



# THE HUMANITARIAN MONITOR

NOVEMBER 2009

## November Overview

House demolition and displacement incidents affecting East Jerusalem continued to be of concern in November. While no demolitions of Palestinian structures have been recorded since mid-July in Area C, demolitions in East Jerusalem continued during the month; ten Palestinian-owned structures were demolished due to lack of building permits, displacing 73 people, including 41 children.

Tensions remain high in Sheikh Jarrah as Israeli settler organizations intensify their efforts to take control of land and property and establish a sustained presence in this Palestinian residential neighbourhood. In November, settlers took over the uninhabited part of a Palestinian home in Sheikh Jarrah: although this proved temporary, they returned on 1 December and appear to have established another foothold in the area. In another part of Sheikh Jarrah, a Palestinian family of four



House Demolition in Al Esawiya, East Jerusalem. Photo by Mahmoud Yllayan, November 2009

evacuated the house they were renting, following an eviction order issued by the Israeli authorities.

Also in November, the Jerusalem municipality approved the construction of 900 new housing units in Gilo, a settlement established on West Bank land and unilaterally incorporated into the extended Jerusalem municipal boundary and annexed by Israel following the onset of the occupation in

### ISSUES COVERED THIS MONTH

**West Bank, including East Jerusalem:** Casualties • Decrease in Palestinian injuries from Israeli settler violence • East Jerusalem demolitions and evictions continue; no Area C demolitions for fourth consecutive month • OCHA releases new movement and access update • Humanitarian Access in the West Bank  
Gaza Strip C

**Gaza Strip:** Casualties • Trapped in Gaza: Students unable to leave • Commodities and cooking gas imports • New UN report: Food insecurity in Gaza over 60 percent • Increasing concern over impact of winter weather conditions • Patient referral out of Gaza • Availability of drugs and medical supplies at Central Drug Stores • Accountability initiatives following “Cast Lead” allegations

**oPt-wide issues:** Child Protection Box • The Committee on the Rights of the Child framework in the oPt • Consolidated Appeals Process and HRF update

June 1967. Of particular concern, East Jerusalem is excluded from the partial, temporary freeze on new settlement construction, which Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, announced in late November.

Concerning access, the Israeli authorities continue to implement measures to improve the freedom of movement between most Palestinian urban centres in the West Bank. However, as demonstrated by OCHA's November Movement and Access update, Palestinian access to land in large areas of the West Bank, especially the Jordan Valley and the closed areas between the Barrier and the Green Line (the "seam zone"), remains for all intents and purposes off-limits to Palestinian use and development. In addition, Palestinian access to the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2) and East Jerusalem continues to be severely restricted, with the majority of permanently-staffed checkpoints in the West Bank restricting access to these urban centres.

In Gaza, as winter approaches there is increasing concern for the families whose homes were destroyed or damaged as a result of the "Cast Lead" military offensive. The continuing blockade has resulted in negligible reconstruction and repair, as essential materials continue to be denied entry: thousands of families continue to live in homes without window panes or solar panels due to the ban on the import of glass.

The general decline in the amount of goods allowed entry through the official crossings continued during the month, caused in part by the gradual closing of Nahal Oz and the Karni conveyer belt and the increased reliance on Kerem Shalom crossing, which has insufficient capacity, for the passage of all goods. With winter approaching, of particular concern, is the limited quantity of cooking gas allowed entry during the month, approximately 1,200 tons, far below the 5 – 7,000 tons required to meet Gaza's monthly needs, including for heating and cooking.

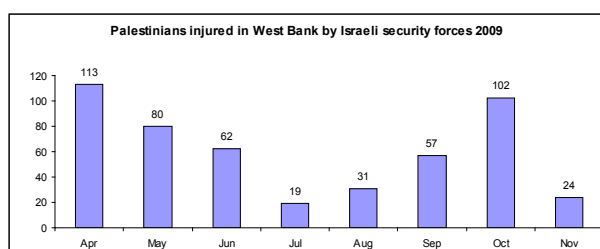
Continuing restrictions on access to arable land in the 'Buffer Zone' and to fishing areas beyond the current three-nautical-mile limit continue to undermine Gazan livelihoods and contribute to ongoing food insecurity. The damaging extent of food insecurity facing the Gaza population was demonstrated this month in a new UN survey issued in November with findings that over 60 percent of Gaza's population are currently food insecure and an additional 16 percent are vulnerable to food insecurity. According to the report, food insecurity in the Gaza Strip is primarily due to the high levels of poverty resulting from restrictions imposed by Israel in the course of its blockade, rather than the lack of food in the market.

On 30 November, the 2010 Consolidated Appeal was launched globally in Geneva. United Nations humanitarian agencies, along with international and national non-governmental organizations operating in the oPt, appealed for US \$664.4 million to fund 236 humanitarian assistance programmes in 2010. Through the CAP, humanitarian agencies will continue the important work of mitigating the worst impacts of the human dignity crisis facing Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. As many of the events reported above indicate, it is a crisis characterized by the erosion of livelihoods, the denial of basic human rights and a forced dependency on international aid that affects all aspects of the daily life of Palestinians. The residents of the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank, including those living in areas near Israeli settlements and in Barrier-adjacent areas, have been identified as priority populations in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.

## West Bank

### Casualties

From July through October, there had been a four-month upward trend in the number of Palestinians injured in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, by Israeli military and police forces. During September and October, the large increase in casualties was mostly attributable to clashes surrounding tensions related to Al Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem that occurred during the weeks between 27 September and 25 October. In November, the level of casualties decreased significantly; there were a total of 24 Palestinian injuries in the West Bank by Israeli forces, including 10 children. In addition, seven Israelis, including five Israeli settlers, were injured by Palestinians. The majority of Palestinians (18), as well as two Israeli Border Police, were injured during anti-Barrier demonstrations that occurred in villages of Ni'lin and Bil'in (Ramallah) and Ma'sara (Bethlehem). Also during the month, three Palestinians, including one child, were injured in incidents that occurred in checkpoints in the Hebron governorate.



### Decrease in Palestinian injuries from Israeli settler violence

In November, OCHA recorded 25 settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians and their property, down from 41 in October, resulting in injury to four Palestinians<sup>1</sup>, compared to 23 last month. In addition, there were eight incidents affecting Israelis and one affecting foreign nationals; these resulted in injury to five Israelis and two internationals.

