

Gaza cheese factory hit for the second time

A member of the Dalloul family stands on the ruins of what used to be the family-run cheese factory in Al Sabra, Gaza City, until last week. Israeli aircrafts reportedly bombed the factory and 13 other targets across the Gaza Strip on the night between Thursday 1 and Friday 2 April, possibly in response to recent rocket fire by Palestinian militants that hit Ashkelon, killing a Thai national. The shelling caused significant damage to the factory, as well as damage to several adjacent houses, and three persons were reportedly injured from glass shrapnel. This is not the first time a Dalloul factory has been targeted by the Israeli military. During the Israeli military operation “Cast Lead”, fighter jets had destroyed another, bigger cheese factory owned by the Dalloul family in the same street, whose production was sold throughout the entire Gaza Strip.

“During the military operation, the Israelis had a policy of calling in advance to warn us they were about to attack, so we had the chance to escape,” said factory owner and father of seven children, Motasem Dalloul, who lives next to the destroyed factory. “But last night we were all asleep. The bomb shook the house, my children were in shock and my wife collapsed”, Dalloul told Oxfam.

On Friday, bucketsful of cheese and dairy products could be seen strewn all over the place as family members looked on at the destruction. The factory used to produce 300kg of cheese a day, in addition to yoghurt, low fat milk and other dairy products, and it was just starting to recover from the losses it sustained in Operation Cast Lead. “Our factory had been open since 1996,” Motasem said. “It took us six months and thousands of dollars of loans and savings to rebuild after it was destroyed last year, and we could only provide cheese for Gaza City. Now we are bankrupt.”

While the Israeli government states it targeted Hamas infrastructure, Motasem claims the factory produced only dairy products. “Do you think I would be producing weapons next to my house?” he said. “We also have a blacksmith’s workshop further away from here that was never targeted. I believe our factory has been targeted, together with other factories, in an attempt to destroy our economy. Our work undermines the siege, so that’s why I believe we were targeted.” *Photo: Karl Schembri/Oxfam*



1. Headlines

- **Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions:** According to reports, 12 rockets were directed by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza at Israeli forces this week (as compared with 15 rockets, 2 mortars and 1 mine reported the week prior). There were reports of 2 Israeli military incursions, 10 airstrikes and 4 shells (compared with 8 Israeli military incursions, 5 airstrikes and 5 shells reported in the previous week). No firefights were reported this week, while 3 were reported the week before.

This week, Israeli airstrikes reportedly hit a dairy factory in the southeast of Sabra quarter (*see story above*), a metal workshop opposite Maghazi camp, Asdaa media centre in the former Gush Qatif settlement bloc, and a military training base and the tunnels west of Rafah.

No Palestinians were reportedly killed this week, but 7 were reported injured, including one 16 year-old. According to reports, 4 Palestinians were reported killed the week before, including a

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15-year old boy, and another 10 were reported injured. No Israeli casualties were reported this week. Last week, 3 Israeli soldiers were reportedly killed (one of them by friendly fire) and another two injured. So far in 2010, 12 Palestinians and 3 Israeli soldiers (including one soldier killed by “friendly fire”) have been killed and another 59 Palestinians and 4 Israeli soldiers have been injured in the Gaza Strip (OCHA, 30 March 2010).

- **Fishermen:** There were 2 incidents reported of Palestinian fishermen being fired at by Israeli naval vessels this week. The previous week, 2 incidents were reported, with one fisherman being hit by a bullet in his head. 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:** This week, no Palestinians reportedly died in tunnels under the Egypt-Gaza border. Egyptian forces reportedly discovered and destroyed 4 tunnels this week. Last week, no Palestinians reportedly died in tunnels. Since the beginning of 2010, 12 Palestinians were reported killed and 21 others injured in tunnel-related incidents, including air strikes, tunnel collapses and electrocution (OCHA, 30 March 2010).
- **Palestinians in the “buffer zone”:** There were five reports of Israeli troops firing towards Palestinians near the “buffer zone” this week. In all five incidents, Israeli soldiers posted in observation posts in the “buffer zone” reportedly fired warning shots towards Palestinians to disperse demonstrations commemorating the 34th anniversary of Land Day. In one incident, three Palestinians, including a 16 year old, were reportedly injured, with one in critical condition.

