



OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
occupied Palestinian territory

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Humanitarian Monitoring Report – April 2005 Bertini Commitments

The Humanitarian Monitoring Report is produced monthly by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It draws on information from the Access, Closure and Information System (ACIS) and other data sources that humanitarian agencies have submitted to OCHA. The report is provided to the Task Force on Project Implementation (TFPI) as a basis for discussions with the government of Israel. It is available on the website www.ochaopt.org.

Context

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Ms Catherine Bertini as his Personal Humanitarian Envoy to address the humanitarian needs arising from the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict since September 2000. Ms Bertini was requested to assess the nature and scale of the humanitarian needs, and to clarify the respective responsibilities of all actors involved.

This report monitors the humanitarian commitments made by the government of Israel to Ms Bertini during a mission to the region from 12 to 19 August 2002. It concluded that there were serious humanitarian problems linked to the ongoing conflict and, specifically, to the measures implemented by the government of Israel to safeguard its citizens from Palestinian attacks.

These security measures, including curfews, closures and roadblocks, led to a crisis of access and mobility, instigating a drastic decline in the Palestinian economy. A large part of the Palestinian population has difficulty accessing basic services such as health and education. Humanitarian service providers, such as UN agencies, NGOs, the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) ambulances, have experienced problems providing assistance and services to beneficiaries.

Commitments made by Israel

Health

- Ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at checkpoints.
- Mechanisms will be set in place to ensure patients, seeking critical medical services (child delivery, dialysis, chemotherapy), can pass all checkpoints quickly.

Water

- Problems relating to water deliveries in Palestinian towns and villages will be addressed to ensure that daily provision of adequate amounts of water can be supplied by Palestinian water tankers.

Facilitation for International Humanitarian Organisations

- The government of Israel will fully facilitate the activities of international organisations, with particular reference to UNRWA.
- The government of Israel agreed to review and strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Additional Commitments

On previous occasions, the government of Israel has made the following commitments, which were confirmed to the mission:

- The fishing zone for Palestinian boats off the Gaza coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles
- Olive farmers will be allowed access to their fields
- Increased shipments will be allowed at Karni crossing in the Gaza Strip
- The number of permits for Palestinian workers in Israel will be increased

Executive Summary

Health

Palestinian ambulance operators reported a total of at least 18 access incidents in April 2005 (compared to 23 in March 2005), in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF. This month's figures are significantly lower than the figures recorded in April 2004, 52. However, there are still incidents in which delays are detrimentally affecting the pregnant and elderly.

Water

Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory face difficulties accessing safe water. In addition, the effect of closure measures, including checkpoints, earth mounds and curfews had a severe effect on water transport (due to a blocked location) for at least four Palestinian communities; 14 other communities were affected to a lesser degree (delays between one and six hours by water tankers were experienced): Khirbet Yarza, Tubas; and 13 communities in Nablus.

Facilitation for International Humanitarian Organisations

In April 2005, international relief agencies filed at least 113 reports (compared to 62 in March 2005) in which the delivery of aid and/or the movement of personnel were obstructed by the IDF or Israeli Border Police. Most incidents reported included delays and disrespect by the IDF of international humanitarian organisations' mandates, privileges and immunities. The 114 figure is the highest number of incidents recorded in almost a year.

