

# UNICEF oPt Monthly Update

15 July 2009

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## MAJOR ISSUES

- The ICRC demanded that Israel lift the blockade on Gaza, saying that six months after Israel's large-scale offensive, the enclave's inhabitants were being prevented from "rebuilding their lives". The report said rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel also put thousands at risk.
- 8 July marked the five-year anniversary of the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion that found that Israel's construction of the Wall within the occupied Palestinian territory violated its obligations under international law. Around 86 per cent of the Barrier lies within the West Bank.

## Child Protection

The UN Mine Assistance Team in Gaza has received specialist explosive ordnance disposal equipment requested in February. Imports of explosives to demolish the UXOs are now needed for the teams to be fully operational. Six children have been killed by UXOs since the ceasefires on 18 January and many areas remain contaminated with hazardous materials. UNICEF has worked closely with partners in mine risk education efforts in Gaza, including producing materials for children that are still being used by the Red Crescent Society and the Ministry of Education.

As chair of the 1612 working group in Israel and oPt, UNICEF coordinated the group's submission to the Goldstone Fact Finding Mission on grave violations committed against children during "Cast Lead". The group reports on nine indicators, including deaths and maiming, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access. The Goldstone Mission visited Gaza in July. Israel has refused to cooperate.

## FEATURED



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UNICEF Radio has won two New York Festivals Radio Programming and Promotion Awards for its coverage of the conflict in the Gaza Strip in late 2008 and early 2009. The series 'Gaza's Children under Siege' won the Silver World Medal for Best Online News Programme and the Bronze World Medal in News.

Read the story and listen to the interviews at:  
[http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/oPt\\_50169.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/oPt_50169.html)

In the West Bank, YMCA psychosocial teams conducted seven emergency home or hospital visits following military incursions or house demolitions, and provided 600 children and 305 caregivers with individual or group counseling support. In Gaza, the Palestinian Centre for Democracy and Conflict Resolution teams reached more than 5,300 children and more than 1,900 parents with psychosocial assistance, including children referred by a UNICEF-supported toll-free line as well as children referred by local communities.

At end-June, UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Affairs agreed to establish five pilot child protection networks across oPt that will provide integrated services for child victims of abuse and violence. The agreement covers training 85 child protection social workers and network members in case management and referrals, and in establishing a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system.

## Health/Nutrition

Around 20 per cent of essential drugs were out of stock at Gaza's Central Drug Store in June. Daily power cuts and fluctuations continue to damage

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medical equipment and most hospitals rely on back up generators for several hours each day.

Seriously ill patients in need of medical treatment not available in Gaza must submit to an arduous bureaucratic process involving Israeli and Palestinian authorities. Some 1,356 referral documents for patients were issued in June, including for 223 children under 15 years old, out of a total of 1,484 requests. Three patients died before they could access medical treatment outside Gaza in June according to WHO.

UNICEF, UNRWA, WHO, and MoH in Gaza organised training on medical waste management; injection safety; adverse events following immunization; and infection control, for around 100 health care providers working in Gaza's 56 health clinics and 13 hospitals. Around 80 healthworkers from MoH, UNRWA and NGO facilities were also trained in exclusive breastfeeding; integrated management of childhood illness skills; and on protocols for managing acute malnutrition.

Neonatal and obstetric kits, pediatric drugs, medical disposables and equipment worth over USD 140,000 were provided in June to the MoH. Sufficient quantities of micronutrient supplements (milk F75, milk F100 with plumpy nut) to treat 1,100 moderate to severely malnourished children for six months were also provided to partner Ard El-Insan.

UNICEF and WHO have completed the identification of geocodes for 35 MoH primary health clinics and 10 hospitals. The geocodes support improved mapping, and will help address gaps in health service coverage.

As at 9 July, the number number of officially diagnosed swine-flu cases in the West Bank stood at 71 including 17 children, with no deaths.

Routine immunization services were maintained in primary health care centers, with districts recording above 97 per cent coverage among eligible infants.

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

The WASH cluster reported that three trucks carrying cement, which has been barred from Gaza for months, and nine trucks with chlorine to treat water, entered Gaza in June, but the vast majority of WASH projects remain on hold due to the blockade. Without cement, steel pipes and aggregates, major reconstruction on water wells, waste water reservoirs and the Khan Younis waste water treatment plant in southern Gaza is not possible.

