



Gaza Closure: Situation Report

29 January 2008

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Access to Egypt and its shops may have provided some psychological respite from the closure of the Gaza Strip but 1.5 million Gazans still rely on Israel for all their supplies
- Since January 18, a total of 32 truckloads of goods have entered the Gaza Strip from Israel. Prior to June 2007, 250 truckloads a day entered Gaza
- The World Food Programme is unable to give a full ration of food to 84,000 of their poorest beneficiaries because of the closure
- The Karni conveyor belt, Sufa and Kerem Shalom goods crossings have been completely closed since 27 January. The Nahal Oz pipelines for fuel have been open since 22 January
- Israel is allowing a restricted amount of fuel to enter Gaza but only enough to ensure 75 per cent of Gaza's electricity needs are met which does not allow for the proper function of public services
- Due to limited reserves of fuel, the Gaza power plant has reduced its power output to 45 megawatts, causing power cuts of up to eight hours per day everywhere in Gaza except Rafah
- Gaza's waste water system is only partially functioning, leading to the daily dumping of 40 million litres of untreated sewage into the Mediterranean sea
- Around 50 per cent of Gazan households have access to running water for only four to six hours
- Egyptian police in conjunction with Hamas police in Gaza have established a degree of control over the Gaza-Egypt border

BACKGROUND

On 18 January, following a surge in conflict between the IDF and armed Palestinians, Israel closed all crossings from Israel into Gaza, cutting it off from all supplies of food, medicine and fuel including humanitarian aid. Erez crossing remained open for Palestinians needing urgent medical treatment and international humanitarian workers. On 22 January, restricted fuel deliveries resumed and limited humanitarian goods were allowed in. Since 18 January, no commercial goods have been allowed into Gaza. On 23 January, Palestinians destroyed the border wall that separates Gaza and Egypt, allowing thousands of Palestinians to cross in and out of Egypt since then.

CROSSINGS

The Sufa and Kerem Shalom goods crossings have been completely closed since 27 January. Erez remains open for international humanitarian workers and medical evacuations. According to WHO, 216 patients crossed for further treatment into Israel/West Bank from 18-28 January. Hundreds of thousands of Gazans have crossed into Al Arish and Egyptian Rafah since 23 January to purchase fuel and goods which have been in shortage since the Israeli lock-down of Gaza in mid-June. Gazans are not allowed to travel beyond Rafah-Massariyah in Sinai.

Nahal Oz has been open regularly but no goods have crossed Sufa or Kerem Shalom since 24 January.



FUEL

The following amounts of fuel entered Gaza between 20-28 January:

| Fuel | Supplied this week | Estimated needs per week |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Industrial Gasoline | 2,450,000 litres | 3,600,000 litres |
| Diesel | 860,000 litres | 2,500,000 litres |
| Petrol | 55,000 litres | 450,000 litres |
| Cooking Gas | 1,090 tonnes | 2,000 tonnes |

The supplies of diesel are in storage on the Gaza side of Nahal Oz because the distributors' association has refused to collect them in protest at the low amounts of fuel available for the commercial market. The association has said that they will allow humanitarian agencies to collect petrol and diesel but they have not yet done so.

Between the 18th and the 29th January, UNRWA provided 6,500 litres of fuel to Shifa Hospital, 3,500 litres to the Gaza European Hospital, 1,500 litres to the Gaza Pediatric Hospital, 2,000 litres to the Patients Friends Benevolent Hospital and 1,500 litres to the central drug store. In addition, UNRWA provided 112,500 litres to the Gaza municipalities and solid waste management councils.

ELECTRICITY

The Gaza power plant is currently producing 45 megawatts in the day and 65 megawatts at night. The Gaza Strip requires an estimated 240 megawatts of power, of which Israel provides 120 megawatts and Egypt 17. The current supply is 182 megawatts or 76 per cent of Gaza's requirements.

WATER AND SANITATION

Gaza's water authority, the Coastal and Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU), has not received any supplies of diesel this week because of the distributors' strike. As a result, Gaza's three sewage treatment stations are unable to operate normally.

The level of the sewage lagoon near Beit Lahia has risen 18 cm this week because the pumps which are meant to move the sewage to the filtration basin have no power. Last year, the walls of the lagoon burst, killing five people in the adjacent Bedouin village.

Due to the fuel distributor's strike which started on 18 January, garbage has not been collected and is piling up along street corners, posing an increasing public health hazard.

FOOD

WFP markets visits this week reveal that fresh meat and wheat flour are becoming scarce. The absence of wheat flour could be as a result of trader's hoarding because they are under pressure not to increase their prices.

WFP found no evidence that the influx of goods from Gaza had any effect on supply or prices although traders could be hoarding in anticipation of the closure of the border.