

Shattered lives

Three years since the 22-day Israeli military operation Cast Lead in Gaza, the Al Batsch family from Shajaiya is still living in their damaged home, financially unable to repair it.

By the end of the military operation, the Al Batsch family's apartment was damaged by tank shells, their fruit producing trees were uprooted and their livestock was all dead.

"Everything was destroyed and burnt down. We had to start everything from scratch, cooking on firewood like in primitive times. All my sheep, lambs, and hens were killed, and our trees uprooted," said Kamal Rabi' Ibrahim Al Batsch, a father of eight.

Having lost his source of livelihood, Kamal was unable to repair the damage left by the Israeli military, and fears the possibility of a new military operation that would leave his family completely vulnerable yet again.

"I've started raising a few sheep. Trees will take much longer to grow. It's impossible to tell you all the losses," he explained.

More than 1,400 Palestinians and 9 Israelis were killed during Cast Lead. Thousands of private homes, in addition to hundreds of public buildings including hospitals, schools and factories were also destroyed, together with agricultural land, farms and water networks.

Oxfam's human rights partners in Gaza, Al Mezan and Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, have documented extensively the violations of international humanitarian law reported during military operation Cast Lead. PCHR has submitted 490 complaints to the government of Israel on behalf of 1,046 victims, but only two substantive replies have been received so far.

PCHR believes that respect for the rule of law is a first step towards building peace and security, and that it is important for people affected by conflict and injustice to see that those responsible for committing violations are brought to justice. "If the law is to be respected – if it is to prove capable of protecting civilian populations – it must be enforced; victims' rights to the equal protection of the law and effective judicial remedy must be upheld."

Text and picture: Karl Schembri/Oxfam

1. Headlines

Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions: There were reports this week that the Israeli military carried out 7 shellings and 1 airstrike in Gaza. Last week, the Israeli military reportedly carried out 2 shellings and 1 incursion across the perimeter into Gaza.

There were reports this week that Palestinian militants fired 4 home made rockets (HMR) and 3 mortars. The week before, 6 home made rockets (HMR) and 3 mortars were reportedly fired.

No Palestinian civilians were reportedly injured or killed as a result of Israeli military activity this week or last week.

There were reports that 2 Palestinian militants were killed this week as a result of Israeli military activity. Last week, 2 Palestinian militants were reportedly injured.

No Israeli civilians or soldiers were reported injured or killed this week or last week.

In 2011, Oxfam reported that 40 Palestinian civilians were killed, 407 Palestinian civilians were injured, 63 Palestinian militants (including Hamas officers) were killed and 79 militants were injured as a result of Israeli military activity. Oxfam reported that 3 Israeli civilians were killed, 34 Israeli civilians were injured and 4 Israeli soldiers were injured as a result of Palestinian militant activity during the same reporting period.

- **Fishermen:** There were no reports of Israeli naval vessels opening fire on Palestinian fishermen this week or last week.

In 2011, Oxfam reported 82 incidents of Israeli naval vessels opening fire on Palestinian fishermen, with 5 fishermen reportedly injured and 1 lost at sea.

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, banning access to around 85% of Gaza's fishing water. In 2010, the annual fishing catch from Gaza decreased by 45% as compared to the 2008 fishing catch before fishing space was restricted to three nautical miles.

- **Tunnel related fatalities:** This week, a tunnel beneath the border between Gaza and Egypt collapsed, with 2 Palestinians reportedly injured. Last week, no tunnel related incidents were reported.

In 2011, Oxfam reported that 37 Palestinian workers were killed and 45 others were reportedly injured while working in the tunnels between Gaza and Egypt.

- **Palestinians in the access restricted area (the so-called "buffer zone"):** This week there were 2 reports of the Israeli military opening fire in the access restricted area, with damage reported to a house but no injuries reported. Last week, there were no reports of the Israeli military opening fire in the access restricted area.

In 2011, Oxfam reported 78 incidents of the Israeli military opening fire on civilians in the buffer zone, with 10 civilians reportedly killed and 41 others reportedly injured.

In 2000, Israel first imposed a 150 metre-wide security 'buffer' within Gaza's perimeter. In certain areas along the northern and eastern perimeters, this official buffer extends up to 500 metres into Gaza. In practice, Israel restricts access to agricultural land up to 1,000-1,500 metres from the fence, which accounts for more than 30% of Gaza's agricultural land and a significant number of water wells. Most of the Gaza Strip's animal production is also concentrated in this area.

- **Rafah border crossing:** The Rafah border crossing was open 5 out of 7 days this week, with reports of 2,881 Palestinians entering Gaza from Egypt, 4,743 Palestinians leaving Gaza for Egypt, and 97 Palestinians denied entry to Egypt. Last week, the Rafah border crossing was open 5 out of 7 days this week, with reports of 3,343 Palestinians entering Gaza from Egypt, 3,719 Palestinians leaving Gaza for Egypt, and 185 Palestinians denied entry to Egypt.

