OCHA United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs occupied Palestinian territory

Press Release

Record number of demolitions in 2016; casualty toll declines

2016 trends affecting the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory

Jerusalem, 29 December 2016

Record number of demolitions and related displacement.

Preliminary analysis of data collected by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) indicates that, during 2016 (until 28 December), the Israeli authorities demolished or seized 1,089 Palestinian-owned structures throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 1,593 Palestinians and affecting the livelihoods of another 7,101. These are the highest West Bank demolition and displacement figures at least since OCHA started recording them in 2009. The vast majority of these structures were destroyed or seized for lack of Israeli-issued building permits.

In the Gaza Strip, as of end November , some 51,000 Palestinians are still displaced after losing their homes in the 2014 escalation, down

from approximately 90,000 during the second half of 2015. Most displaced families are dependent on temporary shelter assistance provided by humanitarian organizations.

Casualty toll declines

By contrast, the casualty tolls have declined significantly. As of 26 December, 109 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed during 2016 in attacks and clashes in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel. This represents a drop down from 169 Palestinian and 25 Israeli fatalities recorded during 2015. Of the Palestinian fatalities this year, 80 were perpetrators or alleged perpetrators of attacks and attempted attacks against Israelis.

OCHA also recorded 3,427 Palestinian and 205 Israeli injuries during the year, as of 26 December, compared with 15,477 and 304 injuries respectively in 2015. About 95 per cent of the Palestinian injuries in 2016 were recorded in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the vast majority during demonstrations and clashes. Similar to last year, about 58 per cent of the injuries resulted from tear gas inhalation requiring a medical intervention; 18 per cent from rubber, rubber-coated or sponge bullets; 16 per cent from live ammunition; and the rest from physical assault and other means.

Access of people becomes more limited as movement of goods improves

Movement and access of people generally became more limited. The Israeli-controlled Erez crossing on Gaza's northern border recorded a daily average of 531 exits of Palestinians during 2016 (until 30 November), down from 602 daily exits in 2015 and the approximately 26,000 daily exits before the Second Intifada started in September 2000. Only certain categories of people, mainly medical and other humanitarian cases, merchants, and aid workers, are eligible for exit permits, subject to security checks. Between January and October 2016, 66 per cent of the permit applications by Palestinian patients to travel via Erez for treatment outside Gaza were approved on time, down from 78 per cent during the same period in 2015

This year too, the Egyptian-controlled Rafah crossing opened on an exceptional basis only, recording a monthly average of 3,306 crossings in both directions (until 30 November), down from a monthly average of 25,186 in 2013, before its closure, which was imposed in

October 2014.

By contrast, OCHA recorded in 2016 some improvements in the movement of goods to and from Gaza. On average, 9,891 truckloads of goods have entered the Gaza Strip every month through Israeli crossings during 2016 (until 30 November), up from 7,836 in 2015, but down from 11,176 in the first half of 2007, before the blockade was imposed. An average of 166 truckloads exited the coastal enclave monthly, up from 113 a month in 2015 and down from 961 monthly in the first half of 2007.

Inside of the West Bank, OCHA recorded 472 movement obstacles as of mid-December 2016, including 44 permanently staffed checkpoints (31 of them along the Barrier), 52 partially staffed checkpoints, 180 earth mounds, 72 roadblocks, and 124 road gates, half of which are normally closed. Although the cumulative number of obstacles is some 5 per cent higher than the equivalent figure by the end of 2015 (451), there are 15 fewer permanently staffed checkpoints than by the end of 2015, most of which were turned into partially staffed checkpoints, thus improving Palestinian movement through them. Additionally, by the end of 2016 there were 110 obstacles deployed within the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron city (H2).

Notes

- Monthly breakdowns of the first 10 months of 2016 and totals for previous years are available at http://www.ochaopt.org/content/monthly-figures
- Israeli fatalities exclude three civilians killed in an attack by a Palestinian citizen of Israel in Tel Aviv on 1 January 2016; the perpetrator is also excluded. OCHA's data on casualties include incidents that occurred outside the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) only if they involved residents of the oPt as either victims or perpetrators.
- Casualty figures also exclude three Palestinians who died of wounds sustained in previous years.
- Daily averages of exits through Erez crossing are based on the number of scheduled opening days rather than calendar days.
- If a permit application to exit Gaza for medical treatment is not approved at least a day before the hospital appointment, the patient must reschedule and submit a new application.

- West Bank closure figures exclude eight checkpoints placed on the Green Line, as well as ad-hoc ('flying') checkpoints lacking permanent infrastructure.

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For more information, please contact:
Ofir Feurestein at feuerstein@un.org or +972 (0) 54 3311 836

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United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

P.O. Box 38712, East Jerusalem via Israel
Email: ochaopt@un.org
Tel.: +972 (0)2 582 9962

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