can exit or enter Gaza due to the closure of Rafah and Erez with the exception of a few selected medical and humanitarian cases.

Military activities affecting civilians

No IDF military activities in the Gaza Strip were reported this week. No rockets or mortars were fired by Palestinian militants towards southern Israel, the first week since the start of the ceasefire on 19 June. However, on one occasion, IDF patrol vessels opened fire at Palestinian fishing boats at sea west of Gaza City, forcing them to return to shore but causing no injuries. This is the seventh shooting on Palestinian fishing boats since 19 June. These shootings have been recurrent over the years and, as a result, hundreds of fishermen have been forced to fish near the shore where only small fish is available and an important (and the cheapest) source of protein for Gazans has become less available.

In the West Bank, 102 IDF search operations and 121 arrests of Palestinians were reported. The largest number of arrests occurred in the Nablus governorate (75), which can be

civilians, including three children. Amongst the injured, three were injured by live ammunition and one by rubber-coated metal bullets following stone throwing by Palestinians at the IDF.

Moreover, confiscation of and damage to Palestinian property during IDF operations continued to be reported. For instance, the IDF demolished part of the walls of a house during a search operation in Al 'Eizariya (Jerusalem) and confiscated documents and a computer whilst raiding a charitable society in Jericho City. Moreover, some of the institutions raided by the IDF in Nablus City on 9 July (previous reporting week)—including the Nablus Municipality, At Tadamon Health Centre, a school for teaching the Qur'an and the 'Aqraba Health Clinic—have assessed the total value of incurred property damage at approximately \$ US 12,700. The IDF also confiscated eight school buses belonging to three different schools in Nablus City.

Bulldozer attack and repercussions

Eleven Israeli civilians were injured and several vehicles were damaged by a 22-year-old Palestinian man from East Jerusalem driving a bulldozer in West Jerusalem. The man was subsequently shot and killed by an Israeli settler and an IDF soldier. Later that day in West Jerusalem, a group of *Yeshiva* (Jewish orthodox seminary) students physically assaulted two Palestinian men from East Jerusalem; the two men sought protection at the house of an Israeli man, who was later attacked by *Yeshiva* students and wounded in the stomach with a knife.

Incidents involving Israeli settlers

The most serious incident this week occurred on 21 July when Israeli settlers from Havat Gil'ad outpost attacked two Palestinian men while working on their land in Immatin, beat them and sprayed a chemical substance on their faces and body (Qalqiliya). The IDF intervened and fired rubber-coated metal bullets, injuring another Palestinian man. During the incident, two dunums with approximately 35 olive trees were burnt both by a fire started by Israeli settlers and the firing of gas canisters by the IDF.

Israeli settlers prevented four Palestinian shepherds accompanied by four internationals from accessing their privately-owned land near the settlement of Susiya (Hebron). Subsequently, the IDF arrested the Palestinian shepherds and the internationals and detained them for eight hours at a police station in Kiryat Arba' settlement. In another incident in Hebron, Israeli settlers from Asa'el outpost stole a tent and its contents that belong to a Palestinian family of six south of As Samu' town.

Family feuds and factional violence in the Gaza Strip

Seven armed family disputes took place in Gaza, two of which led to the injury of 16 people. Another two persons were injured in an armed dispute among Islamic Jihad militants over leadership in Northern Gaza. The Gaza police intervened in these incidents to bring them under control, carried out several search operations, and arrested 32 Palestinians. This brings up the number of Palestinian casualties due to family feuds in the Gaza Strip in 2008 to 14 deaths and 65 injuries and those due to factional violence to three deaths and 34 injuries.

Also reported this week was the takeover of the Fatah-affiliated Shuja'iya Sports Club in Gaza City by Hamas militants and the explosion of an Improvised Explosive Device outside the building housing the National Security Apparatus in Gaza City. No injuries were reported as a result but the explosion resulted in minor damage to the windows of several houses in the area.

Access-related incidents in the West Bank

Delays and long queues were reported this week at the major checkpoints controlling access to Qalqiliya City (Qalqiliya North and Qalqiliya DCO), Nablus City (Huwara and Beit Iba), the northern West Bank (Tappuah), the northern Jordan Valley (Tayasir, Hamra and Yitav), Ramallah City ('Atara and Jaba'), Jericho City (Jericho DCO) and East Jerusalem (Qalandiya and Rafat/AlMasyion). In addition, 75 flying checkpoints were reported, with the highest number deployed in the Hebron governorate (29).

In addition, IDF soldiers physically assaulted and injured four Palestinians at 'Azzun 'Atma Barrier checkpoint (Qalqiliya) and were reported to have verbally insulted and physically abused people travelling through Tayasir checkpoint in the northern Jordan Valley. The Palestinian DCL filed a complaint

with the Israeli DCL addressing the behaviour of IDF soldiers at Tayasir checkpoint.

Following the closure of Al Mu'arrajat road in Jericho on 21 July to allow for the implementation of a two-month renovation project by UNDP, the IDF began to allow all Palestinians to enter and exit Jericho via the Jericho DCO checkpoint in their personal vehicles, which has significantly increased delays and queues at the checkpoint.

Demonstrations

Four anti-Barrier demonstrations were held in the Ramallah governorate during the reporting period. One of the three demonstrations organised in Ni'lin resulted in the injury of seven Palestinians and one international with rubber-coated metal bullets fired by the IDF. In Bil'in, one Palestinian man was injured when hit with a shock grenade by the IDF.

During the reporting period, the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem released a video filmed by a 14-year-old Palestinian girl from Ni'lin on 7 July that documents the firing of a rubber-coated metal bullet by an IDF soldier at a 27-year-old blindfolded Palestinian detainee from Ni'lin from about 1.5 meters away. The detainee, who was participating in an anti-Barrier demonstration in the village, was injured in his left foot.

Protection of Civilians Weekly Briefing Notes – New Format

Following the change in the format of this report since 9 July 2008, please be informed that detailed information on casualties, house demolitions, settler incidents, curfews, flying checkpoints, search and arrest operations, rockets, mortars and airstrikes, which appeared in the previous format, will be gradually made available in a searchable format on OCHA's website as of 15 August 2008.