On May 28, 2011, the Egyptian authorities announced that they had permanently opened Rafah border crossing for the movement of people between Gaza and Egypt. During the first official week of opening, Egyptian officials had reported being overwhelmed by the volume of Palestinians from Gaza attempting to use Rafah border crossing, which had resulted in some delays. Hamas officials had also reported that the Egyptian procedures for transferring travelers from one side to the other were not clear.

Although Rafah border crossing does not ease movement restrictions between Gaza, Israel, and the West Bank, a full and consistent opening of Rafah border crossing would offer Palestinians in Gaza an opportunity to travel abroad for higher education opportunities, medical treatment, or to take a personal holiday.

An estimated 500 people rely on the Rafah border crossing every month to reach scheduled or ongoing medical treatment in Egypt or abroad.

- **Power plant and electricity supply:** Since January 5th, 2011, Gaza's power plant has not placed an order for industrial fuel to be transferred from Israel. The fuel for Gaza's power plant is now being supplied through the tunnels underneath the Gaza-Egypt border in the form of Egyptian diesel, at a much lower price than the industrial fuel supplied from Israel.

OCHA estimates that the power plant receives between 300,000 and 400,000 litres of diesel from the tunnels every day. In addition to what is procured daily from the tunnels, the power plant in Gaza now reportedly has a back up supply of fuel, capable of running the plant at an output of 60 Mw for one month.

- **Cooking gas:** 176 tons of cooking gas reportedly entered Gaza this week via the Kerem Shalom crossing, as compared to 363 tons of cooking gas reported to have entered Gaza the week before. The 176 tons of cooking gas entering Gaza this week represents 10 percent of the 1,750 tons of cooking gas needed weekly. The overall cooking gas shortage has been a main concern for humanitarian agencies since November 2009. Cooking gas cannot safely be transported through the tunnels beneath the Gaza-Egypt border as it is highly combustible and requires a special pipeline to transport in bulk.
- **Diesel/petrol:** No diesel or benzine was reported to have been delivered to the private sector this week or last week. A near total ban on fuel imports for public sale was put in place by the Government of Israel in October 2008. Around 600,000 litres of diesel and 200,000 litres of petrol for public sale are reported to enter Gaza every day through tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border (OCHA, January 2011).

- **Exports:** There were 20 truckloads (15 trucks of strawberries, 3 trucks of flowers, 1 truck of tomatoes and 1 truck of bell peppers) of exports that left Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing this week, representing 4 percent of the pre-blockade weekly average of exports*. Last week, 34 trucks of agricultural products were exported.

Since 2007, and despite an Israeli government commitment in December 2010 to make additional efforts to increase exports from Gaza, exports have to date been entirely agricultural in nature, contributing to the de-development of Gaza's private sector. According to UNRWA calculations, before the blockade, 90 percent of garments, 76 percent of furniture products and 20 percent of food products produced in Gaza were marketed to the West Bank and Israel.

**Pre-blockade weekly average (490 truckloads) is calculated on the daily average of all truckloads that exited Gaza between January 2005 and mid June 2007, before Israel's imposition of the blockade.*

- **Truckloads of supplies:** Kerem Shalom crossing was open 5 out of 7 days this week, with reports of 1,063 truckloads of supplies entering Gaza, which represents 38 percent of the pre-blockade weekly average.** Last week, Kerem Shalom crossing was also open 5 out of 7 days with reports of 1,123 truckloads of supplies entering Gaza.

Following the permanent closure of Karni crossing in early March 2011 and its demolition at the beginning of this year, Kerem Shalom is now the sole permanent crossing through which goods enter Gaza. Karni could accommodate up to 1,000 trucks a day. Kerem Shalom crossing can accommodate around 250 trucks per day. UNRWA has referred to the Kerem Shalom crossing, located in the deep south of Gaza, as an inefficient bottleneck that adds around 20 percent in transport and labour costs to the price of humanitarian goods. Kerem Shalom crossing is also not equipped to handle the bulk transfer of large quantities of wheat and animal feed, while Karni was.

While imports remain limited, and raw materials severely restricted, exports have remained banned almost entirely except for limited numbers of truckloads of strawberries, carnations, sweet peppers, and cherry tomatoes exported to the Netherlands. As a result, the scale of economic activity remains heavily dependent on local demand in Gaza, which in turn is constrained by the low purchasing power of the population and the relatively small size of the local market. Until crossings are fully open for export, the impact of the easing of the blockade on unemployment, poverty and food insecurity rates remains limited.

***Pre-blockade weekly average (2,807 truckloads) is calculated based on the monthly average of all truckloads that entered during the first five months of 2007, before Israel's imposition of the blockade.*

This update is compiled by **Oxfam International** from the best available information drawn from reliable international sources. Some of the information is preliminary and may be updated in subsequent reports.

