Humanitarian Bulletin
occupied Palestinian territory

FEBRUARY 2018

OCHA


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Garbage accumulated in the Ash Sheikh Radwan area in Gaza City, 2 March 2018.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Donations of $3.5 million avert a halt of emergency fuel program in Gaza, preventing the collapse of vital services; available funding will be exhausted by mid-2018.
- Newly-built classrooms demolished in a Bedouin community located in an area planned for settlement expansion; 44 schools in Area C and East Jerusalem at risk of demolition.
- Closure of a West Bank village, ongoing for over one month, generates hardship and raises concern about collective punishment.

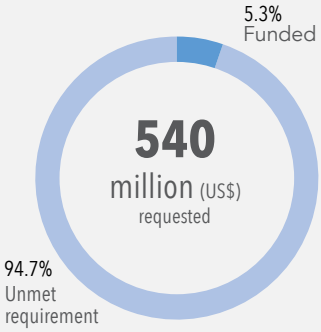
FEBRUARY FIGURES

Palestinian killed (direct conflict)	9
Palestinian injured (direct conflict)	1,050
Israelis killed (direct conflict)	1
Israelis injured (direct conflict)	8
Structures demolished in the West Bank	37
People displaced in the West Bank	44

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN 2018

540 million (US$) requested

5.3% funded



OVERVIEW

Last month's Humanitarian Bulletin warned that the Gaza Strip was on the brink of collapse. The key drivers identified then were the lack of progress in the implementation of the reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas; the unprecedented financial crisis facing UNRWA, one of the territory's main service providers; and the risk that funding for the emergency fuel provided by the UN in Gaza would be exhausted by mid-February.

The latter threat has been temporarily averted following last moment donations for a total of $3.5 million. However, currently available funding will cover only around half of the bare minimum required to maintain emergency fuel deliveries during 2018, assuming no further deterioration in the availability of electricity. The impact of the energy crisis in all sectors of society is illustrated in this month's Bulletin by the case of a nine-year-old boy, whose dialysis sessions are being regularly disrupted due to electricity cuts, with serious ramifications on his health; and by an interview with a Gaza municipality official, who highlights the health and environmental risks stemming from the thousands of tons of uncollected rubbish currently piling up across the city due to lack of fuel to run the garbage trucks.

While UNRWA's crisis remains largely unchanged, some emergency funding mechanisms have been recently mobilized to mitigate the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable. On 13 March, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) approved an exceptional grant of $15 million to UNRWA to support urgent food assistance through in-kind vouchers and cash for work opportunities for more than 600,000 Palestine refugees across the oPt. An additional loan of $15 million will support UNRWA's life-saving humanitarian activities in all it fields of operation in the Middle East, until additional funding is received. Prior to that, the Humanitarian Fund for the oPt, managed by OCHA, released $900,000 to provide support to 140,000 of the most vulnerable Palestinians in the West Bank, left by the cut in funding. The allocation supports the deployment of mobile clinics in 39 West Bank communities, and maintains food distributions to Bedouin and herding in

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Area C, for a period of six months. An international conference to raise funds for the agency, with the attendance of the UN Secretary General, will be held on 15 March in Rome.

Another article in this Bulletin, which provides an overview of demolitions and displacements in the West Bank in January and February 2018, highlights the vulnerability of Palestinian communities in Area C. Among the structures targeted during this period, citing the lack of building permits, were two newly-built classrooms funded by donors in the Palestinian Bedouin community of Abu Nuwar. It is located in an area planned for the expansion of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement (the E1 plan) and is one of 46 communities in the central West Bank at risk of forcible transfer due to a coercive environment, including the promotion of relocation plans. A recent assessment indicates that 36 primary schools in Area C and eight in East Jerusalem, currently serving about 5,000 children, are at risk of demolition or seizure.

"In the absence of immediate steps to address the humanitarian crisis and to revive the economy, we will face a total institutional and economic collapse in Gaza. This is not an alarmist prediction – it is a fact".

UN Special Coordinator Mladenov

The final item in this month's Bulletin concerns the Israeli military's blocking of vehicular access to and from Hizma, a Palestinian village of over 7,000 people in the Jerusalem governorate, reportedly in response to stone-throwing by Palestinian youth at Israeli vehicles. The closure, which is ongoing for over 40 days as of the time of writing, has disrupted the access of Hizma residents to services and livelihoods, with a disproportionate impact on young children, the elderly and disabled people. The closure of Palestinian localities following Palestinian attacks against Israelis, including stone-throwing, has been taking place on a regular basis since late 2015. According to the UN Secretary-General this practice may amount to collective punishment, strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law.

Referring to the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza, in his February briefing to the Security Council, the UN Special Coordinator to the Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov, warned that implementation of the intra-Palestinian agreement "has stalled", and that in the absence of "immediate steps to address the humanitarian crisis and to revive the economy, we will face a total institutional and economic collapse in Gaza. This is not an alarmist prediction – it is a fact." Regarding the West Bank, Mr. Mladenov reiterated "that we in the international community must continue advocating for substantial Israeli policy changes … including a halt to settlement construction, demolition of structures and prevention of Palestinian development in Area C." He also called "upon all sides to reject violence, condemn terror, ensure accountability and work to reduce tensions."



