



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
occupied Palestinian territory

# THE HUMANITARIAN MONITOR

## FEBRUARY 2010

### February Overview

February developments highlighted once again the vulnerability of children in various areas of the occupied Palestinian territory, due to their exposure to violence and the dire conditions in which they live.

In Gaza, three girls aged between 5 and 12 were injured while in their house by a tank shell fired by Israeli troops towards a populated civilian area. The shelling occurred after an unidentified armed Palestinian group opened fire at Israeli forces stationed next to the border, earlier that morning. Civilians living or working in the vicinity of Gaza's border with Israel are frequently exposed to shooting by Israeli forces, in the context of the enforcement of access restrictions or in response to Palestinian fire.

Also in the Gaza Strip, three children were killed this month and five others were injured in an accident caused by a faulty electricity generator. The fatalities



Home in Bir al 'Idd, an Area C herder community in southern Hebron governorate. Photo by Patrick Zoll, UNOCHA

occurred in the context of Gaza's deteriorating electricity supply and growing reliance on back-up generators, many of which are imported through the tunnels and are of poor quality. This reliance has been exacerbated recently by a further decline in the import of industrial fuel needed to operate Gaza's power plant, due to an ongoing funding crisis; for half of February, the majority of the population experienced rolling power cuts of up to

#### ISSUES COVERED THIS MONTH

**West Bank:** Further increase in Palestinian injuries • Wave of arrests of children • Demolitions and demolition orders in Area C and East Jerusalem • Food distribution targeting herder communities in Area C.

**Gaza:** Violence and casualties • The Gaza blockade continues; increases seen in agricultural imports • The continuing electricity crisis • Cooking gas imports • Coping with the lack of building materials • Restrictions on movement in and out of Gaza remain unchanged.

**Across the occupied Palestinian territory:** Child Protection Box • Humanitarian access update • Consolidated Appeals update.

12 hours per day. Electricity cuts are also having a direct impact on the quality of education afforded to Gaza's children, disrupting the functioning of schools and undermining the ability of children to study at home.

The import and export restrictions imposed by Israel in the context of the blockade over Gaza continued to undermine livelihoods and affect the living conditions of children. While the number of truckloads that entered Gaza this month slightly increased compared with January, it was well below the monthly average of imports in 2009. Despite the import restrictions, most goods are available in the market via the tunnel's system, however, their quality is generally poor and much of them are not accessible to the population due to the reduced purchasing power. Of note this month, the Israeli authorities approved the entry of a second shipment of 100 truckloads of glass, which has been identified as a key priority to address the shelter needs of thousands of families living in houses with shattered windows, as a result of the "Cast Lead" offensive. The ability to meet shelter needs is likely to be slightly enhanced also by the growing number of small-scale enterprises producing construction (breeze) blocks using rubble left behind after the offensive. This development, however, has prompted concerns due to the lack of quality control over these new materials, which may eventually result in the collapse of buildings.

Children also paid a high price in the context of violent incidents in the West Bank. In February, 11 Palestinian children were injured in a variety of circumstances by the Israeli military (6) and Israeli settlers (5). Also, in a particularly large operation carried out in the Al Jalazun refugee camp in the Ramallah governorate, the Israeli military arrested 17 children, bringing the total number of Palestinian children in Israeli prisons and detention centres by the end of the month to 343 (up from 318 in January),

of which 41 were 12-15 years old. Testimonies collected by the Palestinian child rights NGO, Defence for the Children International, suggest that excessive force was used in the course of the arrests and that some of the children were also subject to various forms of abuse during the interrogations, all of which were carried out in the absence of a lawyer.

Poor living conditions are also a serious concern for the population of small herder communities scattered across Area C of the West Bank, children in particular. The findings of a new UN survey show alarmingly high levels of acute malnutrition (5.9 percent), underweight (15.3 percent) and stunting (28.5 percent) among children under five living in these communities; the overall level of food insecurity is 79 percent, compared to 25 percent among the wider Palestinian population in the West Bank. Food insecurity among Area C herder communities is closely related to the severe restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on access to grazing land and natural water resources, compounded by frequent droughts, which have led to an unsustainable reliance on purchased fodder and tankered water.

Also in Area C, this month, the Israeli authorities demolished 11 structures, including four residential structures, due to lack of building permit, displacing 12 Palestinians, including eight children; no demolitions took place in East Jerusalem.

Lifting the blockade on the Gaza Strip and opening up Area C for Palestinian development are among key requirements to improving the humanitarian situation of the population living in the occupied Palestinian territory. In addition, there is an urgent need to ensure that children are adequately protected from the worst effects of conflict-related violence.

