Gaza weekly update

23 to 29 May 2010

(71th week since Israeli government and Hamas unilateral ceasefires)

"While Oxfam has no connection to the Gaza flotilla, as an international humanitarian and development organization, we condemn any use of violence and the loss of civilian life which occurred when the Israeli navy intercepted it at sea.

Oxfam extends its sincere condolences to the families and relatives of those killed and wounded. We believe that those on the boats should be treated in a manner consistent with international human rights standards. Oxfam calls for a full and independent inquiry to ascertain what took place and to ensure accountability.

The 1.5 million inhabitants of the Gaza Strip have been living under Israeli blockade for three years and are in dire need of sufficient supplies. The relief items on the boats included cement to rebuild homes destroyed during Israeli military operation Cast Lead, medical items like wheelchairs and materials to repair the failing water system. This particular incident could have been prevented if Israel and the international community had worked effectively together to lift the blockade of the occupied territory which would provide a structural, long-term solution to the humanitarian and development needs of the Gazan people. The blockade of Gaza has widely been condemned as collective punishment, which is illegal under international law."

Jeremy Hobbs, Director of Oxfam

Picture: Fishing boats awaited in the port of Gaza City on Sunday as thousands of Gazans still expected to greet the vessels of the "Free Gaza" flotilla which attempted to break the Israeli blockade. According to the Security Council, at least 10 civilians who were on the boat were reported as killed and many more injured after Israeli forces attempted to seize the flotilla on Monday. (Oxfam/K.Schembri).

1. Headlines (23 to 29 May)

- **Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions:** According to reports, 11 rockets, 15 mortars and 2 landmines were directed by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza at Israeli forces this week, including four mortars that were directed at Kerem Shalom and Sofa crossings, while 3 rockets, 3 rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) and 1 landmine were reported last week. There were reports of 2 Israeli military incursions and 14 Israeli air strikes this week, as compared to 3 Israeli military incursions and 3 Israeli air strikes reported the week prior. 2 firefights were reported this week, while 1 was reported last week.

  No Palestinians were reportedly killed this week, however 16 were reported injured as a result of Israeli military operations in Gaza. 15 of them were reported injured after an Israeli aircraft reportedly fired two air-to-ground missiles targeting a Hamas military base in Beit Hanoun. In a separate incident, a farmer was injured during fire exchange between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants. Last week there were reports of 2 Palestinian militants killed and 1 Palestinian civilian injured. No Israeli casualties were reported this week, while there were reports that one Israeli soldier was injured last week.

- **Fishermen:** 2 incidents of Israeli naval vessels firing at Palestinian fishermen were reported this week. Hamas forces announced on 28 May that the sea would be closed at night for fishing boats due to the heavy presence of Israeli patrol boats off the coast of Gaza. The previous week, 2 incidents were reported. Since January 2009, Israeli naval forces have restricted the access of Palestinian fishing boats to three nautical miles from the coast; in practice, access is sometimes restricted to as little as one nautical mile.

- **Tunnel related fatalities:** 6 Palestinians, including a 17-year old boy, were reportedly killed in a tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border this week, and 12 were reported injured after a gas cylinder exploded. Quantities of gas being brought through official crossings are unable to meet the needs of the population, which turns to goods imported under precarious conditions through the tunnels as a result. Last week, there were no tunnel related casualties.

- **Palestinians in the "buffer zone":** There were 4 reports of Israeli military fire in the so-called "buffer zone" this week, which resulted in four people being injured, including a 16-year-old boy. In three of the incidents, Israeli soldiers reportedly opened fire on people collecting used building material and gravel.

  In one incident, Israeli soldiers stationed at the perimeter of Gaza north of the former Erez Industrial Zone opened fire toward a group of Palestinians collecting building material and gravel, reportedly injuring one person. In a separate incident, Israeli troops reportedly opened fire towards people protesting in the vicinity of the "buffer zone," in an apparent effort to disperse demonstrators as they marched towards the barrier fence. In the two other incidents, Israeli troops reportedly shot towards farmers working in their fields in the "buffer zone".