### FEATURED



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Fourteen-month old Sara is weighed by a nurse at a UNICEF-supported clinic in Shofa, in the northern West Bank. Shofa is located in Area C, which is under full Israeli military and administrative control. It's 1500 residents have very little access to health care.

Around 10,000 people in northern Gaza cannot access water from the network due to repairs by Gaza's Coastal Municipal Water Utility (CMWU). Most households rely on tankered water; others obtain it from filling points close to their homes, or buy it from commercial vendors. The price of water from vendors has increased by about 25 per cent to 25-30 NIS per cubic liter since the beginning of June when repairs of the public water network began.

UNICEF provided three 65 KVA generators to support water pumping for at three wells recently constructed by UNICEF in central and southern Gaza, and one 900 KVA generator was provided to Gaza's wastewater treatment plant. The generators were funded by contributions from the United Arab Emirates.

UNICEF, FAO and the Ministry of Planning are developing a Water Scarcity Task Force to address water-scarcity in the long term, whether due to global warming, or to control of, and access to water resources. The group will conduct vulnerability assessments across oPt, develop a monitoring framework and early warning system; and draft policies and strategies to reduce vulnerability.

## Education

Around 4,000 children from 66 kindergartens across Gaza are participating in “open days” featuring games and other recreational activities between 7 and 24 July. Almost 200 kindergarten directors and teachers from the 66 kindergartens were also trained over three days to strengthen their early childhood development skills, and around 1,600 parents were trained in how to support children through especially difficult circumstances, including in emergencies. Around 250 caregivers and kindergarten supervisors in the West Bank received similar training.

About 820 students aged 6-12 have signed up for “Tales Clubs” operating in 12 centres across Gaza and the West Bank. The clubs promote reading, story telling and creative writing, and encourage students to explore their own historical and traditional roots. The children meet twice weekly for two hours. The project runs through January 2010.

Sixteen new supervisors from all of Gaza’s six education directorates received 50 hours of training over eight days on supervisory skills and counseling and support procedures at end-May and early June. Similar training is underway in the West Bank for 50 professionals. Staffers from Gaza’s Planning Ministry and the education directorates also participated in 80 hours of computer training that will support the development of geographic information system (GIS) maps for planning and monitoring.

At the Humanitarian Task Force meeting in June, UNICEF confirmed its support to MoEHE in strengthening advocacy and fundraising efforts for education in East Jerusalem. Issues to be tackled include access constraints due to the Barrier and Israeli restrictions against building new classrooms, as well as impact on education quality.

## Adolescents

Over a thousand adolescents in Gaza took part in climate change workshops to celebrate International Environment Day. The adolescents attend UNICEF-supported centres that offer remedial education support along with structured recreational and learning activities and are developing a youth-led advocacy campaign on the right to live in a healthy environment. The 73 UNICEF-supported centres across oPt support other youth-led initiatives that include conducting research (such as the risks faced by children working in Gaza’s tunnels); tree planting; and community clean-up campaigns.

## FEATURED



Around 12,000 people in Al Moghraqa community in central Gaza can now access safe water for four to six hours every other day, due to a well constructed with UNICEF support. The well was handed over to the municipality on 1 July.

Around 15,000 residents in Rafah, in southern Gaza, also have better access to water following rehabilitations to the water network by UNICEF and Gaza’s Coastal Municipality Water Utility.

Around 120 researchers aged 14 to 17 from across oPt were trained on creative thinking and communication skills to help them prepare and present findings of research undertaken last year. The young researchers will develop lectures on topics such as safe water, solar energy, and HIV/AIDS prevention, for presentation to their peers over the coming months.

UNICEF and PYALARA trained 30 youth workers to conduct creative writing workshops for adolescents, and 90 adolescents were trained on civic participation. The trainings are part of a nine-month peer support programme in the wake of “Cast Lead” that targets young people in severely affected areas of Gaza with opportunities for creative expression through writing, photography and community building.

UNICEF is supporting daily sports and life-skills education at 60 clubs across the West Bank. The clubs are located in hard-to-reach communities with little infrastructure for youth. Around 9,000 adolescents will benefit each month.

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### REAL LIVES

#### *Music inspires adolescents in Jenin refugee camp*

In the middle of overcrowded Jenin refugee camp stands a UNICEF-supported adolescent friendly learning centre, its worn out façade belying the bustle of activity within. As sounds of beating drums and keyboard melodies waft down from the second floor, a small group of teenagers rush down the staircase, chatting excitedly among themselves.