Two incidents were reported last week of Israeli troops firing towards groups of Palestinians collecting rubble near the “buffer zone”. Palestinian farmers indicate that for some rural families, collecting rubble is increasingly becoming a sole source of income in light of continued restrictions on access to agricultural land near the border. The rubble is sold to brick factories, which recycle it and use it for construction purposes, due to the lack of construction material as a result of the Israeli blockade (OCHA, 30 March 2010). Israeli forces prohibit Palestinian access to farming land along the perimeter fence by opening “warning fire” on people approaching this so-called “buffer zone”.

- **Rafah border crossing:** The Rafah border crossing was officially closed this week, however people crossed on 3 out of 7 days. During those 3 days, 12 people left and 446 entered Gaza. Last week, Rafah was officially open one day, however people crossed on 2 out of 7 days, during which 30 people left and 525 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 each way.
- **Power plant and electricity supply:** Only 721,660 litres of industrial fuel were delivered to Gaza this week, as deliveries were cancelled on 29 and 30 March due to Jewish holidays. This is only 20% of the 3.5 million litres of fuel needed weekly to operate Gaza’s only power plant at the current maximum export capacity of 80Mw. Last week, 1,468 million litres of industrial fuel were transferred.

Since 3 March 2010, the power plant has continued to operate on one turbine, producing only 30 MW (megawatts) of electricity, or 38% of the GPP full capacity. As a result, the majority of Gaza’s population is experiencing long rolling blackouts of 8 to 12 hours a day. Additional power cuts frequently occur due to the extensive overloads on the already overstressed electrical network (OCHA, 23 March). Imports of industrial fuel have been declining 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.

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- **Cooking gas:** Only 581 tons of cooking gas reportedly entered Gaza this week, 33% of the normal weekly level of need of 1,750 tons. Deliveries were cancelled on 29 and 30 March due to Jewish holidays. 964 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:** No petrol or diesel were delivered in Gaza this week, just as no petrol and no diesel had been delivered last week. 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:** 470 truckloads of humanitarian supplies were permitted entry through Kerem Shalom and the Karni conveyor during the week - the equivalent of 36% of the pre-blockade weekly average. 583 trucks were allowed into Gaza during the previous week. Deliveries were cancelled on 29 and 30 March due to Jewish holidays.

3 truckloads of glass were permitted entry into Gaza this week; 3 had been allowed in the week before. Since 29 December 2009, a total of 142 truckloads carrying over 90,000 sheets of glass were imported.

2 truckloads of gravel entered this week thanks to UNRWA coordination. The UN agency received a shipment of 25 tonnes of cement (half a truckload) via Kerem Shalom for the construction and upgrading of a UN pumping station in southern Gaza. The imported cement, however, represents only a small portion of the construction materials needed to complete a number of other UN projects, which are pending due to the lack of construction materials.

- **Exports:** This week, 4 truckloads of flowers were exported from the Gaza Strip. Last week, 6 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. During the 2009 winter season, only 2% of strawberries and 9% of cut flowers of Gaza's total export potential were permitted to leave, representing the third "lost season" in terms of profit and return of the investments (FAO). Since 10 December 2009, following a period of seven months of no exports, 110 truckloads, have exited Gaza, including 77 truckloads of cut flowers and 33 truckloads of strawberries, exports of which stopped on 10 February).

