

**Building under fire**

In a Gaza Strip which has been marked by high unemployment since the beginning of the Israeli blockade, some Palestinians continue risking their lives to collect rubble and scrap metal from areas running along the perimeter fence. A family can be seen here collecting rubble from the former industrial area of Beit Hanoun, close to the Erez terminal, as Israeli authorities continue to block the entry of construction material for private use to the Gaza Strip. Despite the Israeli



government's announcement in June that it would ease the blockade, Palestinians in Gaza must still resort to using recycled rubble, scrap metal and aggregate with construction material coming in from the tunnels running beneath the Gaza-Egypt border to rebuild the houses destroyed during "Operation Cast Lead" almost two years ago. Collecting the rubble is dangerous as, several times a week, Israeli forces fire towards Palestinians entering the "buffer zone" - which can be up to 1,5 kilometer deep - with a number of Palestinian civilians reported injured as a result. Israeli forces also restrict access of Palestinian farmers to their land located in the "buffer zone", which comprises up to one third of arable lands in the coastal Strip of the occupied Palestinian territory.

Text and photo: Karl Schembri/Oxfam

## 1. Headlines

- **Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions:** Palestinian armed groups reportedly fired 2 rockets and 6 mortar shells towards Israel or Israeli forces this week. The previous week, Palestinian armed groups reportedly fired 2 rockets and 23 mortar shells towards Israel or Israeli forces, and planted 1 landmine.

There were reports of 2 airstrikes, including one on tunnels beneath the Gaza-Egypt border, 3 tank shells and 5 Israeli incursions this week - 4 of them under cover of fire- as compared to 2 shells and 4 Israeli incursions reported last week. No firefight was reported this week; one was reported last week.

1 Palestinian militant from the Islamic Army was reportedly killed and 1 Palestinian civilian injured this week after the militant's vehicle exploded on a street in Gaza City on 3 November. Media reported that these fatalities were the result of an apparent Israeli airstrike. Last week, 1 Palestinian militant was reportedly killed as a result of Israeli fire after Israeli forces fired two shells towards Palestinian militants who were planting an improvised explosive device (IED).

- **Fishermen:** There were 2 incidents of an Israeli naval vessel firing at Palestinian fishermen reported this week, as compared to 6 last week. 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:** No Palestinians were reported killed in tunnels beneath the Gaza-Egypt border this week. As mentioned above, an Israeli aircraft reportedly fired a missile targeting the tunnels area; no injuries were reported. Last week 2 Palestinians aged 20 were reportedly killed as a result of electric shock.

- **Palestinians in the “buffer zone”:** 5 incidents of Israeli fire in the so-called “buffer zone” along the perimeter with Gaza were reported this week, resulting in 3 injuries. In two incidents, Israeli forces reportedly opened fire towards Palestinians collecting scrap metal; two Palestinian civilians were reportedly injured. In a third incident, Israeli forces reportedly opened fire towards a group of Palestinians near the perimeter fence east of Al Faraheen in southern Gaza, reportedly injuring a Palestinian with a mental disability. Last week, another man with a mental disability was also reported injured by Israeli forces as he approached the perimeter fence. In total, 6 incidents were reported last week, resulting in 3 injuries. Israel restricts access to agricultural land up to 1,000-1,500 metres from the fence, which accounts for more than 30 % of Gaza’s agricultural land.
- **Rafah border crossing:** The Rafah border crossing with Egypt was officially open 7 days this week for medical cases, students and those with visas to third countries. This week, there were reports of 1,534 people entering Gaza, 3,874 people leaving – including 2,869 pilgrims travelling to Mecca for the Haj - and 136 who were denied entry to Egypt through Rafah – including 12 pilgrims.

Last week, 1,415 people reportedly entered Gaza, 2,023 left and 236 were denied entry to Egypt via Rafah. Since June 2010, there has been a significant rise in the number of people crossing weekly through Rafah: the week before the attack on the Gaza flotilla and the opening of the Rafah border 45 people left Gaza, 748 entered and 2 were refused entry to Egypt through Rafah.

- **Power plant and electricity supply:** A total of 1,3 million litres of industrial fuel were delivered this week for Gaza’s power plant, which is 37% of the 3.5 million litres of fuel needed weekly at the current maximum capacity of 80Mw. A total of 1,8 million litres of industrial fuel was transferred last week.  
Daily life as well as the provision of essential services, including regular water supply, sewage treatment and removal, and the functioning of health services, continue to be negatively affected by the chronic lack of electricity. The current daily supply of electricity stands at about 30% below the estimated demand (OCHA, 14 September 2010).
- **Cooking gas:** Only 338 tons of cooking gas reportedly entered Gaza this week, 19% of the normal weekly level of need of 1,750 tons. This was a sharp drop in deliveries as compared to the average level of deliveries in the past months, and deliveries were cancelled on 2 November. Last week, 711 tons of cooking gas were reported to have entered Gaza. The overall cooking gas shortage has been a main concern for humanitarian agencies since November 2009.
- **Diesel/petrol:** No diesel or benzine were delivered to the private sector this week; last week, 100,000 litres of diesel were delivered to the private sector. A near 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 every day through tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border (OCHA, 4 May 2010).
- **Truckloads of supplies:** A total of 954 truckloads of supplies was allowed entry into Gaza this week (820 through Kerem Shalom and 134 through the Karni conveyor) – the equivalent of 34% of the pre-blockade weekly average of all truckloads entering Gaza\*. Last week, a total of 985 truckloads was permitted entry.  
While imports remain limited, and raw materials severely restricted, exports remain banned entirely. As a result, the scale of economic activity remains heavily dependent on local demand in Gaza, which in turn is constrained by the low purchasing power of the population and the relatively small size of the local market. Until crossings are opened for export, the impact of the easing of the blockade on unemployment, poverty and food insecurity rates remains limited.  
*\*Pre-blockade weekly average (2,807 truckloads) is calculated based on the monthly average of all truckloads that entered during the first five months of 2007, before Israel’s imposition of the blockade.*

This update is compiled by **Oxfam International** from the best available information drawn from reliable international sources. Some of the information is preliminary and may be updated in subsequent reports.

- **Exports:** No exports have left Gaza since 18 April 2010. No change in the policy prohibiting exports implemented since June 2007 has been announced by the Israeli authorities so far.
- **Internal violence:** There were no reported cases of internal violence this week as compared to no cases reported last week.

## 2. Humanitarian trucks (week):

Truck originator	Total for week 31 Oct - 6 Nov
UNRWA	30
WFP	1
ICRC	2
Electricity company	4
Donations	14
Commercial	769
Karni Crossing (grain, animal feed, gravel)	134
<b>Total trucks for the week</b>	<b>954</b>
<b>Percentage of pre-blockade average first five months of 2007)</b>	<b>34%</b>

## 3. Fuel deliveries (week)

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
31 Oct - 6 Nov		<b>0</b>		<b>338 tons</b>
	Percentage of need *	<b>0</b>		<b>19%</b>
Previous week		0		711 tons
* Fuel association 2006 estimates - ** Imports of diesel and petrol for the general public and public sector in Gaza were exceptionally authorized on 6 occasions since October 2008				

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

Industrial diesel	Previous week	31 Oct - 6 Nov
	1.8 million litres	<b>1.3 million litres</b>
<b>Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply capacity of 80 MW</b>		<b>37%</b>

## 4. Contact information

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