  Last week, 4 incidents were reported of Israeli military fire in the buffer zone. Israeli forces prohibit Palestinian access to farming land along the perimeter fence by opening "warning fire" on people approaching the "buffer zone".

- **Rafah border crossing:** The Rafah border crossing with Egypt was officially closed this week, however people crossed on 4 out of 7 days. During those 4 days, 45 people left, 748 entered Gaza and 2 were refused entry to Egypt. Last week, it was officially open 5 days but people crossed on 6 out of 7 days, with 4,053 people who left, 920 who entered Gaza and 859 who were refused entry to Egypt. The Rafah crossing was exceptionally opened on 15 May for a period of six days; this is only the third scheduled opening of the crossing since the beginning of 2010.

- **Power plant and electricity supply:** 1,063 million litres of industrial fuel were delivered this week for Gaza's power plant. This is only 30% of the 3.5 million litres of fuel needed weekly at the current maximum export capacity of 80Mw. Last week, 937,790 litres of industrial fuel were transferred.
  Imports of industrial fuel have steeply declined since the end of November 2009, when the European Commission transferred responsibility for buying industrial fuel to operate Gaza's power plant to the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority.

- **Cooking gas:** 871 tons of cooking gas reportedly entered Gaza this week, half of the normal weekly level of need of 1,750 tons. 645 tons of cooking gas were reported to have entered Gaza last week. The overall cooking gas shortage has been a main concern for humanitarian agencies since November 2009.

- **Diesel/petrol:** No diesel or petrol were delivered to Gaza this week or last week, as entry of commercial petrol and diesel continues to be banned through the official crossings between Gaza and Israel. Small amounts of fuel destined for the open market have been allowed into Gaza from Israel on five occasions since a total ban on fuel imports for public sale was put in place by the

Government of Israel in October 2008. Around 100,000 litres of diesel and 100,000 litres of petrol are reported to enter Gaza each day through tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border (OCHA, 4 May 2010).

- **Truckloads of humanitarian supplies:** 631 truckloads of humanitarian supplies were permitted entry through Kerem Shalom and the Karni conveyor this week. This is the equivalent of 48% of the pre-blockade weekly average. 523 trucks were allowed into Gaza during the previous week.

  Limited quantities of construction materials continued to enter Gaza. 3 truckloads of glass, 15 truckloads of wood of 6 truckloads of aluminum were permitted entry into Gaza this week. Last week, 2 truckloads of glass and 12 of wood were allowed in. In addition, 43 truckloads of clothing and footwear entered Gaza (39 were allowed in as last week).

  This week, half a truckload of cement and half a truckload of steel bars entered Gaza. These supplies are earmarked for the rehabilitation of Al Quds hospital in Gaza City, which sustained severe damage during the "Cast Lead" military operation. The shipments, which are funded and coordinated by the French government, are part of an additional 50 truckloads that are expected to enter Gaza in the coming two months. A number of truckloads carrying construction materials for an UNRWA housing project in Khan Younis also entered Gaza. Also, for the first time since the imposition of the blockade in June 2007, one truckload of spare parts for poultry farms was allowed into Gaza (OCHA, 18 May 2010).

  Entry of other major essential goods, including materials for reconstruction, furniture, livestock, IT equipment and vehicles, remain either restricted to limited quantities, or barred from entry.

- **Exports:** For the third consecutive week, no exports left Gaza. Between 10 December 2009 and 18 April 2010, a total of 118 truckloads of exports left Gaza, including 85 truckloads of cut flowers and 33 truckloads of strawberries. Prior to this, there had been no exports from Gaza since 27 April 2009.