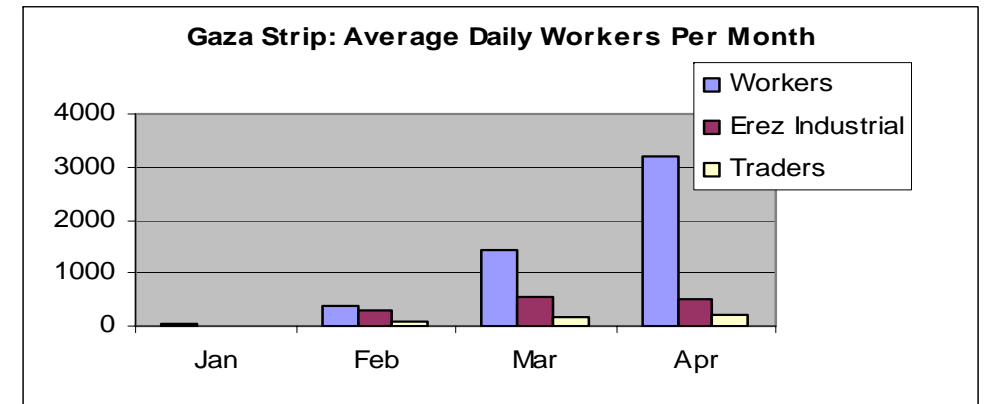
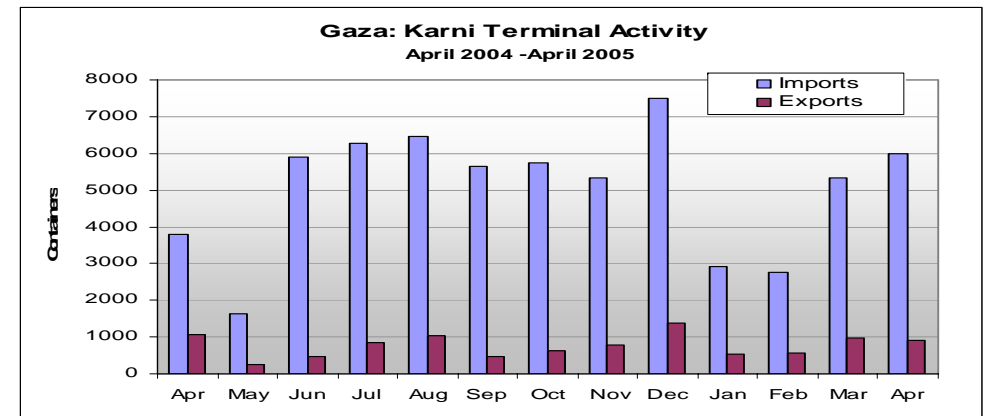
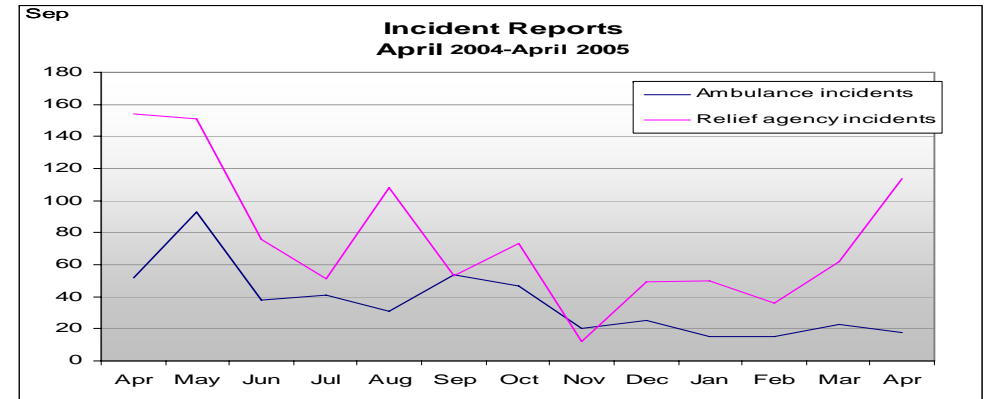
The number of access problems at fixed and mobile checkpoints, predominantly those located at the entrances to Jerusalem and at the gates in the Barrier increased significantly.

Additional commitments

The total number of containers entering the Gaza Strip at Karni in April 2005 was 5,994; the total number of containers exiting the Gaza Strip was 916. These numbers are similar to the figures recorded in March 2005: 5,340 imports and 957 exports. April 2005 import figures are higher than those recorded in April 2004, but exports are lower.

The average daily crossings from the Gaza Strip into Israel (accounting for the days entrance could have been permitted and excluding weekends days: Friday and Saturday) of the first four months of 2005 is as follows: January: 49 workers, 17 traders, nine Erez industrial estate; February: 390 workers, 70 traders, 278 Erez industrial estate; March: 1,451 workers, 158 traders, 537 Erez industrial estate; April: 3,200 workers, 224 traders, 487 Erez industrial estate.

Gaza Strip fishermen are consistently prevented from fishing up to the 12 nautical mile limit, as was agreed by the Israeli government.