Israeli settlers from the settlement outpost of Mitzpe Yair (Hebron) physically assaulted a group of Palestinian herders from the community of Khirbet Bir al 'Idd, south-east of Hebron, injuring one woman. In 1999-2000, some 20 families residing in this community were forced to evacuate their homes

and stay with relatives, following repeated attacks from settlers. In November 2009, the residents returned to their homes, upon agreement reached between the Israeli human rights organization Rabbis for Human Rights and the Israeli Civil Administration, following of a petition to the Israeli High Court of Justice.

Israeli settlers from Havot Ma'on settlement outpost physically assaulted two female foreign nationals from the Christian Peacemakers Team, who were accompanying a Palestinian family en route to their home in Tuba village (Hebron). Due to the systematic harassment and attacks by Israeli settlers, this group has maintained a presence in this area since 2005, supporting Palestinian access.

In addition to incidents resulting in physical casualties, OCHA recorded a number of incidents involving denied access to Palestinian agricultural and grazing land and damage to olive trees and grape vines. For example, Israeli forces prevented Palestinian farmers from Yasuf village from accessing olive groves (approximately 140 dunums) in the vicinity of Tappuah settlement (Salfit). According to the head of Yasuf village council, despite prior coordination with the Israeli DCL, the soldiers requested the farmers to prove ownership of land, which has also been used by settlers as a herding area.<sup>2</sup> In addition, settlers from Efrata settlement uprooted about 70 grape vines belonging to a Palestinian farmer in Al Khader village (Bethlehem) and settlers from Yitzhar settlement uprooted at least 81 olive trees belonging to Palestinians from Burin village (Nablus).

There were a number of incidents where Israeli forces intervened and dispersed settlers from Palestinian areas: for example, in five separate incidents recorded during the week of 4-10 November, Israeli forces intervened and evicted the settlers.<sup>3</sup> In general, however, the Israeli authorities have failed to enforce the rule of law on violent Israeli settlers in the West Bank. The lack of adequate law enforcement and accountability in regard to settler violence has been recurrently pointed out, since the early 1980's, by official commissions appointed

by the Israeli authorities, as well as by human rights organizations.<sup>4</sup> The Israeli human rights group Yesh Din, which monitors law enforcement on Israeli civilians in the West Bank, reported in November that most of the 69 incidents involving vandalism against Palestinian orchards and trees by settlers, monitored by the organization since 2005, were closed by the Israeli police for lack of evidence or due to “unknown perpetrator”; not a single investigation has led to the indictment of a suspect. Of note, on 1 November the Israeli police arrested an Israeli settler suspected of a number of deadly attacks against Palestinians and Israelis, including the killing of two Palestinians and two Israeli policemen and the injury others, of a time period spanning 12 years.

The IDF reported at least 28 incidents (24 involving stone-throwing and four involving Molotov cocktails), resulting in light injuries to two Israelis and damage to vehicles.<sup>5</sup>

*OCHA oPt report on Israeli settler violence and the evacuation of settlement outposts*

During the month, OCHA released a report on Israeli settler violence and the evacuation of settlement outposts.<sup>6</sup> The report raises concerns over possible attacks on Palestinian civilians in the context of the “price tag” strategy announced by settlers. The “price tag” strategy is a new pattern of violence that emerged during 2008, in which groups of settlers attempt to exact a “price” against Palestinians and their property in response to attempts by the Israeli authorities to dismantle “unauthorized” settlement outposts. In addition to an overview of incidents recorded by OCHA since 2008, the report identified and mapped Palestinian communities vulnerable to settler violence, under a scenario of a medium to large-scale outpost evacuation. The result is a list of 83 communities with a combined population of nearly 250,000 people, distributed across the three regions of the West Bank, identified as being highly or moderately vulnerable. In addition, the report identified 26 road junctions and segments, where movement of Palestinians is likely to be disrupted or blocked.

## ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER ANNOUNCES LIMITED SETTLEMENT FREEZE

In late November, the Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, announced a partial freeze on new residential housing construction in West Bank settlements, excluding East Jerusalem, to last for a period of 10 months. The freeze will not affect construction currently underway, nor will it affect “schools, kindergartens, synagogues and public buildings.”<sup>7</sup> The announcement met with criticism from Israeli settler groups and there were a number of incidents reported in the Israeli media where settlers prevented, or attempted to prevent, Israeli Civil Administration inspectors from entering settlements in order to monitor settlement activity and distribute stop-work orders<sup>8</sup> Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was subsequently quoted in the Israeli media indicating that the freeze is a “one-time, temporary” move and that construction would resume once the 10 month period has expired.<sup>9</sup> In the context of settlers’ objections to the freeze, Israeli media reported that the Israeli military is worried about possible attacks on Palestinian communities.<sup>10</sup>

There were a number of incidents where the Israeli authorities removed buildings in settlement outposts without subsequent attacks on Palestinian communities being reported. During the month, Israeli forces demolished two inhabited houses located in an Israeli outpost near the settlement of Negohot, west of Beit Awwa village (Hebron) and removed seven structures at Maoz Ester outpost (three) and Ramat Migron outpost (four), near the settlements of Kokhav Hashahar and Kokhav Ya’kov, both in the Ramallah area. Two Israeli settlers from the latter outpost were arrested while trying to prevent the soldiers from removing the structures.

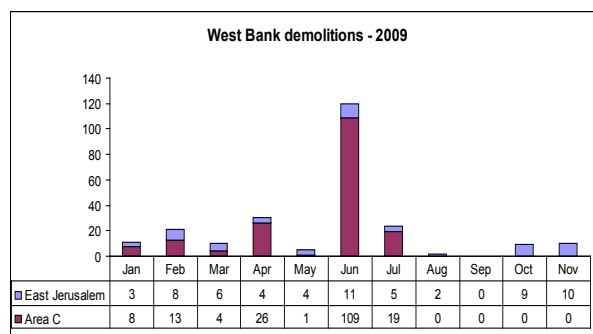
## East Jerusalem demolitions and evictions continue; no Area C demolitions for fourth consecutive month

Palestinians throughout the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem and Area C, continue to suffer the consequences of the restrictive planning and zoning regimes applied by the Israeli authorities to Palestinian communities.