- **Internal Violence:** This week, unknown Palestinian militants reportedly detonated explosives in a donkey cart close to the fence in Abu Samra, west of North Beit Lahia; they were reportedly targeting an Israeli vehicle patrolling the area and ended up killing the donkey. In a separate incident, unknown Palestinian militants reportedly detonated an unexploded device in front of the gate of a house in Beit Lahia, Northern Gaza; no injuries were reported. Last week, 5 incidents were reported.

2. Fuel deliveries (week)

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
23-29 May				**871 tons**
	Percentage of need *			**50%**
Previous week				645 tons
* Fuel association 2006 estimates - ** Imports of diesel and petrol for the general public and public sector in Gaza were exceptionally authorized on 5 occasions since October 2008				

Delivery of Industrial Fuel to the Power Plant (week):

Industrial diesel	Previous week	23-29 May
	937,790 litres	**1,063 million litres**
Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply capacity of 80 MW		**30%**

3. Household level energy supplies:

Electricity and gas sentinels – 23-29 May 2010

Area	**Hours of Blackout For Week of 23-29 May (based on 168 hours)**	**% Hours of Weekly Blackout 23-29 May**	**Have gas?**	**Price change?**
Beit Hanoun	40	24	Yes	No
Beit Lahia	40	24	Yes	No
Jabalia	50	30	Yes	No
Gaza City	50	30	Yes	No
Deir El Balah	50	30	Yes	No
El Burej	50	30	Yes	No
El Nusairat	50	30	Yes	No
El Maghazi	35	21	Yes	No
Khan Younis	60	36	Yes	No
Rafah	30	18	Yes	No

4. Humanitarian trucks (week):

Truck originator	Total for week 23-29 May
UNRWA	92
WFP	36
ICRC	2
Donations	2
Commercial	355
Karni Crossing	144
Total trucks for the week	**631**
Percentage of weekly average before the blockade (April 2007)	**48%**

5. External links to further reports

UN OCHA Protection of Civilians Weekly Report: 19-25 May

http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_protection_of_civilians_2010_05_27_english.pdf