## West Bank

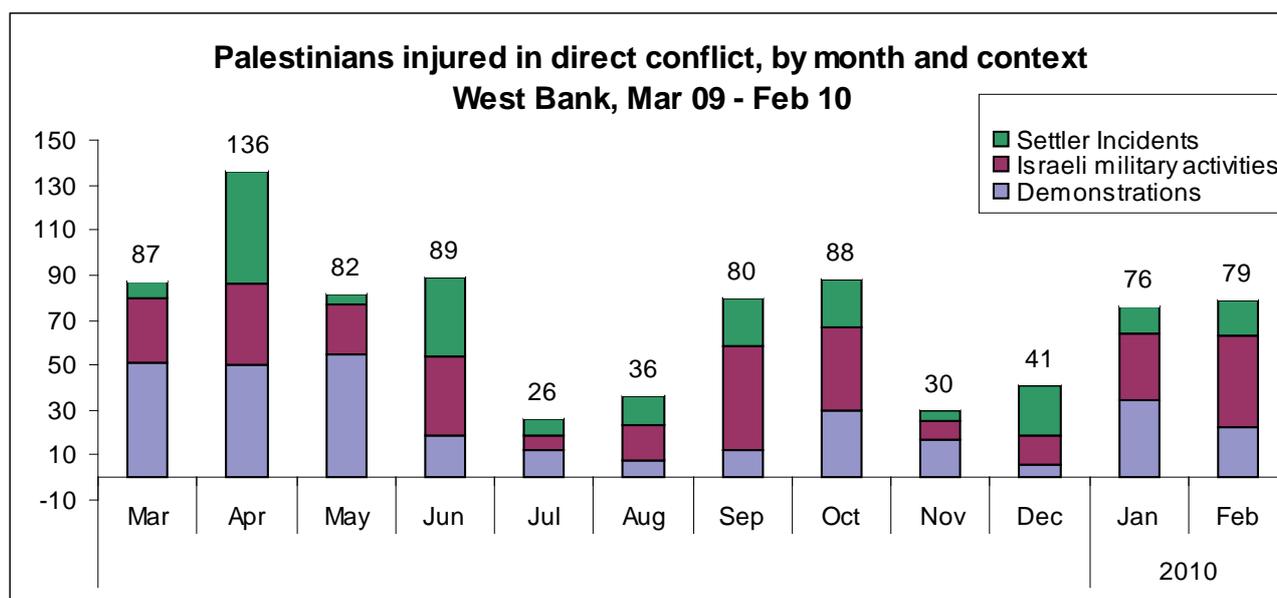
### Further increase in Palestinian injuries

During February, one Palestinian civilian and one Israeli soldier were killed in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On 10 February, a Palestinian man stabbed to death an Israeli soldier near the Tappuah checkpoint, south of Nablus City. The perpetrator was arrested at the scene by Israeli forces, after being run over by an Israeli settler; six of his relatives were later arrested by Israeli forces during a raid of his home village. Two days later, on 12 February, Israeli forces shot and killed a 41-year-old Palestinian man in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2). The Israeli army stated that the soldiers opened fire on him after the man tried to stab a soldier. However, an investigation carried out by the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem suggests that the man, a father of nine who had a permit to enter Israel, was shot after he refused to stop when so ordered by the soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the above-mentioned casualties, for the third consecutive month February witnessed an increase in Palestinian injuries in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Of this month's

79 Palestinians injuries, 71, including six children, were inflicted by Israeli forces, and eight, including five children, caused by Israeli settlers.<sup>2</sup> In addition, 15 Israelis were injured this month, including 12 members of Israeli security forces and three Israeli settlers, all of them by Palestinian stone-throwing.

Of note during the month, on the morning of 8 February, Israeli forces, including border police, municipal workers and an undercover police unit, carried out a search and arrest operation in Shu'fat refugee camp in East Jerusalem. The operation, which lasted for three and a half days, evolved into intense clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian youth. During the confrontations, Israeli forces fired live ammunition, rubber coated metal bullets and sound grenades, while Palestinian youth hurled stones. As a result, at least 11 Palestinians were injured, including six Palestinian journalists covering the event—four of whom were physically assaulted by the Israeli police and two hit with stones thrown by Palestinians. One of those injured is a 17-year-old boy who was injured with live ammunition by the undercover police unit. Five policemen were also injured by stones. According to media reports, the



## WEEKLY DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE EXPANSION OF HALLAMISH SETTLEMENT

Since early December 2009, Palestinians from the villages of An Nabi Saleh and Deir Nidham (Ramallah), together with Israeli and international activists, have been held weekly protests against the persistent restrictions by Israeli settlers from Hallamish settlement on their access to farming land. Since 2000, Israeli settlers have taken over approximately 3,000 dunums of land privately owned by 20-25 Palestinian farmers from these villages by planting various crops and trees and continuously obstructing the access of Palestinian farmers. Only during the last three years have farmers been able to access their land, mainly during the olive harvest season. While the Israeli DCL recognizes that the land is owned by Palestinians, it requires from the the farmers to coordinate every access in advance, a requirement that has been rejected by the farmers.