In East Jerusalem, in November, the Israeli authorities demolished 10 Palestinian-owned structures, including six residential structures, due to lack of building permit, displacing 73 people, including 41 children. Thus far in 2009, OCHA has recorded the demolition of 64 Palestinian-owned structures, including 51 residential structures, in East Jerusalem, displacing 300 Palestinians, including 149 children.<sup>11</sup>

As reported last month, the Jerusalem municipality may have plans to demolish additional Palestinian structures in the city before the end of the year. During the month, OCHA received reports that the Jerusalem municipality issued 17 demolition orders against houses in the Silwan neighborhood lacking the requisite building permits and at least one of which was subsequently demolished. Eight of the orders affect houses located in Al Bustan area of Silwan, designated by the municipality as a “green” area, where all construction is prohibited. Six of these are renewals of previously-issued orders and two are new orders for extensions to existing houses that have previously received demolition orders. In total, approximately 90 houses in Al Bustan have received demolition orders, placing more than 1,000 Palestinian residents at risk of displacement.

In a press release issued in November, the Jerusalem municipality stated that it is promoting a number of zoning plans currently under consideration by the local and regional planning committees. If approved, these will allow Palestinians to construct more than 5,000 new housing units in various areas of East Jerusalem. Since the annexation of occupied East Jerusalem to Israel, it has been very difficult for Palestinian residents of the city to obtain building permits, leaving many of them with no choice but



to build “illegally”. Conservative estimates place as many as 60,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem at risk of having their homes demolished due to “illegal” construction.<sup>12</sup>

Also in November, a group of Israeli settlers took over an uninhabited part of a Palestinian house in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, and a Palestinian family of four persons was forced to leave the house they were renting in another part of Sheikh Jarrah, following an eviction order issued by the Israeli authorities. Prior to this, in early August 2009, 53 Palestinians were displaced after being evicted from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. According to the Palestinian media, another eviction order was issued in November against a number of Palestinian-owned buildings in the Samiramis neighborhood of East Jerusalem, following similar ownership claims by Israeli settlers. This neighborhood, located on the northern edge of East Jerusalem, has been isolated from the rest of the city by the Barrier.

Increased settler activity in Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem is worrying; similar developments in the heart of H2 area of Hebron since the year 2000 resulted in the abandonment of over 1,000 Palestinian homes and the closure of more than 1,800 commercial businesses. OCHA estimates that some 475 Palestinians are at risk of forced eviction, dispossession and displacement due to settler plans in Sheikh Jarrah alone.<sup>13</sup>

While no demolition of an Area C structure has been recorded since mid-July, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) has continued to distribute stop-work and demolition orders. In November, the ICA reportedly distributed over 65 stop-work and demolition orders against Palestinian-

owned structures in Area C, due to lack of permit, threatening to displace at least 120 Palestinians, including 70 children. Also this month, nine eviction orders were delivered for the first time against the residents of a herder community, Ras at Tin, near Al Mughayyir village (Ramallah), to evacuate their dwellings due to their location in a closed military area. The community comprises 16 non-refugee households numbering about 120 people, more than 60 percent of whom are children. The orders affect 21 residences (tent structures) and 20 animal pens, placing 98 persons (81 percent of population), including 67 children, at risk of displacement. The community, which is originally from the Massafer Yatta area of south Hebron, reports that they have been living in the area for 15 years. According to residents, they migrated to the central West Bank in the 1970s due to insufficient vegetation for their herds, and due to harassment because they were living in an area that had been declared closed by the Israeli military. No evictions have yet taken place.

Since 1967, Israel has declared over 20 percent of the West Bank as a closed military zone for training, or “fire” zone. Palestinian presence in these areas is restricted and construction is prohibited by the Israeli authorities. Enforcement of the access restrictions varies and the exact boundaries of the closed area are not clearly demarcated on the ground. Most of the families living in these communities are farmers and herders, many of whom have lived in the areas since before their declaration as closed and who rely on access to land for their livelihoods. These communities represent some of the most vulnerable communities in the West Bank and are considered priority groups for humanitarian assistance. In 2009, the main target of demolitions in Area C, over 80 percent, has been herding communities residing in these closed military areas; most of these demolitions occurred in the context of the forced eviction of these communities

The planning legislation and institutions, including those authorizing and executing demolition orders, differ between East Jerusalem and Area C. The Jerusalem municipality and Ministry of Interior oversee planning issues, and authorize and oversee

the demolition of homes in East Jerusalem. In Area C, the Israeli Civil Administration is responsible for these matters. However, the reality in both areas is quite similar: Palestinian construction in most of these areas is banned and almost automatically criminalized by the Israeli authorities. Also similar in impact of the policy, the most serious of which is the continued displacement of Palestinian families and reduced space for the development of Palestinian communities in the oPt, including East Jerusalem.

### **OCHA releases new movement and access update**

This month, OCHA issued a new movement and access update covering the period between May and October 2009. During this period the Israeli authorities continued to implement measures that increased the freedom of movement of Palestinians between most Palestinian urban centres in the West Bank. However, there has been no parallel improvement regarding access to land and use of space and resources by Palestinians. In particular, Area C, which covers 60 percent of the West Bank has remained, to a large extent, off-limits for Palestinian use and development. Moreover, access of Palestinians to and from areas behind the Barrier, including East Jerusalem, and the Jordan Valley, as well as within the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2), continued to be severely restricted.

Among other elements, the update includes a breakdown of the 69 permanently staffed checkpoints erected within West Bank territory, listed according to the main characteristics of each checkpoint:

The total number of closure obstacles recorded by OCHA as of the end of November 2009 was 578. This figure includes the 69 permanently staffed checkpoints, 21 “partial checkpoints” (checkpoints staffed on an ad-hoc basis) and 488 unstaffed obstacles (roadblocks, earthmounds, earth walls, road barriers, road gates and trenches).<sup>16</sup>

Most unstaffed obstacles are designed to channel Palestinian traffic into staffed checkpoints, making the latter a key component of the closure system.