© Photo by OCHA

Main entrance to Hizma village blocked. February 2018.

CRITICAL SERVICES IN THE GAZA STRIP STILL RELIANT ON LIMITED SUPPLIES OF EMERGENCY FUEL AMID ONGOING ELECTRICITY CRISIS

Supported by donors, the UN has been coordinating the delivery of emergency fuel to run back-up generators and vehicles in the Gaza Strip since 2013. This has ensured that a minimal level of life-saving health, water and sanitation services are maintained despite the severe energy crisis. Since the beginning of 2018, implementation of the emergency fuel program has been disrupted due to a severe funding shortage.

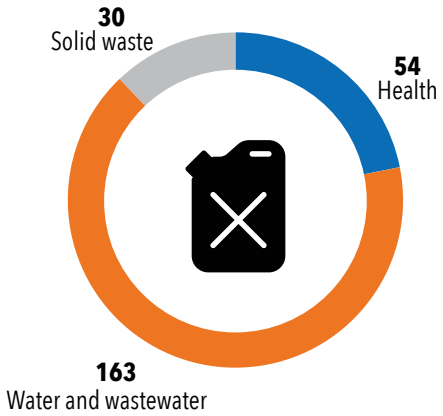
Following the almost total exhaustion of fuel reserves, the Beit Hanoun hospital, which serves over 300,000 people in northern Gaza, announced a halt to medical services on 29 January. Diagnostic services at the other 12 public hospitals also risk being severely curtailed. A strike by hospital medical staff protesting the non-payment of salaries further threatens the health sector. In mid-February, the Gaza Municipality had to reduce the collection of solid waste due to lack of fuel, including UN-facilitated emergency fuel, leaving tens of thousands of tons of uncollected garbage to accumulate across the city (see interview in page 6). Without emergency fuel, 55 sewage pools are at significant risk of overflowing and the functioning of 48 water desalination plants has been reduced to around 20 per cent of their working capacity.

Recent donations will cover 54 per cent of the amount required to prevent a collapse of services during 2018, by providing 700,000 litres of fuel per month to 175 service providers.

Fears that funding for this assistance would be exhausted by mid-February 2018 have been eased following donations worth US$3.5 million from the United Arab Emirates, the Islamic Development Bank and Qatar. These donations will cover some 54 per cent of the $6.5 million required to prevent a collapse of services, by providing 700,000 litres of fuel per month during 2018 to 175 service providers. These include only the most critical life-saving facilities, the number of which has been reduced from a total of 247 facilities supported at the end of 2017 to just 48 in early February due to the funding crisis.

In early January 2018, the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank resumed payment for the 50 megawatts of electricity purchased from Israel that had been cut in June 2017. As

NUMBER OF FACILITIES SUPPORTED WITH EMERGENCY FUEL IN 2017 BY SECTOR



This report was prepared by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in collaboration with humanitarian partners.

a result, electricity outages were reduced slightly from 20 to 16 hours per day. However, the improvement was short-lived as the PA ordered the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) to cover part of the cost of the electricity purchased from Israel from the cost of the fuel purchased to run the Gaza Power Plant (GPP). On 14 February, the GPP was forced to stop operations temporarily due to lack of fuel, bringing power cuts back to the levels recorded during the second half of 2017 (approximately 20 hours per day).

NINE-YEAR-OLD DIALYSIS PATIENT, YAHIA

Najwan al-Samna is a 35-year-old mother of three from Gaza city. One of her children, 9-year-old Yahia, was diagnosed with kidney disease at the age of three months. When he turned five, the disease developed into a kidney failure requiring life-long dialysis.

"Yahia receives dialysis at the Ar Rantisi hospital four times a week for 4-5 hours each time. During treatment, the electricity is often cut and leads to blood clots in the kidney. This causes Yahia to lose blood and gain weight due to extra fluid. The weight builds up in the body and causes breathing difficulties.

"One day when we were returning home after the treatment, Yahia felt very bad and couldn't breathe. I thought I was losing him. I began to scream at the taxi driver to drive us back to the hospital to save Yahia's life. We managed to save him. There are many children who passed away because they could not reach the hospital on time."

"The electricity is often cut and leads to blood clots in the kidney. This causes Yahia to lose blood and gain weight due to extra fluid. The weight builds up in the body and causes breathing difficulties".

Najwan, Yahia's mother



© Photo by OCHA

Yahia, a kidney dialysis patient at Ar Rantisi hospital. February 2018.

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A historical background to emergency fuel deliveries

Basic services such as health, water, waste water management, education and other essential services rely on a reliable and affordable energy supply. Gaza has been faced with a chronic electricity deficit for over a decade. This has severely disrupted the delivery of basic services and undermined already vulnerable livelihoods and living conditions.

