

**A farmer is killed**

Shaban Shaker Qarmout, 65, is seen here in the last photo taken just minutes before he was killed by Israeli forces on 10 January while working in his fields in Beit Hanoun close to the so-called "buffer zone". Qarmout had just been interviewed by Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (GVC) which is documenting the daily hardships of Palestinians living and working in and near the



"buffer zone" under ongoing threat of Israeli gunfire. A father of 12, Qarmout told his interviewer how the area that is now the site of regular incursions and shootings of Palestinians used to be a hive of agricultural activity years back. "It was full of trees here on this land: palm, lemons, oranges, and clementines and other fruits," he said minutes before his death. "I had an almond tree from which I used to fill two bags of almonds but they uprooted it just when it was time to harvest it. They came at night with bulldozers and uprooted it. We used to live a happy life here, working the land with our hands and making some NIS 650 every month. If I watered other people's land they would also give me some money on top of my salary."

Qarmout recounted how everything changed after the 2000 Intifada, when all his trees were destroyed by Israeli forces. "It felt as if someone ripped out my heart while they were bulldozing the land. I witnessed the destruction that night. It was a night in Ramadan when it happened, and then the bulldozers came back again at dawn and destroyed what was left. It took them just three hours to destroy it, using 8 bulldozers to destroy the entire area. I keep coming here every day. What am I supposed to do? This is our land. But the army keeps coming and shooting at us with live ammunition. But I don't care that much. We humans die only once, and God knows when I'm going to die."

*Photo: GVC*

## **1. Headlines**

- **Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions:** Palestinian armed groups reportedly fired 9 rockets and 2 mortar shells towards Israel or Israeli forces this week, as compared to 13 rockets and 22 mortar shells reportedly fired last week. An additional rocket was fired from Beach Camp towards the sea in what was reportedly a test by unknown militants. There were no reports of casualties or damages in Israel. The latest injuries in Israel were reported on 8 January when three Thai workers were wounded by shrapnel from mortar fire.

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Israeli forces reportedly launched 10 airstrikes and 2 incursions on Palestinians this week, as compared to 5 airstrikes, 4 incursions, 4 firefights and 10 tank shells fired on Palestinians last week.

Two Palestinians were reported killed by Israeli forces this week, as opposed to none reported last week. One of them was a farmer (see story above) while the second was a 23-year-old Islamic Jihad activist targeted by a missile while driving a motorcycle. Two passersby were also reportedly injured in the incident. Another 4 Palestinians were reported killed by Egyptian Security Forces while working in the tunnels (see below under Tunnel related fatalities). Four Palestinians were reported injured last week.

- **Fishermen:** 3 incidents of Israeli naval vessels firing at Palestinian fishermen were reported this week, as compared to 5 reported last week. In one incident, the Israeli Navy confiscated a Palestinian fishing boat carrying four fishermen – two aged 18, one aged 19 and one 16-year-old – driving it off towards the Israeli border. 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:** 4 Palestinians reportedly died from suffocation in a tunnel destroyed by Egyptian security forces. Another 5 tunnels were also destroyed under the border between Gaza and Egypt. Last week, 1 tunnel worker was reported injured in an air raid.
- **Palestinians in the “buffer zone”:** 2 incidents of Israeli fire in the so-called “buffer zone” along the perimeter with Gaza was reported this week, leading to the death of a 65-year-old farmer (see story above). Last week, 4 incidents of Israeli fire were reported. Injuries and fatalities of farmers, shepherds and workers collecting scrap material in the area have increased significantly in the last weeks. 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 and significant number of water wells. Most of the Gaza Strip’s animal production is concentrated in this area.
- **Rafah border crossing:** The Rafah border crossing with Egypt was officially open 5 days this week for medical cases, students and those with visas to third countries. A total of 1,167 people were reported to have entered Gaza through Rafah, 1,402 left and 177 were denied entry to Egypt through Rafah. Last week, 1,567 people were reported to have entered Gaza, 1,452 left and 191 were denied entry to Egypt through 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:** No fuel was delivered this week for Gaza’s power plant from Israel, plunging the coastal enclave into longer periods of darkness amid reports that some industrial fuel was imported through the tunnels. At least 3.5 million litres of fuel are needed weekly at the current maximum capacity of 80Mw. Last week, only 719,967 litres of fuel were transferred into Gaza from Israel, which is 21% of the 3.5 million litres of fuel needed.

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.

- **Cooking gas:** Only 755 tons of cooking gas entered Gaza this week, which is 43% of the normal weekly level of need of 1,750 tons. Last week, 715 tons of cooking gas were reported to have

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entered Gaza. The overall cooking gas shortage has been a main concern for humanitarian agencies since November 2009.

- **Diesel/petrol:** No diesel or benzine was delivered to the private sector this week or last week. 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 836 truckloads of supplies was allowed entry into Gaza this week, as opposed to 927 last week. 634 entered through Kerem Shalom and 202 through Karni conveyor. This is the equivalent of 30% of the pre-blockade weekly average of all truckloads entering Gaza\*.

While imports remain limited, and raw materials severely restricted, exports remain banned almost entirely except for limited truckloads of strawberries and carnations exported to the Netherlands. 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 fully 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.*

- **Exports:** Five truckloads of carnations and 21 truckloads of strawberries were allowed to be exported from Gaza this week, as compared to 4 trucks of carnations and 27 truckloads of strawberries last week. The limited exports are allowed as a result of an agreement between Israel and the Netherlands allowing limited exports of flowers and strawberries. The agreement resumed on 28 November 2010.

## 2. Humanitarian trucks (week):

Truck originator	Total for week 9-15 Jan
UNRWA	47
WFP	4
ICRC	2
Gaza institutions	9
PA	10
Commercial	562
Karni conveyor (gravel, wheat, grain, animal feed)	202
<b>Total trucks for the week</b>	<b>836</b>
<b>Percentage of pre-blockade average (first five months of 2007)</b>	<b>30%</b>

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### 3. Fuel deliveries (week)

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
9-15January		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>755 tons</b>
	Percentage of need *	<b>0</b>		<b>43%</b>
Previous week		0		715 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	9 – 15 January
	719,967 litres	<b>0 litres</b>
<b>Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply capacity of 80 MW</b>		<b>0%</b>

### 4. Contact information

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