CHECKPOINT TYPE	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER
Israel and East Jerusalem (E)	Located along the Barrier (except one) and control access into Israel and East Jerusalem for Israelis (mostly commuting settlers); Palestinians holding Jerusalem IDs; and a limited number of other Palestinians holding special permits. Some of them are also used to control commercial traffic into and out of the West Bank.	21
Isolated communities	Located along the Barrier and controlling access of Palestinians holding special permits to and from small communities isolated by the Barrier; <sup>14</sup> some of them also allow access of permit holders to farming land isolated by the Barrier, as well as to workplaces within Israeli settlements.	13
Israel and E] + isolated communities	Located along the Barrier and possessing both types of features outlined above	4
Main route	Located on a main West Bank route on the eastern side of the Barrier and controlling vehicular movement of Palestinians from one area to another; some of them also prevent entry of Israelis into Areas A.	17
Hebron City	Located within or next to the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2) and controlling movement of Palestinians into or within that area; some of them are also used to prevent entry of Israelis into the PA controlled area of Hebron (H1).	11
Settlement entrance	Located at the entrance of an Israeli settlement and controlling access of Palestinian farmers into significant agricultural areas within or next to that settlement; such access requires prior coordination with the Israeli Civil Administration. <sup>15</sup>	3
Total		69

However, as a rule, fluctuations in the number of checkpoints are only a partially indicative of trends regarding Palestinian freedom of movement. Indeed, the ability of Palestinians to move across a given checkpoint varies depending on the policy implemented by the Israeli authorities at that checkpoint at any given moment; therefore, movement on a specific area may significantly improve or worsen due to changes in that policy regardless of the overall number of checkpoints. For example, in June 2009, the permit requirement for Palestinian vehicles leaving Nablus through the southern checkpoint (Huwwara) was lifted, thus easing access to and from the city, while the checkpoint itself remained intact. Additionally, given that the checkpoints along the Barrier allow limited access to areas that would be otherwise completely blocked, a decrease in the number of these checkpoints may indicate a deterioration, rather than an improvement, in the freedom of

movement of Palestinians. For example, during September 2009 the Israeli authorities removed a checkpoint (Lazarus) that controlled access to and from a Palestinian community isolated by the Barrier (Ash Shayyah); this removal resulted in inconvenience for the residents, forcing them to make a long detour to access East Jerusalem.

### Humanitarian Access in the West Bank

There was a significant drop in access incidents reported by UN Staff in November. This month, UN staff members reported fewer than half the number of access incidents reported in October 2009 (39 vs. 80 incidents). As a result of these incidents, the UN lost 251 staff hours or the equivalent of 31 UN staff days. Compared to the previous month, UN staff members spent 66 percent less time at checkpoints in November (31 vs. 93 staff workdays lost).

ACCESS SUMMARY – WEST BANK	
Number of incidents	39
Number of employees delayed or denied access <sup>17</sup>	251
Average no. of employees per incident (buses)	6.4
Total time lost (in hours)	238

The majority (38 percent) of reported UN access delays or denials were the result of Israeli forces' demands to perform internal searches of UN vehicles. 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.

## Gaza Strip

### Gaza Casualties

After five weeks of relative calm, in mid-November, Israeli air strikes against tunnels and factories, and Israeli military incursions, resulted in one Palestinian child killed, and 16 others injured.

The enforcement of access restrictions to the 300-metre-wide so-called "buffer zone" continues to pose a threat to Palestinian civilians, and hinders their use of agricultural land along the border with Israel. In this context, in mid-November, one Palestinian child was killed and another was wounded, when Israeli forces opened fire towards a group of boys in the Juhr Al Deek area, southeast of Gaza City. Afterwards, Israeli forces entered the area and detained four youths, including the injured boy, all of whom were released two days later, except for the injured boy who remains in hospital in Israel. One Palestinian fisherman was injured when Israeli patrol boats opened fire on Palestinian fishing boats in the Rafah area. Since January 09, Israeli naval forces have years restricted the access of

In the first half of 2009 there were 542 reported access incidents that have hindered UN Operations, resulting in 3,331 lost staff hours. This is approximately equivalent to the figures for the first half of 2008, but more than the total for all of 2007.

COGAT announces no new work permits granted to foreign workers in oPt The Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced that B2 tourist visas would be issued in place of B1 work visas for staff of international NGOs (INGOs). Although details of the new policy remain unclear, B2 tourist permit holders are not allowed to work in Israel. As such, COGAT's announcement is of considerable concern for INGOs working from East Jerusalem. In addition, staff may experience problems accessing some terminals, such as Erez terminal to Gaza, whilst on a B2 permit. Also of concern is that B2 tourist visas are typically valid for three months, and it remains unclear whether foreign workers will be able to exit and enter the country multiple times within that duration.

Palestinian fishing boats to three nautical miles from the seashore; although in practice have sometimes restricted access to as little as one nautical miles. Fishermen are routinely targeted by fire towards their boats, forcing them ashore.

In addition, Israeli air strikes destroyed a Palestinian industrial factory, a stone-cutting factory, and damaged three houses. In total, air strikes resulted in the injury of 15 Palestinians, including three children. At least six of the wounded were Palestinian tunnel laborers working in Rafah, along the Egyptian border.

Rockets and mortar shells from Gaza continued to be sporadically launched by Palestinian factions towards southern Israel; no Israeli injuries or property damage was reported. According to various media reports, on 21 November, a number of Palestinian armed factions in Gaza declared a unilateral end to all rocket and mortar fire into southern Israel. However, the following day, some

## GAZA'S "BUFFER ZONE"

In October, Save the Children UK released findings of a survey conducted earlier in the year indicating that Gaza's border with Israel, commonly called the "buffer zone" (or no-go area) faces both more serious protection concerns and more significant loss of livelihoods than the rest of Gaza. Although the Israeli military officially indicated the boundary of the no-go area to be 300 metres from the border, in practice, it extends up to one kilometre in most areas and up to two kilometres at its widest point in North Gaza.

Only nine percent of surveyed families living in or near the "buffer zone" said they felt safe and secure, compared with 55 percent outside of the area. Since the end of Israel's "Cast Lead" offensive in January 2009, six civilians have been killed and 21 others injured in incidents involving Israeli gun and tank fire in areas near the "buffer zone". Four of the fatalities and at least five of the injured were children.<sup>18</sup> While it remains unclear how much agricultural land has been destroyed by repeated military incursions within the area of the "buffer zone", according to FAO, the "buffer zone" makes up approximately 30% of all arable land in the Gaza Strip.<sup>19</sup>

of the factions denied the agreement, and on 26 November, five mortar shells were reportedly fired from the Gaza Strip towards Israel. Although no Israelis were injured due to rocket-fire, in one incident, three Palestinians were injured when a Palestinian-fired rocket accidentally hit their home; several surrounding homes were also damaged.