A key factor in the electricity deficit in recent years has been disruptions to the operations of the GPP, the second largest provider of electricity to Gaza, for reasons that include disputes between Palestinian authorities over the funding and taxing of fuel to run it; the halt to the smuggling of Egyptian-subsidized fuel since 2013; limited collection of payments from consumers; the destruction of fuel storage tanks by an Israeli airstrike in July 2014; and restrictions on imports of spare parts, equipment and fuel under the Israeli blockade.[1] The situation deteriorated further during the second half of 2017 with the cuts referred to above in PA funding for electricity supplied by Israel.

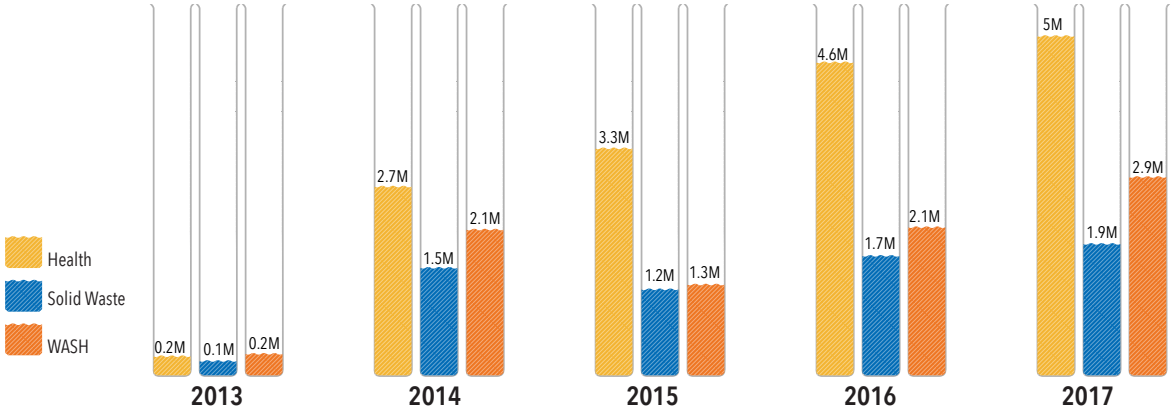
Humanitarian agencies provide emergency fuel funded by donors to prevent the collapse of the most critical life-saving facilities. In November 2013 deliveries started of some 200,000 litres per month distributed to around 80 water, sanitation and health facilities. Over time, this gradually increased to an average of 365,000 litres per month by early 2014, and reached almost 1.5 million litres in August 2014 during the escalation of conflict. In 2015, the supply declined to an average of 480,000 litres per month. With a lack of long-term solutions, compounded by a steep deterioration in supplies, demand for emergency fuel grew significantly. The number of critical facilities requiring fuel support increased from 189 in April to 247 in December 2017, while the quantity of fuel distributed per month grew from 720,000 litres in the first half of 2017 to around 950,000 litres in the second half of the year.

These priorities were used to identify the facilities to be supplied with emergency fuel. The list is revised on a monthly basis by the relevant clusters

THE GOALS OF THE EMERGENCY FUEL PROGRAM SINCE ITS INCEPTION

1. Maintaining the provision of critical hospital/health services;
2. Ensuring clean drinking water, preventing raw sewage from overflowing into the streets, allowing some treatment of wastewater; and
3. Ensuring adequate solid waste management.

EMERGENCY FUEL DISTRIBUTED BY PRIORITY AREA (IN MILLIONS OF LITRES)



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and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on the basis of the availability of electricity, and changing needs and priorities. The facilities supported provide 1.27 million people with critical health services, 950,000 people with water and wastewater services, and 1.44 million people with solid waste management services.

To enable stakeholders to trace and analyze the evolution of the electricity supply and the emergency fuel programme, and to identify gaps easily, OCHA has developed a dynamic, user-friendly dashboard, available online.[2]

25,000 TONS OF SOLID WASTE ACCUMULATE IN THE STREETS OF GAZA CITY



Engineer Abdel Raheem Abulkumboz, head of the Health and Environment Directorate in Gaza Municipality, highlighted the impact of the ongoing energy crisis on solid waste collection capacity in a meeting with OCHA.

"Having fuel to run the trucks is not enough to solve all the problems. The maintenance and repair of trucks is severely impaired by the lack of spare parts and the long outages".

"Our capacity to collect solid waste has been depleted due to the lack of fuel to run solid waste collection trucks. Until mid-2017 the Municipality of Gaza collected around 700 tons of solid waste per day, but this has gradually declined to 500 tons. In some neighbourhoods we have recently been forced to collect only once a week instead of twice.

"We estimate that around 25,000 tons of garbage are currently scattered in the streets and public areas in the eastern and southern parts of Gaza city, posing environmental and health risks. During 2017 we maintained a fair level of operation thanks to the emergency fuel we receive from the UN. If this support is interrupted, as we have been told, the situation will deteriorate.

