# 2017: Energy crisis worsens; fatality toll declines

## Trends affecting humanitarian needs in the occupied Palestinian territory

Today, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the occupied Palestinian territory released a summary of data collected during 2017.

### Gaza energy crisis: daily blackouts of up to 20 hours

2017 saw a decrease in the electricity supply for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, with significant impact on daily life and service provision for 2 million people. Since May, the power supply has decreased from an average of 10-12 hours to just 4-6 hours per day, following the Palestinian Authority's decision to cut payments for the electricity supplied to Gaza by Israel. Despite a national reconciliation agreement signed in October 2017 between Fatah and Hamas, this decision has not been reversed.

As a result of the electricity shortage, domestic water supply has declined by more than 30 per cent compared with the first quarter of 2017; the daily average dropped from 84 to 60 litres per person, well below the minimum recommendation of 100 litres. Similarly, the pollution levels of sewage discharged into the Mediterranean, more than 100 million litres every day, increased by 37 per cent. The number of reported cases of diarrhea among children under 3, an indicator of water quality, has increased by more than 80 per cent since April (from 1,930 to 3,450 cases on a monthly average). The energy crisis has also forced hospitals to postpone non-emergency surgeries, thereby increasing the estimated waiting times from 5-8 months in the first quarter of 2017 to 10-15 months.

### Palestinian fatality toll declines; injuries double

Palestinian fatalities have declined in 2017 for the second year in a row. As of 27 December, 76 Palestinians were killed by Israelis, down from 109 in 2016 and 169 in 2015. Of the 2017 fatalities, 24 were perpetrators or alleged perpetrators of attacks and attempted attacks against Israelis, and 14 were members of armed groups in Gaza. During this period, 15 Israelis were killed by Palestinians, including eleven members of the security forces or security personnel hired by the authorities, compared with a total of 13 fatalities in 2016 and 25 in 2015.

By contrast, the number of Palestinian injuries, as of 18 December, almost doubled compared with 2016: 6,601 vs. 3,427. About 70 per cent of these injuries occurred during protests and clashes in July and December, following developments related to Jerusalem – the installation of metal detectors at the entrance of the Haram Ash Sharif/Temple Mount and the United States' recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. About 50 per

cent of this year's injuries resulted from tear gas inhalation requiring a medical intervention; 25 per cent from rubber, rubber-coated or sponge bullets; 10 per cent from live ammunition; and the rest from physical assault and other causes. The number of Israeli injuries by Palestinians declined from 205 in 2016 to 153 in 2017.

2017 also witnessed a rise in Israeli settler violence, with 150 incidents recorded as of 18 December, compared with 98 in 2016 and 228 in 2015. Of this year's incidents, 48 resulted in Palestinian casualties and 102 in damage to Palestinian property. More than 5,600 trees belonging to Palestinians were vandalized during such incidents, up from 1,650 in 2016. While the number of Palestinian attacks against Israeli settlers resulting in casualties, 49 incidents, was the same as in 2016, incidents resulting in damage to property, mostly vehicles stoned, increased from 63 to 185.

## Demolitions and related displacement decrease

OCHA data show that until 27 December, the Israeli authorities demolished or seized 418 Palestinian-owned structures throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 659 Palestinians and affecting the livelihoods of more than 6,600 others. The vast majority of these structures were destroyed or seized for lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are almost impossible to obtain.

Demolitions and displacement figures in Area C (265 structures and 398 people) were the lowest since OCHA started recording such incidents in 2009. However, in East Jerusalem, the 142 structures demolished and 228 people displaced were the second highest figures recorded, after 2016. Other Israeli policies that contribute to the coercive environment affecting Palestinians in Area C, East Jerusalem and the Israeli-controlled H2 area of Hebron city, continued, placing many at risk of forcible transfer. There are more than 13,100 outstanding demolition orders across Area C.

In Gaza, as of 30 November, some 23,500 Palestinians are still displaced after losing their homes in the 2014 hostilities, down from 51,000 at end-2016. Most displaced families are still unable to rebuild their homes due to a lack of funding and depend on rental cash assistance provided by humanitarian organizations.

## General decline in movement in and out of Gaza

The exit of people in Gaza through the Israeli-controlled Erez crossing declined by almost 50 per cent in 2017, compared with 2016: on average, there were about 7,000 exits per month, as of 30 November, down from 13,200 in 2016. Only limited categories of people – mainly patients, merchants, and aid workers – are eligible for exit permits, subject to security checks. Fifty-four per cent of permit applications by Palestinian patients to travel

via Erez were approved, down from 62 per cent in 2016, marking the lowest approval rate since 2006, when this indicator began to be monitored. The vast majority of the unapproved applications were delayed through not being processed in time, rather than rejected outright on security grounds.

As has been the case since 2014, the Egyptian-controlled Rafah crossing opened only exceptionally, for a total of 36 days, compared with 44 days in 2016. 17,000 exits were recorded compared with 26,000 in 2016 and 151,000 in 2013.

An average of 9,729 truckloads of goods per month entered Gaza in 2017, the vast majority (98 per cent) through the Kerem Shalom crossing. This is 3 per cent below the figure for 2016 and 13 per cent below the monthly average of the first half of 2007, prior to the blockade. Import of dozens of items designated by Israel as "dual use" (military/civilian) goods is only possible through a lengthy Israeli approval process.

An average of 212 truckloads exited Gaza every month, up from 178 in 2016. Despite the increase, the 2017 figures represent only 22 per cent of the equivalent figure in the first half of 2007, before the blockade (961 truckloads). In 2017, some 76 per cent of the exiting goods were transferred to the West Bank, 16 per cent to Israel and 8 per cent to international markets.

The settlement compounds area of Hebron city, home to 800 Palestinians, remains designated as a closed military zone, where access of Palestinians not registered as residents has been prohibited since 2015. This area and its surroundings are segregated from the rest of the city by approximately 100 physical obstacles, some of which were enhanced during 2017.

During the 2017 olive harvest season, 76 gates were designated for Palestinian farmers to access their lands isolated by the Barrier, down from 84 in 2016. Of these, 12 gates open daily throughout the year, up from nine in 2016.

Some 348,000 entries of Palestinians holding West Bank ID cards into East Jerusalem for Ramadan prayers were reported in 2017, up from about 296,000 in 2016, but down from 822,000 in 2012. Additionally, 445 Palestinians from Gaza were allowed into East Jerusalem on the same occasion.

## Notes

- Fatality figures exclude three Palestinian citizens of Israel who were killed by Israeli forces in an attack that they perpetrated in East Jerusalem, and an Israeli soldier who was killed by Palestinian citizens of Israel inside Israel.
- Figures on imported truckloads to Gaza exclude truckloads carrying fuel.

- Sewage pollution is measured by the level Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), which is an indicator of the effectiveness of wastewater treatment.
- Estimated waiting time for non-urgent surgeries is based on the waiting time for ear, nose and throat surgeries at Shifa hospital in Gaza city.
- Figures on demolitions in East Jerusalem include 35 structures demolished by their owners following the issuance of demolition orders by the Israeli authorities.
- Figures on Ramadan prayers refer to all Fridays during the month in addition to the "Night of Destiny" (*Laylat al Qadr)*.