Additional Palestinian casualties were recorded in tunnel-related incidents: a total of three people were killed and five others injured while working inside the tunnels as a result of tunnel collapses. Tunnel activity has gradually increased since the beginning of the Israeli blockade on Gaza in June 2007; so far, there have been 49 Palestinians killed in tunnel-related incidents unrelated to Israeli military bombardment.

Also this month, three armed militants were killed when explosive devices pre-maturely detonated. According to the IDF, two of the armed militants were planting a roadside explosive device in an area east of Gaza city. In a separate incident, an explosive device prematurely detonated in a van carrying three militants, affiliated to the Fatah movement, resulting in one fatality; the two others sustained severe burns.

## Trapped in Gaza: Students unable to leave

There are nearly 750 students in Gaza waiting for permission to leave to pursue their studies abroad. The majority of these students are newly admitted to institutes of higher learning outside of Gaza, but are unable to begin their studies due to the almost complete closure of Erez Crossing with Israel, as well as the Rafah Crossing with Egypt.

Because Israel has prevented Palestinian students from leaving Gaza through Israel for education programmes since June 2007, Gaza students, along with hundreds of other humanitarian-classified cases, are forced to exit through the Rafah crossing, which, although officially closed since June 2007, opens exceptionally 2-3 days each month for humanitarian cases.

In November, the Gaza authorities prepared for the opening of the Rafah crossing between 1 and 3 November. Eight of the 70 buses leaving Gaza to the Egyptian side of the Rafah Crossing were designated for departing students, however, the Egyptian authorities closed the crossing before the student buses' reached their turn in the queue.

## LETTERS SENT TO OCHA FROM A STUDENT<sup>20</sup> TRAPPED IN GAZA:

My name is Shymaa Mazyed, and I am from Gaza City. I am an undergraduate student majoring in English language. I have applied and been accepted to a Masters programme in linguistics at Mu'tah University in Jordan, and my current visa is valid from October until December. I now have only three weeks left on my visa.

Last month, several times I went to the Rafah border and attempted to cross, but was repeatedly turned back with the instruction to come back only on the bus to which I had been assigned. However, even though the Rafah border was open for three days, the turn for my bus never arrived and I am *still* unable to travel to Jordan. My dream is to study for a Masters Degree and one day return to Palestine and become a Professor at University in Gaza City.

I appeal to humanitarian organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to help Palestinian students in Gaza to travel through Rafah border to complete their studies.

In order to be granted access, students in Gaza have to go through a lengthy registration process that can take up to three weeks. Students must:

1. Register at the Gaza Ministry of Interior (MoI). During registration, copies of all necessary documents are submitted (University acceptance, valid visa, payment receipt of tuition fees, etc.).
2. If approved, students are given tickets with seat numbers on assigned buses.
3. Students must then wait until the next opening of Rafah Crossing to pass.

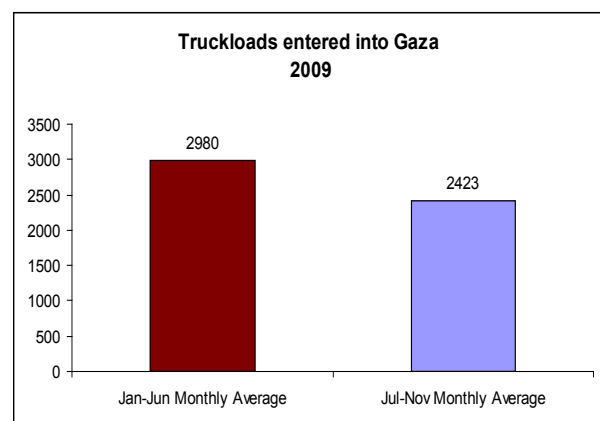
Students unable to leave Gaza may lose their tuition fees and/or visas, and may effectively result in the loss of admission to their schools. On 11 December, Rafah Crossing opened exceptionally for the exit of 82 Palestinian students admitted to Egyptian universities. It remains unclear as to when the remaining nearly 670 student registered in other universities across the world would be allowed to exit.

### Commodities and cooking gas imports

There were a total of 2,727 truckloads of goods allowed entry to Gaza in November. By far the highest percentage of truckloads consisted of food supplies—approximately 82 percent. The remaining truckloads were of fuel supplies, including cooking

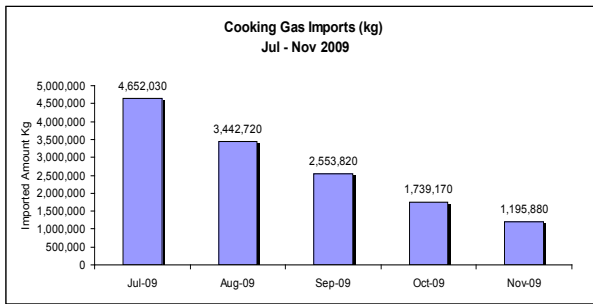
gas (two percent), cleaning and hygiene supplies (8 percent) and other items (8 percent).

Though there was an increase<sup>21</sup> (15.5 percent) in



the number of truckloads that entered Gaza in comparison with the previous month, this was not enough to offset the general decline in the amount of goods entering Gaza through the crossings; from July through November, the average amount of goods entering per month was approximately 19 per cent less than the monthly average of the first six months of 2009.

The reasons for the general decrease may include the change in Kerem Shalom's scheduled days of operations. Since July, Kerem Shalom's days of operation have been reduced to five days per week from six. In addition, it is possible that demand for items entering through crossings has been affected by increasing supplies entering through the underground tunnels along the Gaza-Egypt border.



Since Sufa crossing closed in September 2008, there have been three crossings that allow foods to enter from Israel to Gaza. During the past two months, there has been a trend towards developing Kerem Shalom crossing point as the main point of transfer for all types of goods.