2. Fuel deliveries (week)

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
28 March – 3 April		0	0	581 tons
	Percentage of need *			33%
Previous week				964 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	28 March – 3 April
	1,468 million litres	721,660 litres
Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply capacity of 80 MW		20%

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3. Household level energy supplies:

Area	Hours of Blackout For Week of 28 March – 3 April (based on 168 hours)	% Hours of Weekly Blackout 28 March – 3 April	% Hours of Weekly Blackout The week before	Have gas?
Beit Hanoun	35	21%	18%	Yes
Beit Lahia	35	21%	18%	No
Jabalia	65	39%	42%	Yes
Gaza City	49	29%	32%	Yes
Deir El Balah	56	33%	33%	Yes
El Burej	30	18%	21%	Yes
El Nusairat	40	24%	21%	Yes
El Maghazi	35	21%	21%	Yes
Khan Younis	30	18%	21%	Yes
Rafah	20	12%	15%	Yes

4. Humanitarian trucks (week):

Truck originator	Total for week 28 March – 3 April
UNRWA	19
WFP	25
ICRC	3
NGO	5
Donation	5
Commercial	233
Karni Crossing	180
Total trucks for the week	470
Percentage of weekly average before the blockade (April 2007)	36%

5. External links to further reports

UN OCHA Protection of Civilians Weekly Report: 24-30 March 2010

http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_protection_of_civilians_2010_04_01_english.pdf

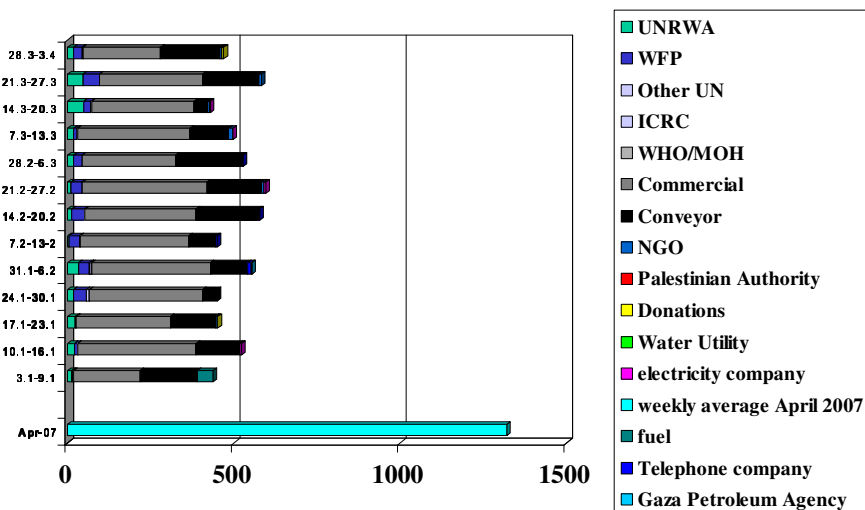
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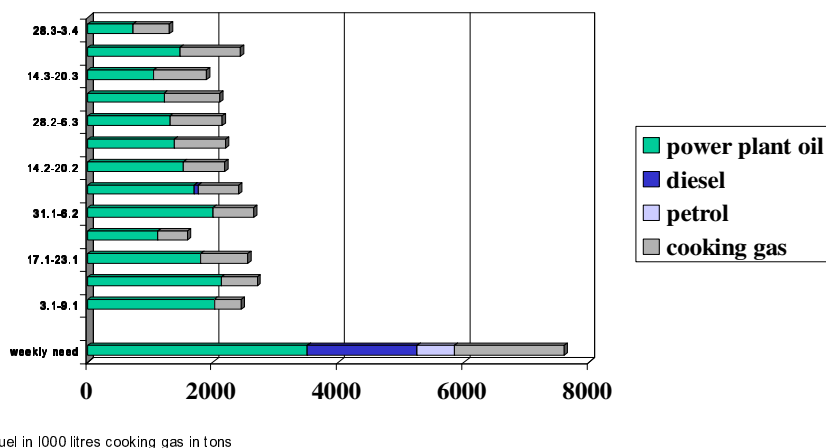
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7. Trend Charts

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



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



fuel in 1000 litres cooking gas in tons