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Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<p>1. Health</p> <p>Palestinian ambulances will wait no more than 30 minutes at any checkpoints</p> <p>(government of Israel to Bertini mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p> <p>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</p> <p>(government of Israel to Bertini mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p>	<p>Instructions issued to all checkpoint commanders concerning maximum time for ambulance delay at checkpoints</p> <p>Palestinian Ministry of Health, PRCS, UNRWA and hospitals no longer report ambulance delays at checkpoints</p> <p>Mechanisms established and Palestinian public informed</p> <p>No more reported instances of Palestinians in need of critical medical services being denied passage at checkpoints.</p>	<p><i>West Bank and the Gaza Strip: 18 incidents</i></p> <p>Palestinian ambulance operators reported a total of at least 18 access incidents in April 2005 (compared to 23 in March 2005), in which the provision of first aid and/or medical evacuations were delayed, obstructed and/or prevented by the IDF.</p> <p><i>Ambulance Access Denials</i></p> <p>Of the 18 incidents reported, at least two included humanitarian access denials. Included in the incident reports is the example below.</p> <p>20 April 2005: A PRCS ambulance was denied access by the IDF at Al Tuffah checkpoint, the Gaza Strip, while en route to transport a woman who was six-months pregnant and in critical condition, to a hospital. One hour later the woman delivered a stillbirth baby in the ambulance.</p> <p><i>Ambulance Delays</i></p> <p>There were 15 documented incidents of delays, in excess of 30 minutes, including the incidents noted below.</p> <p>8 April 2005: An MoH ambulance carrying two patients in serious condition was delayed for four hours, while going through Rafah, the Gaza Strip.</p> <p>23 April 2005: An MoH ambulance carrying two patients in serious conditions was delayed at Erez checkpoint; one patient was delayed for six hours and the other for eight hours, despite prior coordination.</p> <p><i>Other Reports</i></p> <p>In April 2005, one incident was reported in which a PRCS ambulance came under IDF assault.</p>	<p>In addition to the 18 incidents reported, on 12 April 2005, a PRCS ambulance was stopped at Beit Iba checkpoint, Qalqiliya, while en route to transport a 75-year-old person in critical condition to Al-Watani Hospital in Nablus City. The driver tried to communicate the urgency of the case to the Israelis, but the ambulance was only allowed to pass the checkpoint after a 20-minute delay. However, soon after the hospital received the patient, the person was pronounced dead by hospital.</p>
<p>Commitment</p> <p>2. Water</p> <p>Problems related to water deliveries to Palestinian towns</p>	<p>Benchmarks</p> <p>Instructions issued to all checkpoints allowing for the easy transfer of water</p>	<p>Status</p> <p><i>The West Bank¹</i></p> <p>The effect of closure measures, including checkpoints, earth mounds and curfews</p>	<p>Remarks</p> <p>Palestinians in the oPt face difficulties accessing safe water.</p>

¹These reports are based on Water and Sanitation, Hygiene (WaSH) Monitoring Project reports; 67 communities in the West Bank were surveyed over the first two weeks in April.

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<p>and villages will be addressed to ensure that daily water deliveries in proper quantities can be supplied by Palestinian water tankers.</p> <p>(government of Israel to Bertini mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p>	<p>tankers through all checkpoints</p> <p>The IDF removes barriers that prevent the access by water tankers to villages that rely on tankered water</p> <p>No reports on lack of water or delay/stoppage of water tankers at checkpoints</p>	<p>had a severe effect on water transport (due to a blocked location) for at least four communities in the West Bank: Khirbet Tell el Himma, Al Malih, Khirbet ‘Atuf, all three in Tubas; and ‘Einabus, Nablus.</p> <p>Fourteen other communities were affected to a lesser degree (delays between one and six hours by water transporters were experienced): Khirbet Yarza, Tubas; and 13 communities in Nablus</p> <p><i>Damage reported:</i> The following damage was also reported: Bizzariya, Nablus: partial damage of one spring Madama, Nablus : partial damage of two springs Aqraba, Nablus: partial damage of two springs As Sawiya, Nablus: partial damage of one spring Qusin, Nablus: damage in the main and secondary lines of the network.</p>	<p>Fixed and mobile checkpoints, earth mounds and curfews make it difficult for water tankers to reach the communities in Nablus and Tubas governorates in particular.</p>
Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<p>3. Facilitation for International Humanitarian Organisations</p> <p>Israel will fully facilitate the assistance activities of international organisations with particular reference to UNRWA</p> <p>(government of Israel to Bertini mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p> <p>Israel agrees to review and strengthen the liaison arrangements between international agencies and the IDF to facilitate assistance activities</p> <p>(Government of Israel to</p>	<p>Free access for all international staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and at international crossings, at all times.</p> <p>Free access for all Palestinian staff of international organisations throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip at all times.</p> <p>No delays/ stoppage of international organisations’ transport of development and humanitarian goods at any point (that is, at international borders, borders between Israel and the West Bank or the Gaza Strip,</p>	<p>In April 2005, international relief agencies filed at least 113 reports² (compared to 62 in March 2005) in which the delivery of aid and/or the movement of personnel were obstructed by the IDF or Israeli Border Police. Most incidents reported included delays and disrespect by the IDF of international humanitarian organisations’ mandates, privileges and immunities.</p> <p><i>Access by UNRWA staff</i> UNRWA, the largest humanitarian organisation operating in the oPt, reported almost all of the received reports in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in which there were access problems at IDF checkpoints. The number of access problems at fixed and mobile checkpoints, predominantly those located at the entrances to Jerusalem, and at the gates in the Barrier increased significantly.</p> <p>A total of 104 incidents was reported to UNRWA in April 2005 compared to 59 in March - the highest number in almost a year. Of these, 72 involved delays to vehicles, affecting 297 staff members, and 32 incidents in which access was refused, affecting 92 staff members. In total, 389 staff members were affected compared to 271 in March and the number of working hours lost by the agency also significantly increased from 244 last month to 522. The majority of access</p>	<p>UN staff members continued to report incidents where IDF soldiers at checkpoints refused to cooperate with DCL officers and/or accept the validity of UN identity cards, insisting instead that UN staff show another form of identification.</p>

² These figures apply only to the humanitarian aid organisations that reported incidents at checkpoints to OCHA.

