

**May Day event highlights state of labor
in the besieged Gaza Strip**

On May 1st, as the Israeli blockade on Gaza approached its third year, Oxfam's partners in Gaza organized a press conference in Gaza to highlight the state of labor in the coastal enclave. The Democracy and Worker's Rights Center (DWRC), a Palestinian NGO focusing on worker's rights across the occupied Palestinian territory, and Sawt el Amel, an Arab-Israeli NGO, representing 500 Gazan workers suing their former Israeli employers for back wages and withheld pension,

highlighted how workers in Gaza were becoming increasingly dependent on aid. Many remain chronically unemployed despite their strong wish to work and provide for their families.

Adnan al-Alian (picture), a father of 8 who worked for 9 years in the Erez Industrial Zone, said he now had no way to provide a decent life for his family. "I've had no work except when I was given the opportunity to participate in a single three month cash-for-work program last year. I rely on food aid assistance to get by", he explained. According to the last labor force survey conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), overall unemployment in the Gaza Strip is 38.6%, although in some Gazan districts, such as Khan Younis in southern Gaza, unemployment has reached 49.3%. "Under the siege key sectors of Gaza's economy, like the agricultural and industrial sectors, are not functional. Poverty and unemployment figures keep rising and workers are becoming hopeless," stated Karim Nashwan, Director of DWRC in Gaza.

Unemployment amongst young people is particularly high, with 57% unemployment reported for persons under the age of 30 - half of the population of the Gaza Strip is under the age of 18. Samir al-Nahal, a 28-year old from Rafah, is still single. He was steadily employed in the Israeli-controlled Erez Industrial Zone until it was closed down by the Israeli army in 2004. "Since the blockade my life has been turned upside down. I dreamed of building a house, getting married, and starting a family. Now my dream is just finding a job," he says. Today, Gazans don't want to rely on aid. They want the opportunity to engage in decent work, in order to provide for their families and better their lives.

1. Headlines

- **Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions:** According to reports, 2 rockets and 3 mines were directed by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza at Israeli forces this week (as compared to 3 rockets, 1 mortar and 1 mine reported last week). There were reports of 3 Israeli military incursions (compared to 2 Israeli military incursions, 2 air strikes and 6 shells reported last week). 1 firefight was reported this week, while no firefights were reported the week before.

No Palestinians were reportedly killed this week; 2 Palestinians were reported injured. According to reports, no Palestinians were killed last week; 5 Palestinians and a foreigner were reported injured. No Israeli casualties were reported this week or last week.

- **Fishermen:** 1 incident of Palestinian fishermen being fired at by Israeli naval vessels was reported this week; according to reports, one fisherman was severely injured. The previous week, 3 incidents were reported and one fisherman was reportedly severely injured. 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.

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- **Tunnel related fatalities:** This week, 7 Palestinians reportedly died in tunnels under the Egypt-Gaza border and over 6 were injured. In one incident, a device exploded in a tunnel, killing 3 militants and injuring several others. In a separate incident, 4 Palestinians were killed and 6 injured when Egyptian forces destroyed a tunnel. Last week, 1 Palestinian reportedly died in a tunnel collapse and 3 were reportedly injured under the Egypt-Gaza border.
- **Palestinians in the “buffer zone”:** There were 4 reports of Israeli troops firing towards Palestinians this week. In all 4 incidents, Israeli troops opened fire towards people protesting in the vicinity of the “buffer zone”, in an apparent effort to disperse demonstrators as they marched towards the barrier fence; two injuries were reported. Last week, 2 incidents were reported of Israeli troops firing towards Palestinians. Since 1 April, Israeli forces have reportedly opened fire 12 times towards demonstrators in the vicinity of the “buffer zone”. These demonstrations are organized several times a week by a group representing farmers and other people living near the fence in different locations throughout the Gaza Strip. Israeli forces prohibit Palestinian access to farming land along the perimeter fence by opening “warning fire” on people approaching the “buffer zone”.
During the week, the IDF declared the areas adjacent to the barrier fence inside the Gaza Strip a “combat zone”. While the implications of this declaration remain uncertain, there is a concern that this development will increase the level of risk to the lives of Palestinians living or working in these areas. The declaration came after the Israeli military reportedly located and detonated three explosive devices near the border (OCHA, 27 April).
- **Rafah border crossing:** The Rafah border crossing was officially closed this week, however people crossed on 2 out of 7 days. During those 2 days, 5 people left and 286 entered Gaza. Last week, Rafah was officially closed, however people crossed on 2 out of 7 days, during which 40 people left and 278 entered Gaza. The Rafah crossing opens only sporadically; prior to the blockade, during the first six months of 2006, an average of 650 people crossed per day in each direction.
- **Power plant and electricity supply:** 1,463 million litres of industrial fuel were delivered this week for Gaza’s power plant. This is only 42% of the 3.5 million litres of fuel needed weekly to operate Gaza’s power plant at the current maximum export capacity of 80Mw. Last week, 1,045 million litres of industrial fuel were transferred.
Imports of industrial fuel have steeply declined since the end of November 2009, when the European Commission handed over responsibility for buying industrial fuel needed to operate Gaza’s only power plant to the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority.
- **Cooking gas:** 925 tons of cooking gas reportedly entered Gaza this week, 53% of the normal weekly level of need of 1,750 tons. 502 tons of cooking gas were reported to have entered Gaza in the previous week. The overall cooking gas shortage has been a main concern for humanitarian agencies since November 2009.
- **Diesel/petrol:** 294,096 litres of diesel and 44,854 litres of petrol were delivered in Gaza for use by UNRWA this week. Last week, 99,500 litres of diesel were delivered in Gaza for use by UNRWA but no petrol was delivered. Small amounts of fuel destined for the open market have been allowed into Gaza from Israel on just five occasions since a total ban on fuel imports for public sale was put in place by the Government of Israel in October 2008.
- **Truckloads of humanitarian supplies:** 637 truckloads of humanitarian supplies were permitted entry through Kerem Shalom and the Karni conveyor during the week - the equivalent of 48% of the pre-blockade weekly average. 428 trucks were allowed into Gaza during the previous week.

