

Generators: their place is outside, Oxfam warns

Oxfam recently launched an awareness-raising campaign for Palestinians in Gaza about the dangers of using portable generators. An electricity crisis continues to affect the Gaza Strip –with Gaza’s only power plant shutting down on Friday and Saturday due to a lack of fuel. As a consequence, Palestinians are increasingly using generators to power their homes and work places in order to continue to live as normally as possible. However, the misuse of some generators resulted in 75 deaths last year according to the Gazan authorities, and 15 fatalities were reported in the first two months of this year alone – mainly from fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.

On 9 April, an electrical generator reportedly caught fire in Gaza city as a man attempted to refuel it whilst holding a candle. The man, his wife and one of his cousins were all severely burned and taken to Shifa hospital for treatment. One portable generator produces as much carbon monoxide as several hundred cars. It is an odourless and invisible gas that kills within minutes. Approaching working generators with a flame or while smoking has already provoked deadly fires in many households.

This has prompted Oxfam to launch an information campaign across the Gaza Strip together with local partners, distributing brochures and posters to shops, public places, hospitals, schools and directly to many families. The main slogan adopted for the campaign is: “Its place is outside. Generators in closed areas kill people. Don’t be the next victim.” The brochures outline step-by-step instructions on how to operate the generator safely, before, during and after switching it on.



1. Headlines

- **Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions:** According to reports, 5 rockets, 20 mortars and 2 rocket-propelled grenades were directed by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza at Israeli forces this week (as compared with 12 rockets reported the week prior). There were reports of 3 Israeli military incursions, 1 airstrike and 1 shell (compared with 2 Israeli military incursions, 10 airstrikes and 4 shells reported in the previous week). No firefights were reported this week, and no firefights were reported the week before.
No Palestinians were reportedly killed this week, but 4 were reported injured, including three who were walking on the street in Beit Hanoun when a rocket fired by Palestinian militants fell on a house nearby. According to reports, no Palestinians were reportedly killed the week before, but 7 were reported injured, including one 16 year-old. No Israeli casualties were reported this week or last week.
- **Fishermen:** No incidents of Palestinian fishermen being fired at by Israeli naval vessels were reported 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.

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- **Tunnel related fatalities:** This week, one 17-year old Palestinian reportedly died in a tunnel collapse under the Egypt-Gaza border, and Egyptian forces reportedly discovered and destroyed 4 tunnels. Last week, no Palestinians reportedly died in tunnels, and Egyptian forces reportedly discovered and destroyed 4 tunnels.
- **Palestinians in the “buffer zone”:** There were 3 reports of Israeli troops firing towards Palestinians participating in a demonstration, farmers and shepherds near the “buffer zone” this week. One farmer was reportedly arrested by an Israeli foot patrol north of Beit Hanoun. Five incidents were reported last week of Israeli troops firing warning shots towards groups of 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. 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 5 out of 7 days. During those 5 days, 22 people left and 387 entered Gaza. Last week, Rafah was officially closed, however people crossed on 3 out of 7 days, during which 12 people left and 446 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:** The power plant was shut on Friday 9 and Saturday 10 April after fuel supplies ran out. For the second week in a row, deliveries of industrial fuel to Gaza were extremely low: only 731,350 litres were delivered this week, with deliveries being cancelled on 5 April due to a Jewish holiday. This is only 21% 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, only 721,600 million litres of industrial fuel were transferred, and deliveries were cancelled on 29 and 30 March due to Jewish holidays. Imports of industrial fuel have 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. Since March 3, the facility had been producing only 30 megawatts of electricity, or 38 percent of its full capacity, leading to blackouts of eight to 12 hours a day in parts of the Gaza Strip.
- **Cooking gas:** Only 698 tons of cooking gas reportedly entered Gaza this week, 40% of the normal weekly level of need of 1,750 tons. Deliveries were cancelled on 5 April due to a Jewish holiday. 581 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:** 480 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. 470 trucks were allowed into Gaza during the previous week. Deliveries were cancelled on 5 April due to a Jewish holiday.

7 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 149 truckloads carrying over 90,000 sheets of glass were imported. On 4 April, Israeli authorities allowed ten truckloads of clothes and shoes destined for private merchants to enter Gaza for the first time. Such goods had already been imported as part of humanitarian shipments, and large amounts of clothes are brought in through smuggling tunnels running under the Gaza-Egypt border, meaning there are no shortages of such goods.

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- **Exports:** This week, 3 truckloads of flowers were exported from the Gaza Strip. Last week, 4 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, 113 truckloads, have exited Gaza, including 80 truckloads of cut flowers and 33 truckloads of strawberries, exports of which stopped on 10 February).

2. Fuel deliveries (week)

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
4-10 April		0	0	698 tons
	Percentage of need *			33%
Previous week				581 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	4-10 April
	721,600 million litres	731,350 litres
Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply capacity of 80 MW		21%

3. Household level energy supplies:

Area	Hours of Blackout For Week of 4-10 April (based on 168 hours)	% Hours of Weekly Blackout 4-10 April	% Hours of Weekly Blackout The week before	Have gas?
Beit Hanoun	30	18%	21%	Yes
Beit Lahia	30	18%	21%	Yes
Jabalia	70	42%	39%	Yes
Gaza City	64	38%	29%	Yes
Deir El Balah	56	33%	33%	Yes but supply is running out
El Burej	50	30%	18%	Yes
El Nusairat	90	54%	24%	Yes
El Maghazi	60	36%	21%	Yes
Khan Younis	90	54%	18%	Yes
Rafah	20	12%	12%	Yes

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4. Humanitarian trucks (week):

Truck originator	Total for week 4-10 April
UNRWA	20
WFP	36
ICRC	1
NGO	9
Electricity company	1
Commercial	273
Karni Crossing	140
Total trucks for the week	480
Percentage of weekly average before the blockade (April 2007)	36%

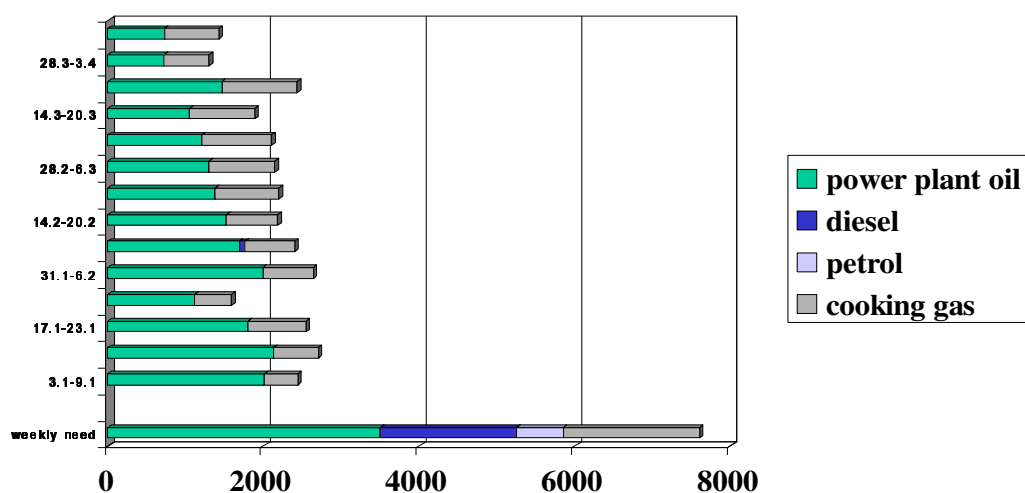
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6. Trend Charts

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

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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

