



GAZA HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT

ESCALATION IN VIOLENCE

27 FEB - 3 MARCH 2008

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Israeli air strikes on Gaza and rocket attacks on Israeli towns from Palestinian militants in Gaza continued during the reporting period.
- Between 27 February and 2 March, 107 Palestinians were killed by the IDF and 250 were injured. During the same period two Israeli soldiers and one Israeli civilian were killed and 25 injured, mainly by Qassam rockets and Grad missiles fired by Palestinian militants towards Israel.¹ (See chart below)
- The IDF operation exacerbated an already deteriorating humanitarian situation emanating from the near total blockade on Gaza since June 2007. Essential services, including water and sanitation, are close to breakdown. Because of the combined lack of electricity, fuel, spare parts and inability to upgrade networks, the Gaza Coastal Municipality Water Utility is forced to continue dumping daily 20 million litres of raw sewage and 40 million litres of partially treated water into the sea.
- The IDF operation has worsened conditions for an already stretched medical system.

Casualties in the Gaza Strip and Israel, 27 February - 02 March 2008

	KILLED						INJURED					
	Civilians Not Involved in Fighting			Involved in Fighting	Unknown	Total	Civilians Not Involved in Fighting			Involved in Fighting	Unknown	Total
	Children	Women	Men				Children	Women	Men			
Palestinians	27	5	20	42	13	107	60	10	31	0	149	250
Israelis	0	0	1	2	0	3	1	1	12	11	0	25
Grand Total	27	5	21	44	13	110	61	11	43	11	149	275

INITIAL HUMANITARIAN ASSESSMENT

Medical services: Current stocks of medicines and medical supplies are insufficient to address present needs. The MoH (Ministry of Health) reports that 85 essential drug items, which are mainly drugs needed for operation rooms and emergency interventions, are at “zero availability”² at central drug stores. There are severe shortages of other medical supplies, such as spare parts for medical equipment and medical consumables³, as most of them have been consumed during the last five days. Hospitals are still operational but are extremely vulnerable due to shortages of fuel. Stocks of fuel in all MoH hospitals are only enough for cover operations for four days.

Emergency health cases: On 2 and 3 March, 62 emergency cases crossed Rafah into Egypt. In addition, 25 cases are waiting to leave, pending approval by Egyptian authorities.



Ambulances: During the ground operations, ambulances and medical teams faced difficulties evacuating the wounded. On four separate occasions, ambulances were fired at and could not immediately reach injured persons due to the intensity of fighting. Four MoH medics were injured by IDF fire. The ambulance services in Gaza have been severely restricted because of shortage of fuel; by the end of February, 23 out of 56 MoH ambulances and 7 out of 40 PRCS ambulances were forced to stop due to lack of fuel.

Water and sanitation: Five major water wells supplying water to 150,000 people in the areas where military operations took place, did not operate between 1 and 2 March as IDF prevented any access to the wells. In addition, some 30% of the population is currently without regular water supply, due to electricity cuts resulting from fuel shortages.

Food: UNRWA and WFP stock levels will only be sufficient if 20 truckloads continue to enter the Gaza Strip on a daily basis. However, UN food supplies are insufficient to cover Gaza's nutritional needs, and a sustained access for commercial trucks is essential.

Electricity: The Gaza power plant has no fuel reserves and any restriction on fuel imports - if only for one day - will result in further electricity cuts in Gaza City and Central Gaza in addition to the 8-10 hours of daily cuts already being experienced by Gazans (except for the area of Rafah, which is powered by Egypt).

Education: Schools in and around areas of military operations in northern Gaza remained closed between 1-3 March. The attendance rate of UNRWA schools in Gaza City was about 20% and in other areas of the Gaza Strip between 40% and 65%. On the evening of 2 March homework session at the New Gaza Preparatory School was disrupted when an Israeli helicopter fired into the school yard.

INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE:

- On 27 February, an IAF air strike on the Ministry of Interior in Gaza City, which had already been destroyed in prior attacks, also damaged a clinic, pharmacy and an ambulance administered by the Palestinian Medical Relief Society.
- On 1 March, two UNRWA schools in Rafah and Al Zahra were damaged in IAF air strikes.
- The GEDCO (Gaza Electricity Distribution Company) said that eight of its transformers were destroyed by the IDF. The company had been able to replace seven, but currently has no more in stock. IDF has not allowed GEDCO to import additional generators, ten of which are being held at Karni since June 2007.

End Notes

1. Data on number of persons injured (Palestinians and Israelis) excludes wounded persons who were not hospitalized
2. Items at zero level mean a stock of 0-30 days, which is below the security level.
3. Medical consumables include items such as syringes, gauzes, bandages, splints etc., not including drugs.