"Having fuel to run the trucks is not enough to solve all the problems. The maintenance and repair of trucks is severely impaired by the lack of spare parts and the long outages because these activities rely on electrical equipment. In addition, it is almost impossible to bring new trucks into Gaza due to Israeli restrictions on imports of utility vehicles.

"The municipality is facing an unprecedented financial crisis. Residents cannot pay their municipal taxes so we are currently able to collect only around 15 per cent of bill payments, down from 30 per cent in the first half of 2017. This is detrimental to the provision of basic services and the ability to pay salaries on a regular basis. In January we had to reduce the already very low salaries by 25 per cent, but if the situation continues even that will not be possible. Many employees have asked for loans from the municipality, but we cannot afford to do that.

"We are worried about a potential increase in disease due to poor hygiene caused by the accumulation of solid waste. We are also receiving complaints about respiratory problems caused by the smoke of the garbage burned in the streets."

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WEST BANK DEMOLITIONS AND DISPLACEMENT CONTINUE AT SIMILAR PACE TO 2017

Concern over 44 schools in Area C and East Jerusalem threatened with demolition

During the first two months of 2018, the Israeli authorities demolished or seized a total of 70 Palestinian-owned structures across the West Bank. On average, this is the same number of monthly demolitions recorded in 2017 (35), and around one-third of figures recorded in 2016 (91). Around 30 per cent of the structures targeted in 2018 were residential and 81 people were displaced. The remainder were livelihood-related or public structures, including two school classrooms. An assessment by humanitarian actors of the education sector indicates that 44 Palestinian schools in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are at risk of full or partial demolition or seizure due to the lack of an Israeli-issued building permit.

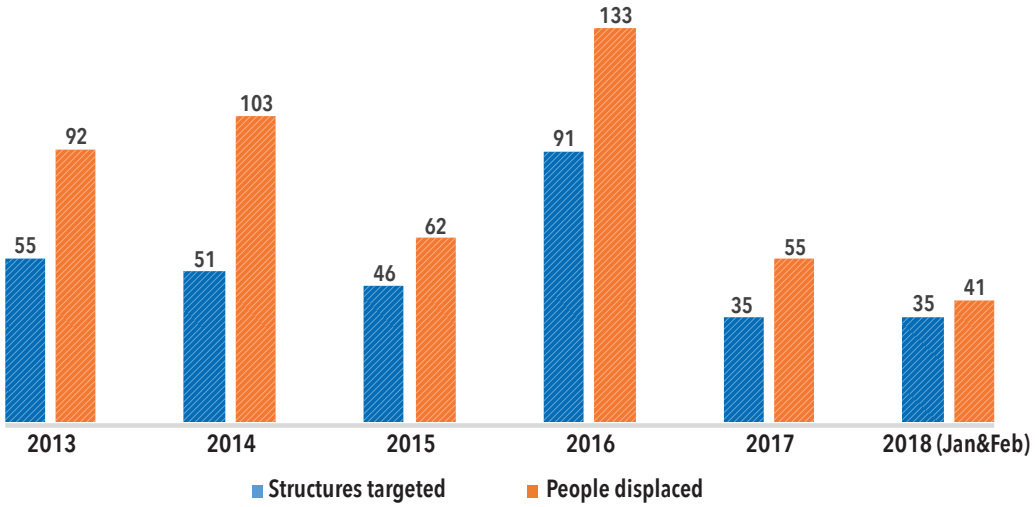
East Jerusalem

Over half of the demolitions recorded during the reporting period (36 of 70) took place in East Jerusalem and were on the grounds of the lack of a building permit, which is very difficult to obtain. Unlike the general trend recorded for the West Bank, the monthly average for this period in East Jerusalem (18 structures) was higher than figures for both 2017 and 2016 (12 and 16 structures respectively), during which OCHA recorded the highest rates of demolition in East Jerusalem since 2000.

Unlike the general trend recorded for the West Bank, the monthly average of demolitions in East Jerusalem during January and February, was higher than figures for both 2017 and 2016.

In one incident in Al 'Isawiya (30 January), the Israeli authorities demolished twelve commercial and animal structures that were the source of livelihood for nine families. Al 'Isawiya remains one of the East Jerusalem communities most affected by demolitions, followed by Beit Hanina and Jabal Al Mukkabir, both of which recorded the highest levels of demolitions in 2017.

MONTHLY AVERAGE OF DEMOLITIONS AND DISPLACEMENT ACROSS THE WEST BANK



WEST BANK DEMOLITIONS DASHBOARD



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This report was prepared by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in collaboration with humanitarian partners.

In Bir Onah, a residential area in the southern part of the Jerusalem municipal area, physically severed from the city by the Barrier, the Israeli authorities demolished two multi-storey buildings under construction on 29 January. This is the first demolition recorded by OCHA in this area since 2009. In recent years, municipal areas behind the Barrier have seen 'wildcat' construction driven by the broader planning crisis in East Jerusalem and lack of an appropriate planning and zoning regime.[3] The buildings targeted in Bir Onah were located next to the 'tunnels road' that connects the Etzion settlement bloc to Jerusalem; there are plans for this road to be upgraded and widened.