Given the lack of sufficient infrastructure at Kerem Shalom, the shift of transfer point of cooking gas from Nahal Oz to Kerem Shalom has caused a significant decrease in the amount of cooking gas entering Gaza. The amount of cooking gas that entered via Kerem Shalom and Nahal Oz crossings combined declined for the fifth consecutive month. In November, approximately 1,196 tons of cooking gas entered the Gaza Strip. The current supply does not meet the market demand—an estimated 5000-7000 tons per month of cooking gas is required to meet Gaza’s needs.<sup>22</sup> There are serious concerns that the new fuel pipelines that began operations at Kerem Shalom crossing have less capacity than infrastructure in place at the Nahal Oz crossing, and the shift in fuel import operations from Nahal Oz to Kerem Shalom crossing could potentially exacerbate current shortages. The official crossings with Israel are the sole entry point for cooking gas; the amount of cooking gas entering through the tunnels is negligible, as there are no cooking gas pipelines that extend through the tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border.

Gaza exports: On 22 Nov 09, Israeli authorities gave indication that the a limited shipment of exported flowers via Kerem Shalom would be allowed in December. One truckload of 36,000 carnations was exported on 10 Dec 09 via Kerem Shalom crossing. This is the first export from Gaza since 27 April 2009.

## New UN report: Food insecurity in Gaza over 60 percent

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) released findings of a joint survey conducted in the first half of 2009 on socioeconomic and food security trends in the Gaza Strip.<sup>23</sup> The survey, which had a population sample size of 7,536 households, found that 61 percent of Gaza’s households are food insecure, and a further 16 percent are vulnerable to food insecurity.

The survey also indicates that, in contrast to the West Bank, food insecurity levels are higher among non-refugees (64.2 percent) in comparison to refugees (58.1 percent) and are more prevalent among households in rural areas (67 percent), compared to their counterparts in refugee camps (62 percent) and urban areas (60 percent). Moreover, 68 percent of female-headed households are food insecure; nine percent of total households in Gaza are headed by women.

The survey examines household income, consumption and expenditure patterns before and after Israel’s “Cast Lead” military operation, and reflects the socio-economic and food security situation in the aftermath of the offensive. The survey was designed to assess food security levels over time; follow-up surveys will be conducted every six months.

## Increasing concern over impact of winter weather conditions

In light of the continuation of Israel’s blockade on Gaza’s crossings, the beginning of winter rains and winds during November increased concern over the impact of weather conditions on some of the families whose homes were destroyed or damaged during the Cast Lead military offensive.<sup>24</sup> The greatest concern, according to the shelter cluster, there are 162 displaced families currently living in tents or makeshift shelters erected next to their demolished/damaged homes (144 families) or in tented camps (18 families). Thousands of families continue living in houses with shattered windows, which cannot be repaired due to the current ban on the import of glass. The shortage of glass also impedes the

installation of solar panels, which represent an alternative power source, much needed due to the recurrent power cuts and shortages of cooking gas. A UN request to the Israeli authorities to allow the import of glass to address these urgent needs, is still awaiting a response.

In the meantime, UNRWA has launched its winter response plan, which consist of the distribution of provisional shelters (compressed earth blocks shelters) for those living in tents (currently under the process of purchase), as well as tarpaulin (for roofing) and plastic sheeting (for windows) to all refugees in need. In addition, UNRWA and UNDP continue to distribute cash assistance to all families with houses damaged or destroyed during the last military offensive; this is planned to end by the close of this year.<sup>25</sup> Other UN agencies and NGOs have developed additional small-scale interventions addressing the winter needs of the most vulnerable non-refugees, some of which depend on the availability of funding and the approval of import requests.

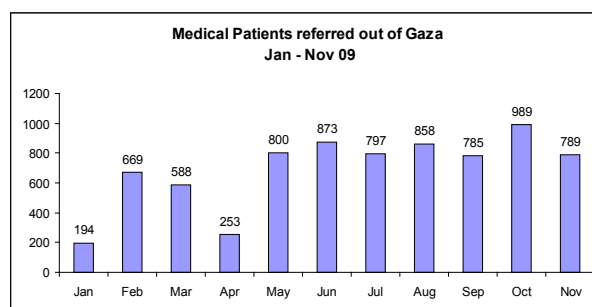
Other imports urgently needed to address winter conditions include pumps and generators, electricity equipment and spare parts, and increased amounts of industrial fuel and cooking gas. Electricity shortages during the rainy season, combined with poorly functioning pumps, could cause the wastewater treatment plants to overflow. The Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) has been waiting on the Israeli authorities for an authorization to transfer materials currently in West Bank warehouses since [date]. As a result of this delay, GEDCO warns that electricity supply to some areas may stop during the winter season due to the fragility of some network components that sustained damage during the Israeli offensive, which currently cannot be repaired/ replaced. This is in addition to the scheduled electricity outages, partially due to the restrictions in the amounts of industrial fuel allowed entry. When power outages occur, they cover an entire area, including public services facilities located in that area, such as water and sanitation, health, and education facilities.

## Patient referral out of Gaza

The Palestinian Referral Abroad Department (RAD) approved the referral of 789 patients to facilities outside of Gaza in November,<sup>26</sup> including 55.5 percent of patients referred to West Bank facilities (including 42.1 percent to East Jerusalem), 22.5 percent to Egypt, 2.5 percent Jordan, and 15.5 percent to Israeli hospitals. The largest number of referred patients were suffering from cardiovascular diseases, accounting for 15.7 percent of all referrals. Oncology cases accounted for 10 percent, ophthalmology 9 percent, neurosurgery 6.7 percent, and orthopedics 6.3 percent.

Of the 988 applications for permits to cross Erez processed by the Israeli District Liaison Office during November. 72.9 percent were approved (721, compared to 974 in October), 1.2 percent denied and 25.8 percent delayed. Of those approved, WHO reported that one medical referral case, a 21-year-old male, was detained while crossing Erez to Israel on 25 November; as of 7 December he is still reportedly detained. Most of the delayed patients (67.5 percent) are adults between 19 and 40 years old (18.4 percent of whom are female); all of the delayed patients missed their appointments with the health facilities for which they have been referred, and must submit new applications for permit to cross Erez, after being granted a new hospital appointment. One male patient died during the month while waiting to exit Gaza for medical treatment. Since the beginning of the year, 26 patients have died in these circumstances.

