

**Greening the enclave**

Children from Al Zarqa in northern Gaza together with their parents and relatives planted trees in a new garden built by Oxfam as part of a project in one of the Gaza Strip's poorest neighbourhoods. Asmaa and Amira, aged 11 and 8, are seen watering the tree they just planted together with other school children. "It's great to have our own garden because we have nowhere to play," Amira said. "As children we have a right to play in a safe area but this is often forgotten because of all the problems we face in Gaza." Parents and relatives accompanying the children were equally enthusiastic about the garden, saying it will provide a space for them to play and forget about the hardships brought about by the blockade.

Oxfam is setting up water and sanitation infrastructure in the neighbourhood, linking households to the sewage and water network, rehabilitating roads and providing safe and clean water and sanitation facilities to the local kindergarten with AusAid and Oxfam Australia funding. At the same time, Oxfam's public health team is working with the community to promote public health awareness through home visits, children's activities, public events and parents' meetings. The village was bombed during

operation "Cast Lead" two years ago, but since the blockade has prevented entry of much of the essential material needed for construction and repairs, the area has been left living in poverty and facing risks to public health.

Text and photo: Karl Schembri/Oxfam

1. Headlines

- **Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions:** Palestinian armed groups reportedly fired 2 rockets, 23 mortar shells towards Israel and reportedly planted 1 landmine against Israeli forces this week. The previous week, Palestinian armed groups reportedly fired 2 rockets towards Israel. There were reports of 2 shells and 4 Israeli incursions this week, as compared to 3 Israeli airstrikes and 2 incursions reported last week. One firefight was reported this week and one last week.

This week, 1 Palestinian militant aged 20 was reportedly killed as a result of Israeli fire after Israeli forces fired two shells towards Islamic Jihad militants who were planting an improvised explosive device (IED) south of Beit Hanoun, close to the perimeter fence. Last week, 2 Palestinian militants were reportedly killed and 1 wounded by missiles fired by the Israeli navy after the militants attempted to fire a homemade rocket.

- **Fishermen:** There were 6 incidents of an Israeli naval vessel firing at Palestinian fishermen reported this week, as compared to 1 reported 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:** 2 Palestinians aged 20 were reportedly killed as a result of electric shock in tunnels beneath the Gaza-Egypt border this week; last week 1 Palestinian aged 20 reportedly died after a tunnel collapsed.
- **Palestinians in the “buffer zone”:** 6 incidents of Israeli fire in the so-called “buffer zone” along the perimeter with Gaza were reported this week, resulting in 3 injuries. In 3 of the incidents, Israeli forces reportedly opened fire on Palestinian laborers collecting scrap metal. In another incident, they reportedly opened fire, injuring a man with a mental disability as he approached the perimeter fence. The two other incidents reportedly involved Palestinian shepherds and Palestinians working at a landfill. Last week, 5 incidents were reported, resulting in 4 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 1,415 people entering Gaza, 2,023 people leaving and 236 who were denied entry to Egypt through Rafah. Among people leaving the Gaza Strip on 24 October were members of the “Viva Palestina” convoy which entered Gaza on 21 October. Last week, 1,905 people reportedly entered Gaza, 1,616 left and 315 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:** 1.8 million litres of industrial fuel were delivered this week for Gaza’s power plant, which is 51% of the 3.5 million 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:** A total of 711 tons of cooking gas reportedly entered Gaza this week, 41% of the normal weekly level of need of 1,750 tons. Last week, 823.5 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:** 100,000 litres of diesel were delivered to the private sector this 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 985 truckloads of supplies was allowed entry into Gaza this week (809 through Kerem Shalom and 176 through the Karni conveyor) – the equivalent of 35% of the pre-blockade weekly average of all truckloads entering Gaza*. Last week, a total of 1,101 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 3 cases reported last week.

2. Humanitarian trucks (week):

Truck originator	Total for week 24-30 October
Karni Crossing (grain, animal feed, gravel)	176
Total trucks for the week	985
Percentage of pre-blockade average first five months of 2007)	35%

3. Fuel deliveries (week)

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
24-30 October		0		711 tons
	Percentage of need *	0		41%
Previous week		0		823.5 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	24-30 October
	1.8 million litres	1.8 million litres
Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply capacity of 80 MW		51%

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