Area C

Over 40 per cent of the structures targeted in January and February (29 of 70) were in communities partially or entirely located in Area C; this is a major decline compared with the monthly average in 2017 (14 vs. 23).

Fourteen (14) of the demolished structures were funded by donors and had been provided as humanitarian assistance to five vulnerable Bedouin communities. In the Qurzaliya area of al Jiftlik in the central Jordan Valley, the Israeli authorities demolished two residential and four animal shelters worth about €7,700 that had been provided in response to an earlier demolition one year ago. A family residing in this community, designated by the Israeli authorities as a 'firing zone', was affected and the road leading to this area was damaged and blocked following the demolitions.

Fourteen of the structures demolished during January and February in Area C were funded by donors and had been provided as humanitarian assistance to five vulnerable Bedouin communities

On 4 February, in the Palestinian Bedouin community of Abu Nuwar in Jerusalem governorate, the Israeli authorities demolished two newly built classrooms funded by donors and which served 26 third and fourth grade students.[4] This is the sixth demolition or confiscation incident in Abu Nuwar school by the Israeli authorities since February 2016. The community is located in an area allocated and planned by the Israeli authorities for the expansion of Ma'ale Adumim settlement (the E1 plan). It is one of the 46 communities in the central West Bank at risk of forcible transfer due to the coercive environment exerted upon them, including the promotion of relocation plans.



© Photo by OCHA

Demolitions in Bir Onah, next to the 'tunnels road' that connects the Etzion settlement bloc to Jerusalem, 29 January 2018.

The acting Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt, Roberto Valent, raised concerns over the targeting of the school and called on the Israeli authorities "to fulfill their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and immediately cease all practices that are directly or indirectly generating a risk of forcible transfer for Palestinians in various parts of the West Bank, including the destruction of schools and related property".

Area A

Another five structures demolished during the reporting period, including three homes and two livelihood structures, were located in Area A of the Jenin governorate; their demolition resulted in the displacement of 31 people, including eight children. The structures were destroyed, citing military needs, during two search and arrest operations to capture the suspected perpetrators of a shooting attack on 9 January 2018, in which an Israeli settler was killed. During one of the operations, four residential apartments sustained damage, temporarily displacing 15 people (not included in the totals). Clashes that erupted during the operations resulted in the killing of two Palestinian men, including one of the wanted persons, and the injury of another 33 people.

Schools at risk of demolition

Based on a series of field visits and interviews, partners working in the education sector (the Education in Emergency Working Group) identified 36 schools in Area C and eight in East Jerusalem that are at risk of full or partial demolition due to outstanding orders[5] affecting all or part of their facilities. These schools currently serve about 5,000 children.

Some children living in Area C have no primary school in their communities and must walk or travel long distances to reach a school. They are often exposed to settler harassment or searches at checkpoints.

Some children living in Area C have no access to a primary school in their communities and must walk or travel long distances to reach a school. They are often exposed to settler harassment or searches at checkpoints. These constraints undermine the quality of education and increase the chances of early dropout.

A needs assessment carried out by OCHA in 2017 found that only six of the 46 Bedouin communities in the central West Bank at risk of forcible transfer have a primary school within the community, and all of the schools are at risk of demolition.[6] The Palestinian Ministry of Education provides transportation to schools for children residing in 20 of the remaining communities, while children in the other 20 communities must walk or travel up to six kilometres to reach their schools.

In East Jerusalem, a chronic shortage of classrooms and substandard or unsuitable conditions of existing facilities has long been recognized as 'the most pressing of the many serious problems in education in East Jerusalem'.[7] According to the Association of Civil Rights in Israel, in addition to the shortage of around 2,000 classrooms in the municipal system, almost half of the 1,815 classrooms in the municipal system were considered sub-standard.[8]

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THE CASE OF WADI AS SEEQ SCHOOL

Wadi as Seeq is a Palestinian Bedouin community in northeastern Ramallah governorate, one of 46 communities in this area at risk of forcible transfer. It is home to some 150 people, 62 per cent of whom are children. Residents rely on grazing as their primary source of income. As the community is not connected to the water network, they rely on water tankers and report paying more than NIS20 per cubic meter, over four times the price of piped water.

On 30 September 2017, a primary school was established in the community with support from an international NGO and opened to serve 82 students from 1st through 6th grade from Wadi as Seeq and three nearby communities. It comprises three zinc structures cemented to the ground with tiling inside and includes six classrooms, a kitchen, a staffroom and the principal's room. Community sources reported that up 20 of the children enrolled this year were over the age of seven and had never attended school previously due to the travel distances and transportation constraints.

"Our life changed dramatically following the establishment of the school. Children are very happy and their school performance has already improved. We are also relieved that they are nearby and safe, and this is enough for us."

Community representative

A community representative approached by OCHA commented: "Our life changed dramatically following the establishment of the school...Children now love to go to school. They are very happy and their school performance has already improved. We are also relieved that they are nearby and safe, and this is enough for us."