Aws Al Sadi, Qais Saxxour, and Majd Al Sadi, all 15 years old, have been coming to the adolescent friendly learning centre for two years. They always head directly for the music corner, where they play with instruments such as the traditional 'tabla' drum, and keyboards. "I can't imagine not playing music anymore," Aws said. "Without it, I don't know what I would do."

Many local musicians have left the area and the centre has been unable to hire a full-time music instructor so Aws, Qais and Majd are feeding their hunger for music via the internet at the centre's IT lab. They've now formed their own band, 'Noujoum Al Layl' (The Night Stars), and are offering lessons to their peers.

#### **Offering life-skills education and recreation for adolescents**

Adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 comprise around 11 per cent of the population in oPt, and are frequently exposed to the frontline of the conflict with Israel, as well as violence on the streets. In 2008, 80 per cent of children killed in conflict were adolescents; and the vast majority of Palestinian children being held in Israeli detention facilities are between 15 and 17 years old. Most young people report anxiety, poor performance in school and aggressive behaviour as their main symptoms of stress.

UNICEF-supported adolescent friendly learning centres are working to expand learning, recreational and civic participation opportunities for this particularly vulnerable age group. Each of 73 centres across the West Bank and Gaza is equipped with a computer lab, sports and music equipment, stationary and art supplies and library books. The centres also support adolescent-led campaigns to prevent peers from dropping out of school; to promote reading; and to advocate for ending violence.

"In the two years since the centre has been operational, I've seen these young people become less prone to violence, and more able to communicate

### FEATURED



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Nael, 12, earns around USD 5 a week working at an autobody shop in Gaza. He's helping support his family, and he no longer attends school. Around 7 in 10 households in Gaza now live below the poverty line.

Read the story at: [http://www.unicef.org/oPt/media\\_5759.html](http://www.unicef.org/oPt/media_5759.html)

with each other and to adults," said Naim Sadi, UNICEF Jenin Field Officer. "They've learned critical skills – team work, respect, self-confidence – that will last them a lifetime."

#### **Music transports us away from here**

Aws, Qais and Majd were five years old when the second Intifada erupted in 2000. They can remember, but just barely, a time when they could travel freely to the beach 40 minutes away, or visit the cinemas and cultural spaces in nearby Jerusalem.

Today, conflict and occupation affect all aspects of their lives. The more than 600 obstacles to internal Palestinian movement across the West Bank block more than the physical movement of people and goods, the boys say, but stifle creativity and dreams as well. Music, for these boys, is a ticket to a place far away from checkpoints, violence and politics.

When asked about their dreams for the future, they sit in silence. After some thought, they all say that they want to be music stars. "What all of us want, more than anything else, is to be like adolescents everywhere else around the world," said Aws. "We want to be free to live, to hope, to dream."

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### Basic indicators

Indicator	Data
Under-five mortality rate 2007 (per 1,000 live births)	27
Infant mortality rate 2006 (per 1,000 live births)	24
Life expectancy at birth, 2007	73
Annual number of births (thousands), 2007	145
Annual no. of under-5 deaths (thousands), 2007	4
1-year-old children immunized against TB, DPT, polio, measles, HepB and Hib	99
% under-fives with suspected pneumonia to appropriate health care provider, 2000-2007	65
Proportion of under 6 month-olds exclusively breastfed, 2000-2007	27
Proportion of under-fives moderately or severely stunted, 2000-2007	10
Primary school net attendance ratio, females, 2000 – 2007 (%)	92
Primary school net attendance ratio, males, 2000 – 2007 (%)	91
Secondary school gross enrolment ratio, females, 2005 – 2006 (%)	79.5*
Secondary school gross enrolment ratio, males, 2005 – 2006 (%)	69.8*
Number per 100 population (2006) of internet users	7
Maternal mortality ratio	No data
Total population (thousands), 2007	4,017
Total population (thousands) under 18, 2007	2,095
Total population (thousands) under 5, 2007	685
Total fertility rate, 2007	5.2
GDP per capita average annual growth rate (%), 1990-2007	-2.9
GNI per capita (US\$), 2007	1,230
ODA inflow in millions US\$, 2006	1,449
ODA inflow as a % of recipient GNI in 2006	33

*All data from the State of the World's Children 2009 unless otherwise cited.*

*\*Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007*

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#### For more information, please contact:

Marixie Mercado, Chief, Communication, UNICEF-oPt + (972) 54 77 87 604; [mmercado@unicef.org](mailto:mmercado@unicef.org)

**Next monthly update:** Friday 14 August 2009