There was a significant increase in the percentage of patients requested to meet Israeli intelligence prior to receiving an answer to their application; 12.3 percent of total applicants in November, compared with 8.5 percent last month and 8.8



## PATIENT DIES WHILE WAITING TO EXIT GAZA

A.A, 51 years old, suffered from bronchial tumors since March 2009. On 5 May 2009, he was granted referral to Nasser Institute Hospital in Egypt. At the time, his brother was denied entry to Egypt and he had to cross alone. The hospital refused to admit him for overnight stay; after administering his chemotherapy doses, he was asked to leave. He stayed in a nearby hotel and commuted to the hospital, but with no one to assist him or help him go to treatment, he could not cope. After his condition deteriorated further, he decided to return to Gaza. His family tried to obtain another referral to Egypt, this time placing his wife as a companion, but he died on 3 November 2009 before he was able to receive proper medical treatment. He is one of 26 Gazan patients who have died in 2009 while waiting to exit Gaza to receive medical treatment.

percent in September 2009. A total of 122 patients were asked to be interviewed by Israeli intelligence before their application was approved; 64 did not go to the interview, and 58 were asked to submit new applications. None were approved to cross the border following the interview.

In a letter sent this month to the Israeli human rights organizations Gisha, HaMoked and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, the State Attorney's office effectively retracted a previous notification from the Israeli Gaza liaison office (DCO) that it would no longer handle interventions from the groups regarding applications by Palestinians needing to travel out of the Gaza Strip. In place of the total boycott of the human rights organizations, the State Attorney's office laid out restrictive working procedures: the DCO will only handle requests transferred through the Palestinian Civil Affairs Committee (PCAC), but will accept direct interventions by human rights organizations solely in "urgent life-and-death humanitarian situations". The DCO will notify the organizations of the status of requests they are following in writing, and if an application through the PCAC is denied, the organizations will be able to appeal to the DCO.

Gisha, HaMoked, and PHR-Israel expressed concern about the distinction made by the Israeli authorities between life-and-death cases and other urgent cases, which they said might not receive proper attention. They said they also remain concerned about their ability to advocate on behalf of people whose applications have not been submitted by the PCAC because they do not meet Israel's very restrictive criteria for travel out of Gaza.

## Availability of drugs and medical supplies at Central Drug Stores (CDS)

The Central Drug Store (CDS) reported that 115 drugs items out of the 480 items on the essential drug list and 119 disposable items out of 700 essential disposable items are at zero levels by the end of November, an increase from 78 drug items and the same number of disposable items at zero level at the end of the previous month. Amongst the zero level drug items is an immuno-suppressive medication that is urgently needed for kidney transplant patients, and is not available in Gaza, there are reportedly 170 patients in need of this medication.

## Accountability initiatives following "Cast Lead" allegations

This month, the UN General Assembly (GA) discussed the report of the Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (the "Goldstone report"), issued in September 2009. The report found evidence indicating that during the course of Israel's "Cast Lead" offensive, both Israel and Palestinian armed groups committed serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including acts amounting to war crimes. Following the discussion, the GA endorsed the report, referred it to the UN Security Council for further treatment, and called upon the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Gaza authorities to "take all appropriate steps... towards ensuring accountability and justice."

According to the IDF Spokesperson, so far, the Israeli military has examined more than 100 complaints related to alleged misconduct by Israeli forces during the "Cast Lead" offensive; 27 of

which have led to the opening of military criminal investigations.<sup>27</sup> An Israeli media report indicated that, among the incidents that are currently under IDF criminal investigations, there are 12 which were investigated and reported by the UN Fact Finding Mission, including two involving civilian deaths and 10 involving the destruction of civilian property.<sup>28</sup>

While Israel's investigation of alleged violations of international law is welcome, the UN Fact

Finding Mission has warned that the current Israeli investigation system does not comply with the universal principles of independence, effectiveness, promptness and impartiality.<sup>29</sup> In the aftermath of the "Cast Lead" offensive, a number of Israeli human rights groups and legal scholars requested the Israeli state attorney to set up an effective mechanism, independent from the Israeli military, to investigate alleged violations of international law, however, these requests were rejected.<sup>30</sup>

## oPt-wide issues

CHILD PROTECTION	October 2009	November 2009
Palestinian children killed	0	1
Israeli children killed	0	0
Palestinian children injured	30	11
Israeli children injured	0	0
Palestinian children displaced from home demolitions	13	41

**Palestinian children in Israeli prisons**  
 In November, the number of Palestinian children held in Israeli detention facilities fell to 306 – the lowest figure this year, and the first month in 2009 where the numbers are lower than the parallel month in 2008. However, in 2009, there has also been an increase in number of detained children between the ages of 12 and 15. As of the end of November 2009, 41 children in this age category were being held in Israeli detention facilities – a 64% increase on November 2008.

### The Committee on the Rights of the Child framework in the oPt

Israel ratified the CRC in 1991. Its first State Party Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2001 did not include information on the situation of Palestinian children living in the oPt,<sup>31</sup> Israel excluded information on Palestinian children based on its opinion that it is not obliged to apply the CRC to the oPt, though it did include information on Israeli children living in settlements within the oPt.<sup>32</sup> However, the Committee on the Rights of the Child holds that as the occupying power, Israel is the primary state duty bearer and is obliged to apply the CRC to the oPt.<sup>33</sup> The Committee expressed deep regret<sup>34</sup> at Israel's exclusion of Palestinian children in its 2001 report, and requested that Israel include Palestinian children in its scheduled 2008 report. However, the 2008 Israeli State Report to the CRC has not yet been submitted.

Israel submitted its Initial Report related to the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC) in Geneva in March 2009, and is scheduled to appear before the Committee to present its report in January 2010. In this context, the Palestine and Israel sections of Defence for Children International (DCI-Palestine and DCI-Israel) submitted a joint Alternative Report to the Committee in July 2009, focusing on Israel's use of children as human shields (during Operation "Cast Lead," but also before) in violation of their obligations under the CRC OPAC, and the threat and use of children as informers.

Although the Palestinian Authority (PA) endorsed the CRC in 1995, it cannot ratify the Convention until there is an internationally-recognized Palestinian state. Since endorsing the CRC, the PA has made progress towards enshrining its standards; in 2004, it adopted a Child Law, and has since produced 28 amendments, including in areas of health insurance, compulsory education and juvenile justice. The amended Child Law has been approved by the Palestinian Council of Ministers, and awaits endorsement from the President.