Most demonstrations (eleven as of the end of February) have evolved into clashes with the Israeli army, resulting in the injury of 27 Palestinians (including two children) and three international activists, mostly with rubber-coated metal bullets, and the injury of two Israeli soldiers with stones. Moreover, according to An Nabi Saleh village council, 12 people have so far been detained in the demonstrations, one of whom remains in custody, while several others paid bails between 7,500 and 15,000 NIS.

purposes of the operation included the arrest of tax evaders and West Bank ID holders living and working in the camp without permits. Access to education and work was disrupted not only inside the camp but also for those accessing services outside the camp.

Twenty-two Palestinians were injured in the course of various anti-Barrier and other demonstrations throughout the West Bank. In addition, two Israeli and two foreign national activists participating in protests were injured by Israeli military forces.

During February, OCHA recorded a total of 18 settler incidents resulting in injuries or property damage, slightly higher for the second consecutive month than the monthly average of incidents of 14 during 2009. In addition, there were a number of other settler incidents involving intimidation, access prevention and trespass. One of this month's seven Palestinian injuries during settler incidents occurred on 9 February when a group of armed Israeli settlers from the Bracha settlement (Nablus) approached

the nearby Iraq Burin village, clashed with the residents and opened fire with live ammunition injuring a 17-year-old boy. In another two incidents, on 16 and 24 February, Israeli settlers who occupy a house in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem, clashed with Palestinian residents of the neighborhood, injuring an elderly woman and two young children.

### Wave of arrests of children

The month of February was marked by the arrest of at least 17 children between 14 and 17 from the Al Jalazun refugee camp (Ramallah) by the Israeli military during an operation carried out on 11 February; as of the end of February, 15 of the children were still in detention awaiting determination of their cases by a military court. Testimonies collected by Defence for the Children International (DCI-Palestine) from five of the children and their families allege that the Israeli soldiers used excessive force in the course of the arrests. According to these testimonies, some of the children were also subject to various forms of abuse during the interrogations,

which were carried out in all cases in the absence of a lawyer. In addition there were four children, aged between 12 and 15, arrested during the month in Silwan, East Jerusalem, by the Israeli authorities.

Each year, approximately 700 Palestinian children (under 18) from the West Bank are prosecuted in Israeli military courts after being arrested, interrogated and detained by the Israeli military. At the end of February 2010, there were 343 Palestinian children detained in Israeli prisons and temporary detention centres, representing an eight percent increase compared to the previous month. Of these children, there were 41 young children aged 12-15 detained. There were no Palestinian girls in Israeli detention facilities, as well as no Palestinian children under administrative detention (detention without charges or trial). In 2009, the monthly average of Palestinian children held in Israeli detention was 355, an 11 percent increase compared to the parallel figure in 2008; moreover, the number of young children (12-15 year olds) in detention over the same periods of time increased by 37 percent (32 vs. 44 on a monthly average). The most common offence these children are charged with is for stone throwing.

According to testimonies of detained children given to DCI-Palestine, the use of coercive methods of interrogation, involving physical and psychological abuse, is widespread in the interrogation of children, resulting in confessions later used in their trials before Israeli military courts. The majority of Palestinian children are held in prisons inside Israel, contrary to the requirement of the Fourth Geneva Convention (art. 76), also making family visits difficult. In addition, only two of the 12 Israeli prisons and detention centres holding children ensure provision of education, and even then a limited number of subjects are offered.<sup>3</sup>

## Demolitions and demolition orders in Area C and East Jerusalem

In February, the Israeli authorities demolished 11 structures, including four residential structures, in Area C of the West Bank, due to lack of building permit, displacing 12 Palestinians. There were no demolitions in East Jerusalem during the month.

Among those structures demolished in Area C were one house, five water springs, three structures used as seasonal residences for farmers during the planting season, an animal barracks and a storage room. Thus far in 2010, OCHA has recorded the demolition of a total of 48 structures, including 22 residential structures, in Area C, and three structures (self-demolitions) in East Jerusalem, resulting in the displacement of 125 people. In 2009, the Israeli authorities demolished an average of 16 structures each month in Area C and seven in East Jerusalem, displacing an average of 27 Palestinians per month in Area C and 25 in East Jerusalem.

Also in February, the Israeli military destroyed five water wells and pumps in an agricultural area next to Kafr Dan village (Jenin), in an area designated as Area B. The Israeli authorities justified the demolitions on the grounds that they were dug without authorization from the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Committee. No demolition orders or prior notice were delivered in advance of the operation. As a result, the agricultural livelihoods of 32 families, who relied on the water to irrigate 36 greenhouses and 169 dunums of cultivated land, have been severely affected.