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<p>Bertini mission, 12 to 19 August 2002)</p> <p>Israel will improve the situation at checkpoints, including the deployment of more experienced IDF personnel</p>	<p>within the West Bank or the Gaza Strip) at any time.</p> <p>Palestinian drivers (with either Jerusalem or West Bank IDs) allowed to drive humanitarian vehicles for international organisations, in particular UNRWA, WFP and ICRC</p> <p>Procedures will be established that provide direct access by international organisations to operational and command structures within the IDF.</p>	<p>problems could be linked to the tight closure enforced by the Israeli security forces due to Jewish Passover, predominantly between the West Bank and Jerusalem. Incidents specifically occurred at the Tunnels, Hizma, Beitunia, and Khamra checkpoints, and at Bartaa and Baqa gates in the Barrier.</p> <p>In the Gaza Strip, four delays were recorded by UNRWA. In one incident, 15 vehicles were delayed at Abu Houli Junction on 28 April 2005 for seven and a half hours; 479 persons were affected including students, teachers and health staff. A similar incident was reported the next day at the same location and affecting 533 persons.</p> <p><i>Additional Reports</i></p> <p>In April, there were five incidents reported from additional UN and NGO staff, in which delays or denials at checkpoints were recorded. Entry was denied in two incidents, and delays were observed in three incidents.</p>	
Commitment	Benchmarks	Status	Remarks
<p>4. Additional Commitments</p> <p>The fishing zone for Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza Strip coast will be extended to 12 nautical miles</p>	<p>Extension of fishing zone fully implemented</p> <p>No arrests of fishermen or confiscation of fishing boats within the 12 nautical mile zone.</p>	<p>Since January 2005, the Israelis have permitted fishing up to 10 nautical miles from the Gaza Strip coast compared to 6 nautical miles previously. Fishing is still not permitted over most of the Al Mawasi coastline as has been the case since October 2003.</p>	<p>Gaza Strip fishermen are consistently prevented from fishing up to the 12 nautical mile limit, as was agreed by the Israeli government. Under the Oslo Accords, Gaza Strip fishermen are entitled to fish as far as 20 nautical miles from the coast.</p>
<p>An increase in shipments at Karni crossing, Gaza Strip.</p>	<p>Quantifiable increase in humanitarian aid shipments permitted through the crossing.</p>	<p>The total number of containers³ entering the Gaza Strip at Karni in April 2005 was 5,994; the total number of containers exiting the Gaza Strip was 916. These numbers are the similar to the figures recorded in March 2005: 5,340 imports and 957 exports.</p> <p>April 2005 import figures are higher than those recorded on year ago, but exports are lower: 3,802 imports and 1,073 exports for April 2004.</p>	<p>In the last four weeks of April, the Israeli authorities did not allow UNRWA to bring petrol into the Gaza Strip area.</p>
<p>Increase in the number of work permits for workers in Israel.</p>	<p>Quantifiable increase in the number of work permits issued for workers in to work inside Israel.</p>	<p>The average daily crossing (accounting for the days entrance could have been permitted and excluding weekends days: Friday and Saturday⁴) of the first four months of 2005 is as follows.</p>	<p>Until the end of the third week in April, there was a steady increase in the number of</p>

³ Trade figures are reported by Palestinian officials at Karni to OCHA. These figures represent the most accurate figures available to OCHA at the time of publication.

⁴ Weekend figures are excluded because, in general, much fewer crossings are recorded on Fridays and Saturdays.

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		<p><i>Daily average</i> January: 49 workers; 17 traders; nine Erez industrial estate February: 390 workers; 70 traders; 278 Erez industrial estate March: 1,451 workers; 158 traders; 537 Erez industrial estate April: 3,200 workers, 224 traders; 487 Erez industrial estate</p>	<p>Palestinian workers and merchants entering Israel and the Erez industrial estate.</p> <p>Between 17 and 21 April , more than 4,100 workers entered Israel each day. With the onset of the Jewish Passover Holiday, Erez crossing closed to most Palestinians on 25 April while the industrial estate closed earlier on 22 April. Both the crossing and industrial estate remain closed for the rest of the month.</p>
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