



Gaza Strip Situation Report 12 July 2006, 12 pm

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate in the Gaza Strip due to shortages of electricity and water, caused by the 28 June bombing by the Israel Air Force (IAF) of the Gazan power plant, and the continued sporadic opening of only some of Gaza's crossing points. Electricity supply to households and institutions remains severely depleted. Gazans are receiving on average 6 – 8 hours of electricity per day and for most families living in urban areas 2 – 3 hours of water per day.

Palestinian Authority national and municipal services which have been financially struggling since the withholding of VAT transfers by the Government of Israel and the cutting of assistance by western donors, are unable to provide essential services to the population. Gaza's high poverty (79% of households are living under the poverty line¹) and unemployment (40%²) levels have sharply limited households' ability to buy supplies, fuel and water.

Almost half the population in the Gaza Strip are children, who are living in an environment of violence, fear and insecurity. Since 28 June, 71 Palestinians have been killed and 197 injured during Israel Defense Forces (IDF) incursions and artillery shelling, IAF air strikes or in disputed circumstances. In the same period one IDF was killed and 4 others injured. Since 28 June, Palestinians have fired 127 homemade rockets towards Israel and the IAF have conducted over 120 air strikes. IDF artillery shelling continues along the north and eastern borders of the Gaza Strip with Israel.

Key developments in the last six days³:

- An increasing number of children have been killed in recent days including seven children from one family this morning, Wednesday, aged 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15 and 16 years. Their mother and their father were also killed in the same IAF air strike on their home in Sheikh Radwan area of Gaza City.
- The IDF conducted an incursion into the middle areas of the Gaza Strip in the early hours of 12 July and are holding positions westwards up to Salah ed Din street.
- The IDF has withdrawn from At Tatra (west of Beit Lahia, northern Gaza Strip), Karni Industrial Estate (Karni crossing) and around Gaza International Airport and Rafah and Sufa crossings (south east Gaza Strip).
- Karni has been closed for six days (since 7 July). Kerem Shalom, Sufa and Rafah crossings remain closed since 25 June. UNRWA estimates that approximately 578 people are currently trapped on the Egyptian side of Rafah terminal waiting to enter the Gaza Strip.
- Nahal Oz energy pipelines remain open for the fourth consecutive day for the import of fuel.
- The Gaza Municipality has run out of fuel for its fleet of vehicles and no garbage has been collected since 9 July. Piles of rotting debris can be seen on streets throughout Gaza City and there are concerns about a public health crisis if the garbage is not collected.

IDF military incursions

- In the early hours of 12 July, large numbers of IDF forces entered the middle area of the Gaza Strip through Kissufim road. The IDF are now deployed westwards up to Salah ed Din street.
- This morning, the IDF withdrew from the Karni Industrial Estate where they had been positioned since 8 July searching for alleged tunnels dug by Palestinian militants.
- In the early hours of 12 July, the IDF withdrew from the south east corner of the Gaza Strip around the Gaza International Airport. The IDF had remained in this area since 28 June leading to the internal

¹ IUED Palestinian Public Perceptions Poll No. 10. The poverty line for the reference household (two adults and four children) is \$2.70/day.

² PCBS Labour Force Survey, Q1 2006.

³ This is the sixth Situation Report issued by OCHA in the June/July 2006 period. The previous reports were published on 21, 27, 30 of June and 4 and 6 July and are available on www.ochaopt.org.

displacement of over 1,000 Palestinians in the Al Shoka area who are now returning to their homes. Palestinian security forces have now returned to the airport and Rafah crossing.

- On 8 July, the IDF withdrew from At Tatra area, west of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip following a two-day incursion that resulted in a large number of Palestinian casualties.

Gaza Strip crossing points and humanitarian access

- Erez crossing remains open for diplomats. Movement in and out of the Gaza Strip for all non-diplomats, including those working for international organisations, requires prior coordination with the Israeli DCL at Erez.
- Residents of As Shoka are leaving temporary shelters set up by UNRWA in Rafah and returning to their homes following the withdrawal of the IDF from the Gaza Airport. Since 8 July, 146 displaced families (1,008 persons) from the As Shoka were staying at two UNRWA schools in the Brasil area of Rafah. UNRWA was providing food, washing facilities, blankets, mattresses and established a small first aid clinic. ICRC also provided 96 personal hygiene kits. A UN interagency assessment team conducted an assessment of As Shoka area on 10 July after having been previously denied access by the IDF.
- No humanitarian or commercial supplies including food aid have entered the Gaza Strip through Karni crossing since 7 July. Kerem Shalom and Sufa crossings have remained closed since 25 June. The Erez DCL informed OCHA this morning that both Kerem Shalom and Sufa crossings are available for the movement of humanitarian supplies into the Gaza Strip. However, this has been rejected by the Palestinian Authority (PA).
- Rafah crossing has now been closed for 18 days (since 25 June). According to UNRWA, 578 people including eight senior UNRWA staff are currently trapped at the terminal on the Egyptian side of the border waiting to enter the Gaza Strip. The conditions are becoming extreme with limited sanitation facilities and high temperatures.
- UNRWA via the Egyptian Red Crescent Society (ERCS) has been providing in-kind support to some of the families at the terminal. This has included hygiene kits, clothes for children and critical medication required for 17 UNRWA beneficiaries.
- During an IDF incursion in the Karni Industrial Estate between 8 and 11 July two UN warehouses were damaged. During this time, WFP were also unable to reach its warehouse which contains ten days emergency food stocks for 160,000 people in the area.