Also this month, OCHA recorded the distribution of 37 demolition orders in East Jerusalem (8) and Area C (29), placing at least 74 Palestinians at-risk of displacement. In addition, the Israeli army delivered two eviction orders to two families (27 people) residing in the community of Ibziq (Tubas), on the

## UPDATE ON RESPONSE TO JANUARY DEMOLITIONS IN KHIRBET TANA (NABLUS)

In January 2010, the Israeli army demolished the homes of 100 Palestinians, including 34 children, from the community of Khirbet Tana, located in an area of the Nablus governorate that has been declared closed by the Israeli military for training purposes, or a “firing zone”. In addition to the recent demolitions, in December 2009 and January 2010, the Israeli army also confiscated all the tractors used by the community for their agricultural work, on the grounds that they were located in a “closed military area”. The five tractors were held until the community was able to pay a fine of some 7,800 NIS.<sup>6</sup>

Along with support provided to the community in the immediate aftermath of the demolitions (see January Humanitarian Monitor), in February, the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) transferred the first payment of 10,000 NIS to the Municipality of Beit Furik (the services hub for the community of Kirbet Tana) as a contribution to the reconstruction of the community’s school. In the meantime, a tent provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government is being used for classes.

In addition, UNICEF, through its partner organization YMCA, and Islamic Relief are continuing to provide support to the residents in the form of psychosocial counseling and in-kind assistance, including fodder and water tanks. In addition, CARE international has provided veterinary kit to livestock.

grounds that they are located in an area declared closed by the Israeli military for training purposes (“firing zone”). According to the residents, the two families have been living in tents in the same area since before it was declared a closed military area after the beginning of the occupation in 1967. The majority of Area C demolitions in 2009 and 2010 have taken place in areas declared by the Israeli military as “firing zones.”

Palestinian construction in Area C and East Jerusalem is largely prohibited as a result of restrictive planning policies applied by the Israeli authorities.<sup>4</sup> In Area C, Palestinian construction is effectively banned in some 70 percent, in areas that have been designated for the use of Israeli settlements or the Israeli military.<sup>5</sup> In practice, the Israeli authorities generally allow Palestinian construction only within the boundaries of an Israeli-approved plan and these cover less than one percent of Area C, much of which is already built-up. A similarly restrictive planning and zoning regime is applied by the Israeli authorities in East Jerusalem where only 13 percent

has been allocated for Palestinian construction, within which Palestinians have the possibility of obtaining a building permit. However, much of this land is already built-up, the permitted construction density is limited and the application process is complicated and expensive.

### Food distribution targeting herder communities in Area C

The month of February saw the completion of a new round of the joint UNRWA-WFP emergency response addressing the nutritional needs of a total of 5,200 families living in 209 herder communities in Area C. This is the second of six planned rounds of food distribution; each round is carried out over a three month period. The food basket distributed included cereals, pulses, vegetable oil, sugar and salt.

The population targeted was identified on the basis of a joint UNRWA/OCHA vulnerability survey conducted at the end of 2008-early 2009. A follow up food security and nutritional survey was conducted

| Nutrition indicator                       | 2009                      |                        |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
|                                           | Area C Herder Communities | Global millennium goal |
| Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM)           | 5.9%                      | 5%                     |
| Underweight                               | 15.3%                     | 10%                    |
| Stunting Prevalence                       | 28.5%                     | 20%                    |
| Food security indicator                   | 2009                      |                        |
|                                           | Area C Herder Communities | West Bank wide         |
| Food Insecurity                           | 79.0%                     | 25%                    |
| Poor Food Consumption                     | 42.5%                     | 10%                    |
| Families currently in debt                | 93%                       | NA                     |
| Families with no further access to credit | 20%                       | NA                     |

in October 2009 by UNRWA, WFP and UNICEF, where 510 Bedouin/herder families were surveyed by eight teams of social workers. Analysis of the collected data has shown a need for a sustained humanitarian focus on Area C livestock-dependent communities (full report is forthcoming).

A key factor behind the high levels of food insecurity among Area C herder communities is the severe restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on access to range land and natural water resources

which, compounded by frequent droughts, have led to a non-sustainable reliance on bought fodder and tanked water. Moreover, the collapse of livelihoods and the exhaustion of coping-strategies, aggravated by the inability to obtain building permits, the limited access to basic services, and frequent incidents of Israeli settler violence and intimidation, have created pressure among many Palestinian families living in these communities to relocate to other areas in the West Bank.

## Gaza Strip

### Violence and casualties

While the overall level of fatalities decreased significantly in February compared to January 2010, the situation along the Gaza-Israel border continued to be tense. This month, Israeli forces killed one Palestinian (compared to eight in January) and injured 13 others, of whom seven were civilians, near the border areas. During the first two months of 2010, a total of nine Palestinians were killed and another 19 injured in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

This month's fatality, an armed Palestinian, and approximately half the injuries (six) occurred in the course of three separate incidents involving airstrikes. In a particularly disturbing incident, three girls (ages 5, 11 and 12) were injured while

in their house, when Israeli tanks fired shells at the Johr El-Dik village, south-east of Gaza City (see also the box below). Additionally, four Palestinians were injured when Israeli forces opened fire towards Palestinians, including a group who were reportedly approaching the border fence in Beit Hanoun (North Gaza) and a group of Palestinian farmers working their land in the Johr El Dik area.