On 2 October, officials from the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) arrived at the community, took photographs of the school, and informed the residents that the structures would be seized as they are considered as mobile and were installed without a permit. To prevent the seizure, the community requested that the ICA waive the need for a permit as per a provision in military legislation. This was rejected[9] and the community filed a petition against the rejection to the Israeli Supreme Court; a ruling is pending.



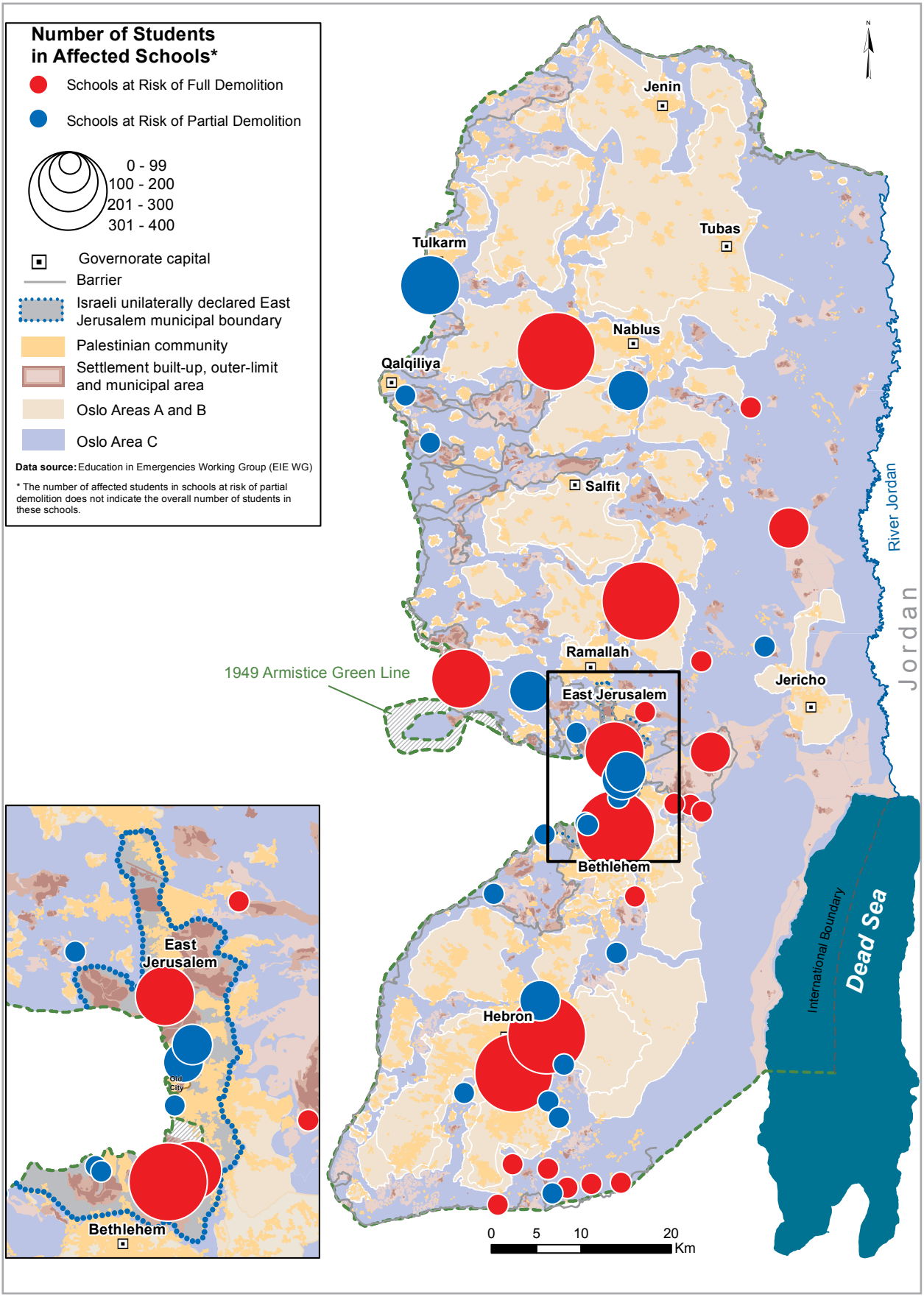
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Wadi as Seeq school,10 October 2017.

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PALESTINIAN SCHOOLS AT RISK OF DEMOLITION FEBRUARY 2018

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BLOCKING OF VEHICULAR ACCESS TO A PALESTINIAN VILLAGE DISRUPTS ACCESS OF 7,000 PEOPLE TO SERVICES AND LIVELIHOODS

Concerns raised over collective punishment

Since 28 January 2018, the three access roads into Hizma village have been totally or partially blocked to Palestinian traffic by the Israeli military, and remain so at the time of writing. Hizma is a Palestinian village of over 7000 residents in Jerusalem governorate. The bulk of its built-up area is in Area B, but small parts of the village lie in Area C or within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, separated from the rest of the city by the Barrier.