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4 truckloads of glass, 13 truckloads of wood and 11 truckloads of aluminum were permitted entry into Gaza this week; 5 truckloads of glass, 11 of wood and 10 of aluminum had been allowed in last week. In addition, 49 truckloads of clothing and footwear entered Gaza, and 5 truckloads of plastic pipes were delivered to the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) for the first time since May 2009.

- **Exports:** This week, no truckloads of flowers were exported from the Gaza Strip. Last week, 2 truckloads of flowers were exported. In the context of a near total ban on exports, the Israeli authorities have authorised very small numbers of flowers and strawberries to be exported from Gaza after an intervention by the Dutch government. Since 10 December 2009, following a period of seven months of no exports, 117 truckloads have exited Gaza, including 84 truckloads of cut flowers and 33 truckloads of strawberries, exports which stopped on 10 February.
- **Internal Violence:** This week, one man was reportedly killed and another one injured by masked gunmen in Jabalia Camp, northern Gaza. In a separate incident, the body of a man is said to have been found stabbed to death and decapitated in an open area east of Tal el-Hawwa, a suburb of Gaza City. In a third incident, three persons were reported injured after unknown militants detonated an IED near a police base at Tal Es Sultan, southern Gaza. Last week, a suspicious object reportedly exploded while two 15-year-old boys were playing with it, reportedly wounding three people including the two boys, and a device is said to have exploded in a house, reportedly killing one militant.

2. Fuel deliveries (week)

3.

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
25 April – 1 May		294,096 (UNRWA)	44,854 petrol (UNRWA)	925 tons
	Percentage of need *			53%
Previous week		99,500 liters (UNRWA)		502 tons
* Fuel association 2006 estimates - ** Imports of diesel and petrol for the general public and public sector in Gaza were exceptionally authorized on 5 occasions since October 2008				

Delivery of Industrial Fuel to the Power Plant (week):

Industrial diesel	Previous week	25 April – 1 May
	1,045 million litres	1,463 million litres
Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply capacity of 80 MW		42%

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4. Humanitarian trucks (week):

Truck originator	Total for week 25 April – 1 May
UNRWA	69
ICRC	1
NGO	5
Water utility	11
Electricity company	2
Donations	1
Commercial	424
Karni Crossing	124
Total trucks for the week	637
Percentage of weekly average before the blockade (April 2007)	48%

5. External links to further reports

UN OCHA Protection of Civilians Weekly Report: 21-27 April

http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_protection_of_civilians_2010_04_27_english.pdf

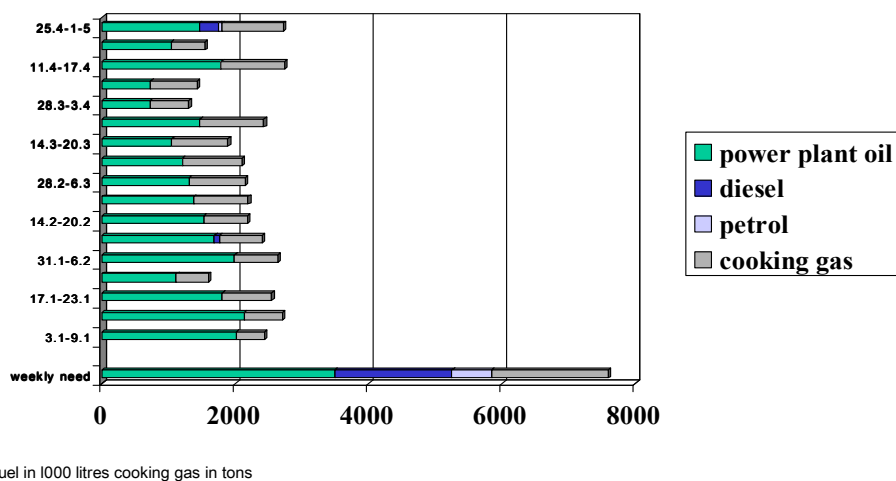
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7. Trend Charts

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Fuel passing weekly into Gaza in January, February, March and April 2010 in comparison with fuel association 2006 estimates of weekly need



Truckloads of humanitarian goods passing weekly into Gaza in January, February, March and April 2010 as compared to the pre blockade April 2007 weekly average