Also of note this month, Israeli tanks and bulldozers entered a few hundred metres inside Gaza and razed a rural area east of Al Maghazi refugee camp, after an improvised explosive device targeting an Israeli military patrol along the border area was detonated, injuring one soldier. During the operation, Israeli forces demolished two civilian houses and one agricultural structure, displacing two families (comprising 13 people). According to

Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights Israeli forces leveled 18 dunums of cultivated agricultural land, including approximately 520 olive and citrus trees, before withdrawing. On another 14 separate occasions, Israeli tanks and bulldozers launched incursions a few hundred metres inside the Gaza Strip and withdrew after conducting land leveling operations.

Following its 2005 “Disengagement”, Israel declared a “buffer” zone along its border with the Gaza Strip, in which a Palestinian presence is prohibited. This “buffer zone” was officially expanded from 150 metres to 300 metres in May 2009, though restrictions on access have been imposed, at times, up to a kilometer from the border. The Israeli military enforces the prohibition on entry to the self-declared “buffer zone” and beyond by opening “warning” fire at persons approaching or entering the border areas as well as through land leveling.

Similar restrictions on Palestinian access to fishing zones beyond three nautical miles from the shore also remained in place during the month; in seven separate incidents in February, Israeli forces opened fire towards Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore. Also, in February, the Palestinian Local Initiative, together with international activists, held weekly peaceful demonstrations marching towards the exclusion area and protesting against the access restrictions enforced in this area by the Israeli military.

During the month, tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border continue to claim Palestinian lives. Two Palestinians were killed and nine others were injured in a number of tunnel-related incidents, including tunnel collapse and electrocution, while working inside the tunnels. In spite of the risks they pose to people who work inside them, the tunnels constitute a lifeline for the Gaza population, providing goods which are unavailable through the official Gaza

### CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

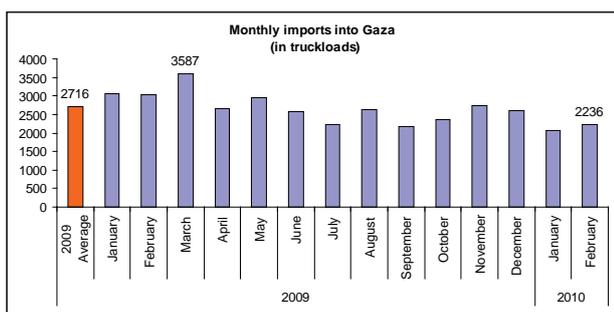
The Al Tarabeen family, composed of two parents and seven children, lives in the Johr El-Dik village located south-east of Gaza City, approximately 1.2 km from the border fence. On the morning of 11 February, Israeli troops fired a number of tank shells and opened machine-gun fire towards the village, after an unidentified armed Palestinian group had opened fire at Israeli forces stationed next to the border earlier that morning. One of the shells hit the roof of Al Tarabeen’s house and penetrated the room where the family stayed. Three of the family’s girls, Afaf (12), Ahlam (11) and Mona (five), received light-to-moderate injuries and were evacuated to the Al Aqsa hospital. Machinegun fire continued that morning intermittently for approximately five hours, preventing many residents from leaving their homes.

Ismail Al Tarabeen, the father of the family, described the difficult living conditions imposed on the family due to the location of its home in the vicinity of the border area. “Shooting is an everyday occurrence and we can never rest without fear”, he said. His children must walk an additional 1.3 km a day, in order to reach their school through a safer, but longer, alternative route. Ahlam, one of the injured sisters, wondered to what extent will she be able to take care of her injured younger sisters after the incident. According to Ismail Al Tarabeen, due to these conditions, three families from Johr El-Dik have recently left the village and relocated elsewhere in Gaza. However, he said, “this is our house and this is our land, and my family is not going to leave it”.

crossings because of the Israeli-imposed blockade. Since the end of Israel's "Cast Lead" offensive, at least 75 Palestinians, including two children, have been killed and 139 others injured in various tunnels-related incidents.

### The Gaza blockade continues; increases seen in agricultural imports

The total truckloads of goods that entered Gaza in February (2,236 trucks) increased by about eight percent compared to the number of truckloads that entered in the previous month (2,062), and was 18 percent less than the average monthly imports in 2009. This month's imports also constituted approximately 17 percent of the parallel monthly average that entered during the first five months of 2007 (12,350), before the imposition of the Israeli blockade after the Hamas takeover of Gaza.