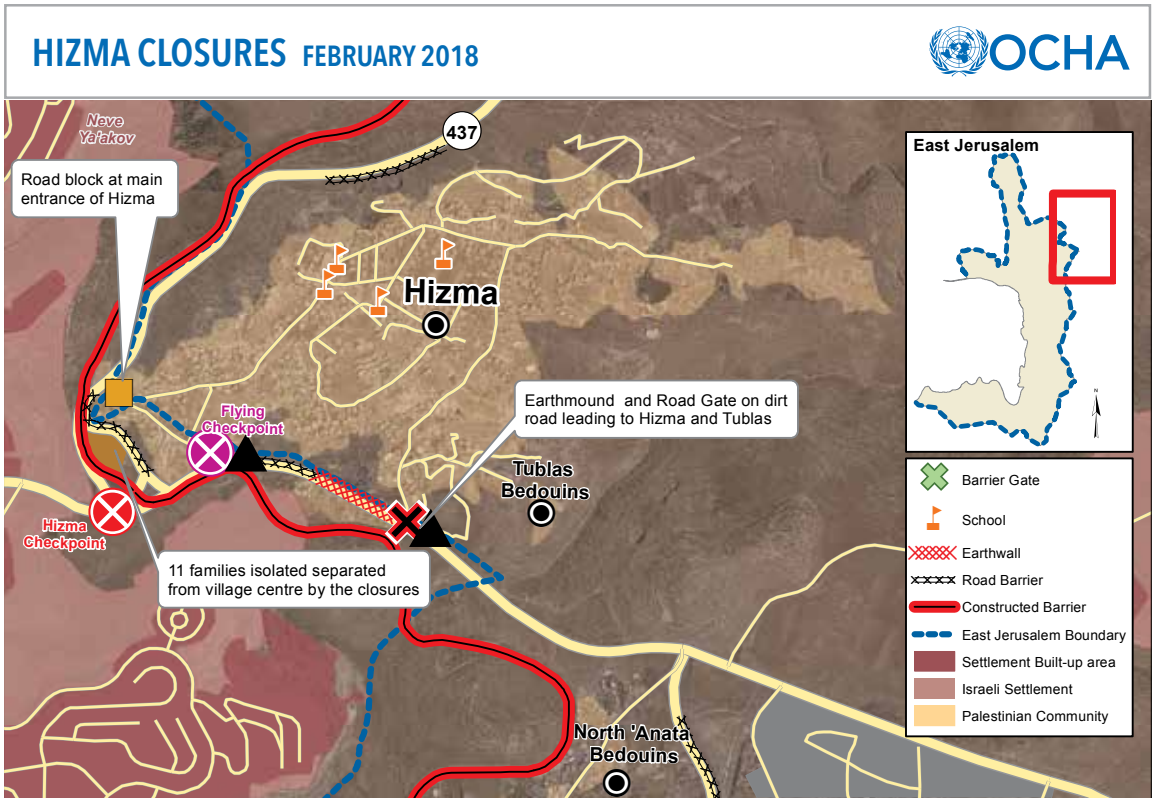
The recent closures disrupt access by Hizma's residents to services and livelihoods, with a disproportionate impact on children, the elderly and disabled people. General traffic between the north and south of the West Bank that passed through the village is now diverted, thereby undermining the commercial life of the village.



Poster hung by Israeli forces in Hizma

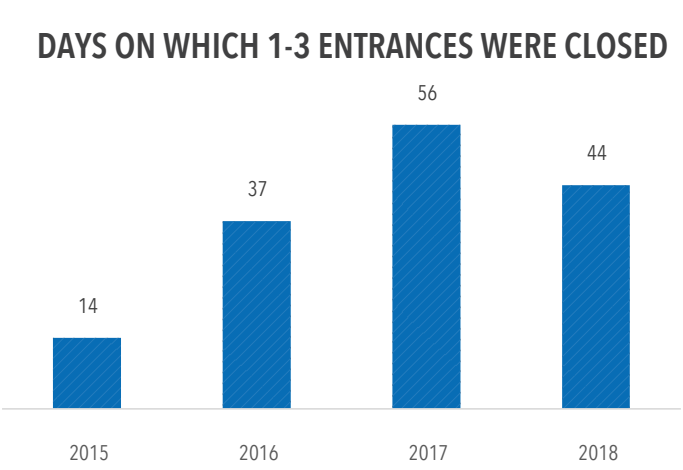
The recent closures disrupt access by Hizma's residents to services and livelihoods, with a disproportionate impact on children, the elderly and disabled people.

On 30 January, the Israeli army hung posters at the entrances of village shops stating that the army "shall continue its work so long as you [residents] continue to be disruptive". Other posters showed windshields broken by stones. Based on communications with the Israeli military, the head of the village council said that the statement refers to the closures as a response to stone



This report was prepared by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in collaboration with humanitarian partners.

throwing by Palestinian youths at vehicles with Israeli number plates travelling on Road 437. However, no direct connection is evident between the closures that block vehicles and the ability of youths to reach on foot the main roads where stone throwing is reported.