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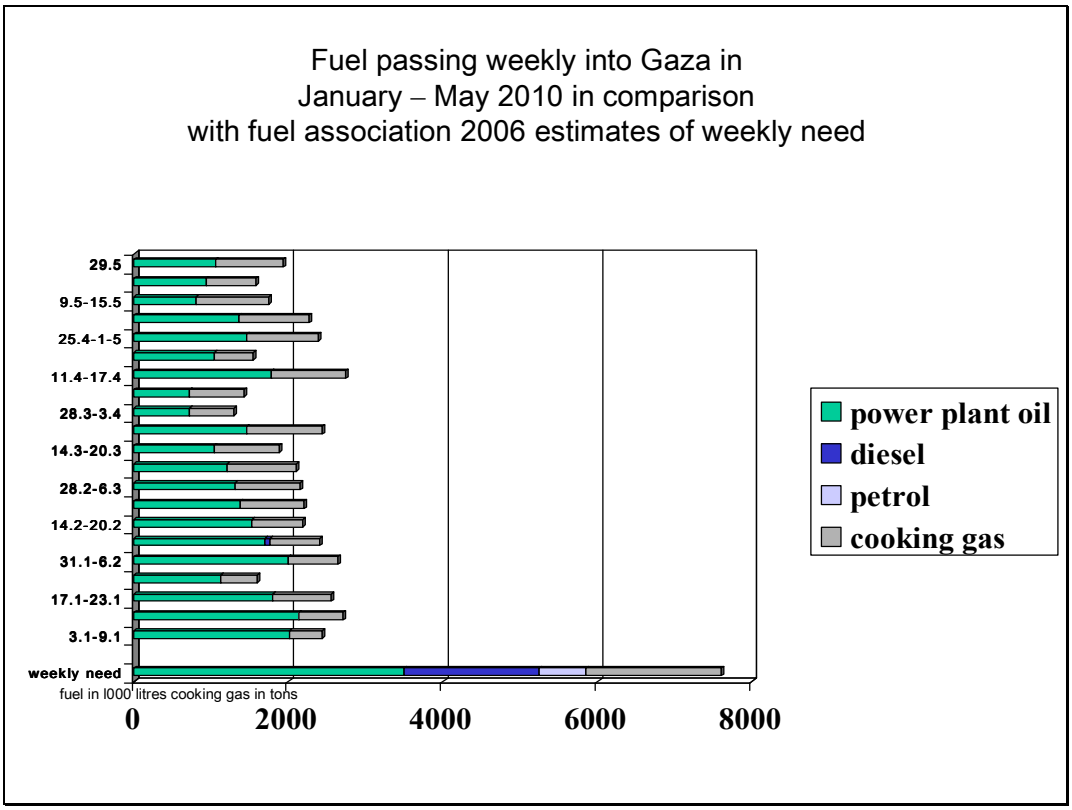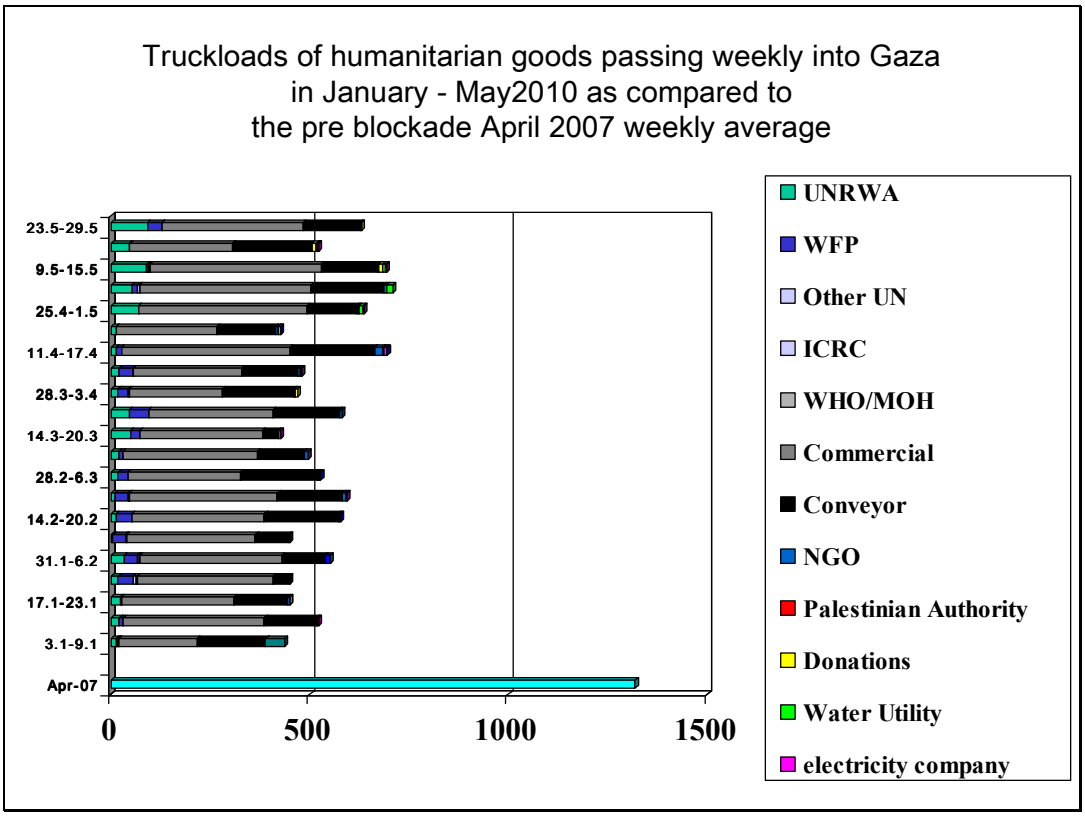
7. Trend Charts