Food products, including food intended for both human and animal consumption, made up the majority of the imports into Gaza, representing approximately 76 percent of the total imports. The proportion of food to total reflects the general trend: in 2009, food products made up roughly 79 percent of all imports (24,664.5 truckloads of food vs. 32,587.5 total truckloads).

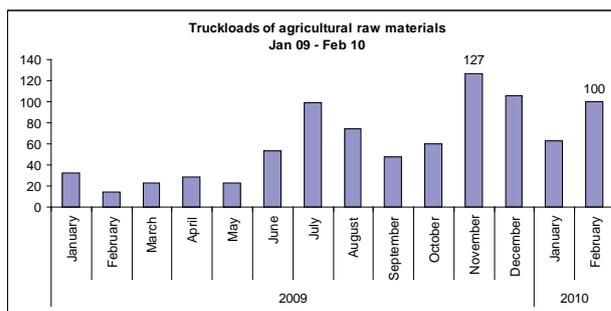
Agricultural imports into Gaza have increased in the recent months (see graph below), with the average number of truckloads of agricultural materials from November 09 through February 10 (99 truckloads/month) more than doubling the average between January and September 09 (43 truckloads/

### February 2010 imports by type

| Commodity Group                    | Total       |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Agricultural Raw Materials         | 87          |
| Animal Feed                        | 369         |
| Construction                       | 34          |
| Education/Stationary               | 20          |
| Human Food Products                | 1325        |
| Hygiene/Cleaning Supplies          | 118         |
| Fuel                               | 132         |
| Industrial/Electrical Applications | 36          |
| Medical Supplies                   | 38          |
| Non-Edible Consumables             | 52          |
| Packaging Applications             | 24          |
| IT                                 | 1           |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                 | <b>2236</b> |

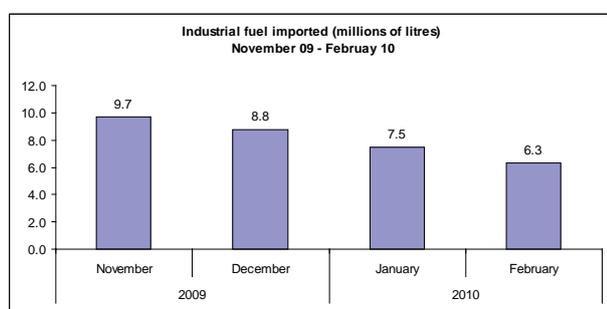
month). Since the beginning of 2009, a total of 851.5 truckloads of agricultural raw materials have entered Gaza.

Of note, a total of 34 truckloads of glass have entered Gaza during February. While ceased on 17 February, glass imports were resumed by the end of the month, after the Israeli authorities approved a new shipment of 100 truckloads of glass on 25 February. The first shipment of glass took place on 29 December 2009, for the first time following the imposition of the blockade on Gaza in June 2007. Glass was identified as a key priority to address the winter needs of thousands of families living in houses with shattered windows, as a result of the "Cast Lead" offensive. Since 29 December 2009 until the end of February, a total of 103 truckloads of glass entered Gaza.



## The electricity crisis continues

In February, the import of industrial fuel for the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) decreased for the third consecutive month to approximately 6.3 million liters, the lowest level since January 2009. This has resulted in a further decrease in electricity production by the GPP, which was forced to shut down one of its two turbines due to fuel shortage during half of the month. Over that period, the majority of Gaza's population (except in the area of Rafah) experienced rolling power cuts of up to 12 hours per day, every day, compared to a maximum of eight hours per day, 3-4 days a week during the rest of the month.



The current crisis in fuel supply began in December 2009 following the November 2009 expiration of the European Commission's commitment to financially support this purchase. The monthly average of industrial fuel delivered to the Gaza power plant between December 2009 and February 2010 was 7.5 million litres, compared to 9 million liters between January and November 2009 which already constituted only 70 percent of the estimated needs of the power plant station. Import of industrial fuel is restricted by a quota imposed by the Israeli government in October 2007, and approved by the Israeli High Court of Justice, as part of a package of punitive measures against Hamas. As a result of this quota the GPP can produce one quarter of the average electricity demand in Gaza; another half was met through the purchase of electricity from Israel and 5-10 percent from Egypt, creating a chronic deficit of 15-20 percent.

These cuts affect the provision of essential services, including water supply, sewage removal and treatment, and medical treatment; public institutions providing these services are forced to rely extensively on backup generators and other alternative devices, which are extremely vulnerable due to the inconsistent supply of spare parts. The increasing reliance of the population on generators has led to an increase also in the number of generator-related accidents; in February, three children in Gaza were killed and five others from the same family were injured due to fire caused by a faulty generator; in January, three fires were reportedly caused by generator malfunction.