### Consolidated Appeals Process and HRF update

Funding for the revised CAP 2009 stands at approximately 70 percent, with a total of USD 524 million of the USD 804.5 million requested already received. Gaza projects, including a few joint

projects shared with the West Bank, have received a total of USD 341 million. The largest sector, food, approximately one-third of the CAP's financial requirements, has now received USD 182.4 million of the USD 256.3 million requested. Economic recovery, coordination and support, and education and health sectors are all over 50 percent funded.

The balance of the HRF currently stands at USD 4.1 million, with 37 projects funded. A review by a mission from headquarters was conducted in November to support the strategy, structure and operation of the HRF in 2010. A mission met with a wide and varied range of stakeholders including

national and international NGOs, recipients and non-recipients of HRF funding, donors, and heads of UN agencies. Field visits included the Jordan Valley, Hebron and the surrounding areas and a two day visit to Gaza. The mission presented their initial findings to the HRF donors and HRF Advisory Board at the end of their two week mission. The visit of the review mission coincided with the process of finalizing the new draft guidelines for the HRF. A HRF Advisory Board meeting was held on 11th November, at which the latest draft of the new guidelines was introduced and preliminary discussions took place.

## Endnotes

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1. Of Palestinians injured in the course of Israeli-settler related incidents, three were injured by Israeli settlers, and one was injured by Israeli forces.
2. Similar incidents recorded during the month included: Israeli settlers from an outpost near Ma'ale 'Amos settlement prevented access for herders from Kisan village (Bethlehem) to graze their animals on their land in the vicinity of the settlement and Israeli settlers from Beit Yatir settlement prevented Palestinian herders living in a nearby area, isolated between the Barrier and the Green Line, from grazing their sheep (Hebron).
3. The concerned incidents were: Israeli settlers threw stones at Palestinians picking olives (Bethlehem) and at Palestinian houses in the H2 area of Hebron city, in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem and in Burin village (Nablus). In addition, Israeli settlers from Halamish settlement began land-levelling works on land belonging to Deir Nizam village (Ramallah).
4. For a summary of official reports see, OCHA, *Unprotected: Israeli settler violence and related activity against Palestinians civilians and their property*, December 2008, p. 11; see also Yesh Din, *A Semblance of Law: Law Enforcement upon Israeli Civilians in the West Bank*, June 2006.
5. These incidents are unconfirmed by OCHA, OCHA recorded eight incidents of Palestinian stone-throwing at settlers in November at Israeli-plated vehicles traveling on roads in the West Bank, these resulted in the injury of five Israelis.
6. OCHA *oPt, Israel Settler Violence and the Evacuation of Outposts*," available at [www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org).
7. Statement by Prime Minister Netanyahu on the Cabinet Decision to suspend new construction in Judea and Samaria, 25 November 2009.
8. For example, see Chaim Levinson and Barak Ravid, "Netanyahu: Settlement freeze is not evacuation," *Ha'aretz*, 6 December 2009 and Chaim Levinson, Mazal Mualem and Avi Issacharoff, "Settlers block distribution of building freeze orders," *Ha'aretz*, 7 December 2009.
9. For example, see Chaim Levinson and Mazal Mualem, "PM: Settlement freeze is temporary, one-off", *Ha'aretz*, 2 December 2009.
10. See Anshel Pfeffer, "IDF fears settlers may attack Palestinians in response to freeze," *Ha'aretz*, 4 December 2009.
11. Figures include structures self-demolished by Palestinians after receipt of a demolition order from the Israeli authorities.

12. For additional details, see OCHA oPt's Special Focus : The Planning Crisis in East Jerusalem, April 2009
13. For additional details, see OCHA oPt's Sheikh Jarrah fact sheet, August 2009, available at [www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org).
14. Checkpoints controlling access to East Jerusalem for communities isolated by the Barrier are marked as "isolated communities"
15. This category does not include the large majority of checkpoints at the entrance of settlements, which are not regularly used by Palestinians to access agricultural lands.
16. This figure does not include eight permanently staffed checkpoints along the Green Line, 63 "Barrier gates", which control Palestinian movement into agricultural areas isolated by the Barrier, and 84 obstacles within the Israeli-controlled section of Hebron city (H2), which due to data collection constraints were not included in the first rounds of OCHA's closure survey.
17. A 'staff-incident' is a record of each time a staff member is delayed or denied access. If there are 5 staff in a vehicle that is recorded as 5 'staff-incidents': a bus with 40 staff aboard would be 40 'staff-incidents'. Staff time lost is the product of staff-incidents by time delayed.
18. UN OCHA – Protection of Civilians Database
19. Food and Agricultural Organization for the UN (FAO) Agricultural Sector Report: Impact of Gaza Crisis, March 2009, available at [http://reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/EDIS-7QQPS6-full\\_report.pdf/\\$File/full\\_report.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/EDIS-7QQPS6-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf)
20. Letter was edited for language and clarity
21. A total of 2,364 truckloads of goods entered through the Gaza crossings in October 2009.
22. According to the Gas Stations Owners Association Gaza's cooking gas needs stands at 5-7000 tons/month. The Petroleum Distributors Association places Gaza needs at 5-6000 tons/month.
23. FAO and WFP, Socioeconomic and Food Insecurity survey report 2 - Gaza Strip, November 2009. Data collection was undertaken by the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). The report was posted on several websites, including OCHA's webpage.
24. The total number of such families has been estimated by the UN and partner organizations at 60,188 (including those living in houses that sustained light damage), comprising more than 325,000 individuals.
25. USD 5,000 is being provided to those with completely demolished houses, USD 3,000 to those with shelters having suffered major damages, and various lower amounts to those affected by light damages.
26. In addition, 188 patients were referred to NGO-run medical facilities inside Gaza in November.
27. "B'Tselem: IDF probes alleged cases of harm to civilians in Gaza", Ha'aretz, 4 November 2009.
28. Amir Oren, "IDF already investigating some Goldstone allegations", Ha'aretz, 8 November 2009.
29. United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, chapter 26.
30. Ibid, para. 1573-6.
31. Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Israel. 09/10/2002. CRC/C/15/Add.195. (Concluding Observations/Comments). 9 October 2002,
32. Israel has argued the same with respect to other UN human rights treaties to which it is a State Party (e.g. the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture, etc.).
33. See Concluding observations.
34. See Concluding observations.

## 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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