The two access roads have been closed, one with concrete blocks and the second with a road gate. Residents are forced to park their vehicles near the entrance and walk past the obstacles on foot to continue their journey with alternative transportation on the other side. The third entrance, to the south, was initially closed with concrete blocks but these were later replaced by a flying checkpoint where Israeli soldiers check IDs and limit passage mainly to vehicles driven by people whose place of residence is Hizma.

Service providers, including a third of the teachers in village schools who commute on a daily basis, face delays and uncertainty in reaching workplaces and clients in the village. Over 50 shops/businesses that are the main source of income for 150 households are affected by the diversion of general Palestinian traffic from the village. These include corner shops, supermarkets, gas stations and plant nurseries. Family life has also been affected by the unpredictable nature of the closures that discourages, if not bars, visitors from the area.

No direct connection is evident between the closures that block vehicles and the ability of youths to reach on foot the main roads where stone throwing is reported.

Eleven families who reside in an area of Hizma severed from the rest of the village by a fenced section of Road 437 face particular problems as they are unable to cross this obstacle by foot and need transportation to reach the centre of the village. Prior to the southern entrance becoming partially accessible via the flying checkpoint, they were cut off from their centre of life, access to the health clinic and to schools.

SAMAR DAIFALLAH, HEAD OF HIZMA VILLAGE COUNCIL

"Hizma's strategic location near East Jerusalem and along the key access road that links the northern and southern West Bank has made it a target for Israeli occupation policies and practices. Thousands of dunums were confiscated for the construction of Israeli settlements, by-pass roads and the Wall, or were isolated behind the Wall. Since the beginning of the year, Israeli forces regularly conduct search and arrest operations in the village, and have increased its isolation. This is collective punishment. We are afraid that this latest wave of restrictions aims to take control of what remains of our land for the E1 settlement plan."

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The presence of the Israeli army at the entrances has also formed a friction point with residents, especially children. In one instance in late January 2018, the Israeli army detained nine children aged between nine and 15 years for three hours.

The closure of Hizma's main entrances has been ongoing since 2015. The duration of the closures has gradually increased in recent years. The longest period of uninterrupted closure was recorded in early 2017 (56 days), followed by 2018 (44 days as of the end of February).

The closure of entrances to Palestinian localities from which stone throwing at Israeli vehicles has been reported, or where the homes of perpetrators or suspected perpetrators of attacks against Israelis are located, has been taking place on a regular basis since late 2015.

In 2018 so far there have been reports of two incidents of Palestinians throwing stones at Israeli vehicles that resulted in casualties (three injuries) or property damage (1 vehicle damaged) compared with nine such incidents in 2017.

Hizma is not a unique case. The closure of entrances to Palestinian localities from which stone throwing at Israeli vehicles has been reported, or where the homes of perpetrators or suspected perpetrators of attacks against Israelis are located, has been taking place on a regular basis since late 2015 in a context of heightened violence.

In a 2017 report to the Human Rights Council, the UN Secretary General stated that measures such as the closure of Palestinian towns and villages following attacks against Israelis "may amount to collective punishment". He also underscored that "collective punishment is expressly prohibited by international humanitarian law. That prohibition does not apply only to criminal sanctions but also to harassment of any sort, including administrative measures, carried out by the police or the military".[10]

ENDNOTES

1. The situation has been exacerbated by the poor state of the distribution network that results in significant electricity losses. The GPP needs approximately NIS45 million per month to procure sufficient fuel to operate at half capacity (60MW approximately). Currently, it can only secure some NIS20-23 million per month through customer payments.
2. Available at: https://www.ochaopt.org/page/interactive-charts-emergency-fuel.
3. https://www.ochaopt.org/content/east-jerusalem-key-humanitarian-concerns
4. In November last year, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) issued an order preventing the community from using the two classrooms until a building permit application had been submitted. Following several legal developments, on 24 January, the ICA sub-committee for planning and construction rejected the building permit application that had been submitted, allowing ten days for the submission of an appeal. According to the lawyer, an appeal was submitted two days before the demolition with no subsequent decision from the court.
5. Only one school in Area C is at risk of demolition following the ICA's rejection of the community's request to waive the need for a permit. A petition against the demolition is currently pending at the Israeli Supreme Court.
6. OCHA's vulnerability profile of 46 Bedouin communities at risk of forcible transfer in the central West Bank, 2017, available at https://www.ochaopt.org/46-communities.
7. Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), Human Rights in East Jerusalem: Facts and Figures, May 2010, p. 47.
8. Association for Civil Rights in Israel and East Jerusalem: Facts and Figures 2017, p.3.
9. The land on which the school was installed had been designated as 'state land' during Jordanian rule of the West Bank. The community requested the ICA to allocate the land to the school and waive the need for a building permit as provided under Military Order 418 of 1971.
10. Report by the Secretary General, Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, A/HRC/34/38, April 2017, para. 32-33,

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