## Cooking gas imports

Cooking gas from Israel continued to enter exclusively through the pipeline located at the Kerem Shalom Crossing. Although there was 14 percent increase in the quantities of cooking gas compared to the previous month, (2,653 vs. 2,321 tonnes), the amount entered is approximately seven percent less than the monthly average during 2009 (2,850 tonnes). This month's cooking gas import amount is approximately 44 percent of the monthly needs of gas, as estimated by the Gas Station Owners Association (GSOA).<sup>7</sup>

With a maximum capacity of 400 tonnes per day, and the capacity to store fuel on the Gazan side of the border, the Nahal Oz crossing, which was closed on 1 January 2010, was well equipped to meet Gaza's cooking gas fuel needs. In contrast, Kerem Shalom's maximum capacity is reportedly under 200 tonnes per day—roughly two thirds of Gaza's winter needs.

In spite of the reduced quantities, there are currently fewer queues reported at the distribution points, possibly because of increasing cooking gas containers entering through the tunnels under Gaza's border with Egypt.

## Coping with the lack of building materials

Given Israel's continued ban on the import of building materials into Gaza, a growing number of Gazans have recently engaged in small-scale enterprises producing construction (breeze) blocks for house repair and reconstruction. The basic raw material used for this purpose is the rubble left behind after Israel's "Cast Lead" offensive. The rubble is crushed with locally made equipment, mixed with sand and cement, formed into blocks and sold on the market. While these enterprises have provided some relief to those affected by unemployment and enabled shelter needs to be addressed, they raise a number of concerns: prior to Israel's imposition of the blockade and its ban on building materials, the production of concrete and breeze blocks was concentrated among a few large enterprises that were committed to certain standards and testing procedures. At present, the small-scale businesses involved in the production of breeze blocks are largely unregulated, prompting concerns about the quality of the blocks and the possible future collapse of buildings constructed with them. Additionally, the cement needed to produce the blocks is currently available only through the tunnels operating under the border with Egypt, at high monetary and human cost. As a result, in spite of the short-term benefits they may provide, the production of breeze blocks in its current form is not a substitute for Israel's opening of the crossings and the import of adequate and safe amounts of reconstruction materials into the Gaza Strip.

Approximately 60,000 families have had their house destroyed or damaged (including light damages) during the "Cast Lead" offensive. According to the Shelter Cluster, while significant progress was achieved in regard to repair of houses that sustained



Newly established factory producing "breeze" construction blocks - Izbat 'Abed Rabbo, Gaza.

light damages, only minor steps have taken place with houses under the 'major damages' category and no progress at all for the totally destroyed shelters. It is estimated that 9,275 housing units need to be reconstructed (including 2,900 destroyed or severely damaged before "Cast Lead") and 2,886 units already started to be built by UNRWA and UNDP, need to be completed.

## Restrictions on movement in and out of Gaza remain unchanged

The movement of Palestinians in and out of the Gaza Strip through the Erez and Rafah border crossings with Israel and Egypt continues to be largely restricted. The borders remained officially closed in February, allowing limited access for medical and other humanitarian cases only.

The number of Palestinians who succeeded in crossing Erez in February (2,037) declined by 27 percent compared to January (2,806); the majority of those who crossed were patients and their companions (see also the following section). The remaining Palestinians who crossed Erez this month included holders of permits to visit families outside of Gaza (480) and traders (70). Before the imposition of the Israeli blockade, thousands of traders crossed out of Gaza through Erez each month.

Officially, Rafah Crossing was closed throughout the month. However, a number of cases with special authorization entered (1,262) or left (314) Gaza. While those entering represented around 90 percent of those who entered via Rafah in January, those who left represented only nine percent of the respective figure for January, during which the crossing exceptionally opened on four days. No medical case referred for medical treatment in Egypt was allowed to leave Gaza during February. According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 600 patients are waiting to exit via Rafah Crossing. Rafah Crossing has been officially closed since June 2007 and opens only sporadically; prior to the blockade, during the first six months of 2006, an average of 650 people crossed per day each way. However, uncertain/unpredictable time and length of opening, vague criteria and overcrowding are contributing to the difficulties Palestinian travelers are encountering while travelling via Rafah Crossing.

## Medical referral abroad update

In February, 979 applications for permits by Gazan patients referred to medical treatment in Israel, the West Bank and Jordan were submitted to the Israeli District Liaison Office (DCL). Of these applications, 80 percent were approved, three percent were denied and 17 percent were delayed. A delayed application means that no reply is received by the patient from the Israeli authorities by the day of the planned departure, resulting in the loss of the pre-arranged appointment at the relevant hospital. The delayed patient must then seek a new appointment and submit an entirely new application. The rate of approval during February slightly increased compared to January (80 vs 78 percent), and constitutes a significant improvement compared to the monthly average during 2009 (67 percent).

During February, a 62-year-old man suffering from cardiac disease died while waiting for an approval to his application to exit Gaza through Erez.