Electricity

- The entire Gazan population continue to rely on the remaining intermittent power supplied by the Israel Electric Company (57% of previous daily supply). Most Gaza residents are receiving electricity on average between 6 – 8 hours per day. Generators are increasingly difficult to find in the local markets.
- Power was restored at 10pm on 9 July to the large number of Rafah residents in the southern Gaza Strip that were without power for four consecutive days after the network reportedly overloaded.

Water

- The electricity and water networks continue to remain unsynchronised and water supply to Palestinian households is sporadic. Even when the networks coincide, power remains insufficient to get water to families living in high-rise apartments. This means that Palestinians are not having reliable access to water required to meet daily needs including for drinking, personal hygiene and washing clothes.
- The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) estimates that families living in urban areas are receiving between 2 – 3 hours of water per day with this increasing up to eight hours in rural locations.
- Water supplies in the north western Gaza Strip were further disrupted after water pipes were fractured by IDF tanks and armoured personnel carriers during an incursion west of Beit Lahia (At Tatra, Salatin and Al Issra). Following the withdrawal of the IDF on 8 July, UNRWA supplied water tankers and distributed 10,000 litres of water in conjunction with the ICRC to the affected areas.
- Demand for alternative commercial water supply is so high that it can take up to 36 hours for deliveries to be made and restrictions are imposed by the suppliers on the amounts available.
- UNICEF has provided three collapsible 5,000 litre water tanks to the CMWU as part of their contingency preparedness.
- The CMWU received 54,000 litres of chlorine on 10 July through Erez crossing. This chlorine for water purification was urgently needed by the CMWU and had been stuck at Karni crossing for a number of weeks. The passage was facilitated by the Erez DCL and a further 40,000 litres arrived on 11 July. The CMWU now has enough chlorine for two months. The Erez DCL has stated that they are prioritising a container of much needed spare parts through Erez today.

Fuel

- Nahal Oz pipelines are open for the fourth consecutive day for diesel, petrol and cooking gas following closure between 5 and 8 July. Between 9 and 11 July 1,630,000 litres of diesel, 246,000 litres of petrol and 1,516 tonnes of cooking gas were imported.
- These figures include 300,000 litres of diesel funded by the EU and earmarked for the Ministry of Health (MoH). The fuel was urgently needed following the increased reliance on generators to power Gaza's 11 hospitals and 58 primary health care clinics (PHC). Distribution of the fuel has already begun and 68,500 litres has been delivered to the European hospital in Khan Younis (45,000) and Al Nasser Pediatric hospital (7,750) and Shifa hospital (15,750) in Gaza City. The remaining supplies are in storage at the MoH and will be distributed as required.
- Since 6 July, ICRC has provided 28,000 litres of fuel to municipalities throughout the Gaza Strip to power generators used for water wells and sewage pumps.

Health

- The Gaza Municipality has run out of fuel for its fleet of vehicles and no rubbish has been collected since 9 July. Piles of rotting debris are now evident on streets throughout Gaza City and there are concerns about public health if the garbage is not collected.
- The At Tatra PHC run by the MoH reopened on 8 July following the withdrawal of the IDF from the area on 8 July.
- Representatives from Kamal Adwan hospital informed the UN on 8 July, that the hospital had sufficient supplies to deal with the heavy case load from the Israeli incursion into west Beit Lahia on 6 and 7 July. In total the hospital had received 17 dead and 65 injured.
- UNICEF has provided generators to two PHCs in the Zeitoun and Rahma areas of Gaza City to ensure continuous power.
- WHO, based on UNRWA's data related to communicable diseases, stated that the total number of cases of watery and bloody diarrhea amongst refugees for the last week in June and first week in July has increased by 163% and 140% compared to the same period last year.
- Essential medicines were transported by ICRC through Erez crossing in the last two days. Two war-wound kits were donated to the MoH by the ICRC on 10 July. Each kit provides treatment for up to 1,000 surgical interventions.
- Over the course of the last week UNICEF has intervened in the northern Gaza Strip and provided 145 toy kits, one family hygiene kit and four family water kits.

Food

- No humanitarian or commercial supplies have entered the Gaza Strip for the last six days through Karni crossing (closed since 7 July). Two WFP truckloads of palletised wheat flour via Erez on 11 July.

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