## Issues throughout occupied Palestinian territory

| Child Protection                                     | January 2010 | February 2010 |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Palestinian children killed                          | 1            | 0             |
| Israeli children killed                              | 0            | 0             |
| Palestinian children injured                         | 16           | 15            |
| Israeli children injured                             | 0            | 0             |
| Palestinian children displaced from home demolitions | 44           | 8             |
| Palestinian children in Israeli prisons              | 318          | 343           |

### Humanitarian access update

This month, UN and international NGO staff members reported 59 access incidents (delays or denied access) at Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank, a 22 percent decrease compared with the parallel figure in January 2010 (76), and a 14 percent decrease compared with the monthly average of incidents in 2009 (69).

As a result of February's incidents, humanitarian agencies lost 191 staff hours or the equivalent of

25.5 staff days, almost the same as in January. The majority (71 percent) of the reported incidents were the result of Israeli forces' demands to perform internal searches of UN vehicles.<sup>8</sup> Almost all of this month's incidents (94 percent) occurred at checkpoints located on the Barrier, most of them around East Jerusalem. Similarly to previous months, 83 percent of the incidents involved Israeli Border Police.

An additional three incidents affecting humanitarian staff crossing the Erez Crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel were reported during February, compared with eight incidents during January. While the large majority of the applications for permits to leave Gaza submitted by UN national staff residing in Gaza during this month were approved (91 percent), only 60 percent of the applications to enter

Gaza submitted by West Bank UN national staff were approved. A significant portion of national staff no longer try to enter or leave Gaza as their applications have been rejected multiple times in the past on “security grounds”.

Also in February, following concerns expressed by international organizations and diplomatic missions, the Israeli authorities established an inter-ministerial committee to review the previous decision to stop issuing work (B1) visas to staff members of international NGOs. Whilst this process is underway, the Israeli authorities informed the international community that the Ministry of Interior will issue B1 work permits to INGO staff members and their families, as done prior to the policy change in late 2009. In order to apply for a visa, the staff member needs a letter of support from the Israeli Ministry of Social Affairs

## **Consolidated Appeals update**

The 2010 CAP in the oPt appeals for USD 664.4 million for 236 humanitarian and early recovery projects in the areas of food security, agriculture, protection, education, health, water and sanitation and coordination and support services. 147 projects are to be implemented by UN agencies and 89 by international and local NGO's. Cash Assistance/ Cash for Work and Food Security comprise approximately two thirds of this year's funding requirements.

As of 10 March FTS funding levels stand at \$53 million, or around 8% of total requirements (all but 2m is for UNRWA related projects). Although this figure is expected to rise over the next month as organizations are currently up-dating the contributions received, donors are encouraged to expedite allocations and disbursement to prevent the interruption of key humanitarian responses.

## Endnotes

1. The findings of the investigation are available at: [http://www.btselem.org/English/Firearms/20100212\\_Fayez\\_Faraj\\_shot\\_to\\_death\\_in\\_Hebron.asp](http://www.btselem.org/English/Firearms/20100212_Fayez_Faraj_shot_to_death_in_Hebron.asp)
2. In addition, one Palestinian woman was injured by an Israeli unexploded ordnance and another man injured in a traffic collision with an Israeli settler.
3. See Defence for Children International – Palestine, *Palestinian Child Prisoners: The systematic and institutionalised ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian children by Israeli authorities*.
4. For additional details, see OCHA oPt, *Restricting Space: The Planning Regime Applied by Israel in Area C of the West Bank*, December 2009, and *The Planning Crisis in East Jerusalem: Understanding the Phenomenon of “Illegal” Construction*, April 2009.
5. These include areas that have been placed under the jurisdiction of Israeli settlements’ Local and Regional councils (the majority of which was previously declared as “state” land), areas closed by the Israeli military for training, along with nature reserves, Israeli military bases and a “buffer zone” around the Barrier. In the remaining 30 percent, a range of restrictions virtually eliminate the possibility of obtaining a building permit.
6. Exchange rate of NIS 3.75 to US\$ 1. This amount was later reimbursed by the Palestinian Authority. Prior to payment of the fines, the residents were forced to rent a tractor to transport water to the community.
7. The 6,000 tonnes requirement has been met or exceeded only twice since 2005; in February 2007 and March 2008, respectively, approximately 6500 tonnes and approximately 6300 tonnes of cooking gas entered Gaza.
8. While outside visual inspections are regularly conducted by Israeli forces staffing checkpoints, Israeli checkpoint personnel often insist on invasive car searches, unless a diplomat is present in the vehicle. According to the United Nations Convention on Privileges and Immunities (1946), UN property and assets are immune from search and, as such, UN staff are instructed not to allow vehicle searches.

### CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for

Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), Al Haq, Badil, Save the Children (UK), Defence for Children International – Palestine Section (DCI-PS), Oxfam GB, Palestine Hydrology Group (PHG), Campaign for the Right to Enter, ACF-E, AAA, ACP, ACAD, and members of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM).

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