2. Humanitarian trucks (week):

Truck originator	Total for week 15 - 21 January
Bulk grains (human and animal)	125
Aggregates (for humanitarian agencies)	167
UNRWA	108
WFP	29
Power Authority	5
FCC	2
Jawal	5
Palestinian	2
Commercial	620
Total trucks for the week	1063
Percentage of pre blockade average (first 5 months of 2007)	38%

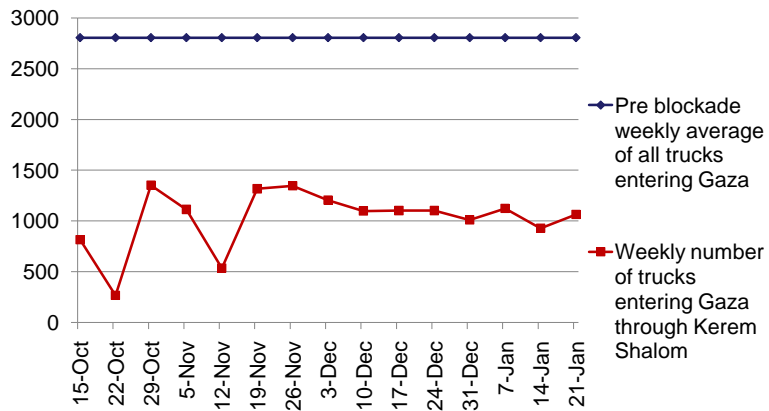
3. Fuel deliveries (week)

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
15 - 21 January		0	0	176MT
	Percentage of need *	0		10%
Previous week		0	0	363MT
* Fuel association 2006 estimates - ** Imports of diesel and petrol for the general public and public sector in Gaza were exceptionally authorized on 6 occasions since October 2008				

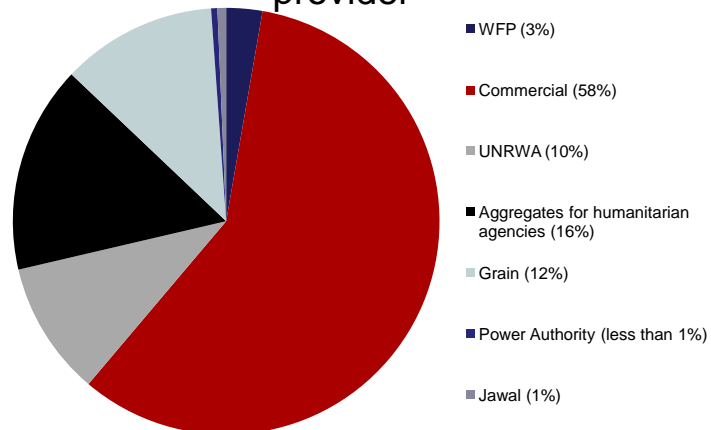
4. Weekly Charts

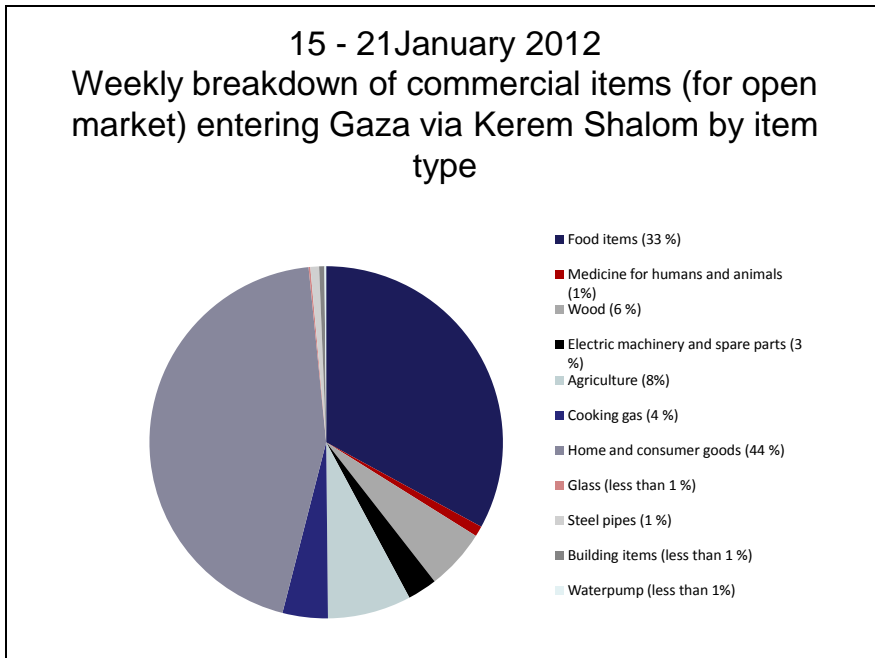
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Number of trucks entering Gaza

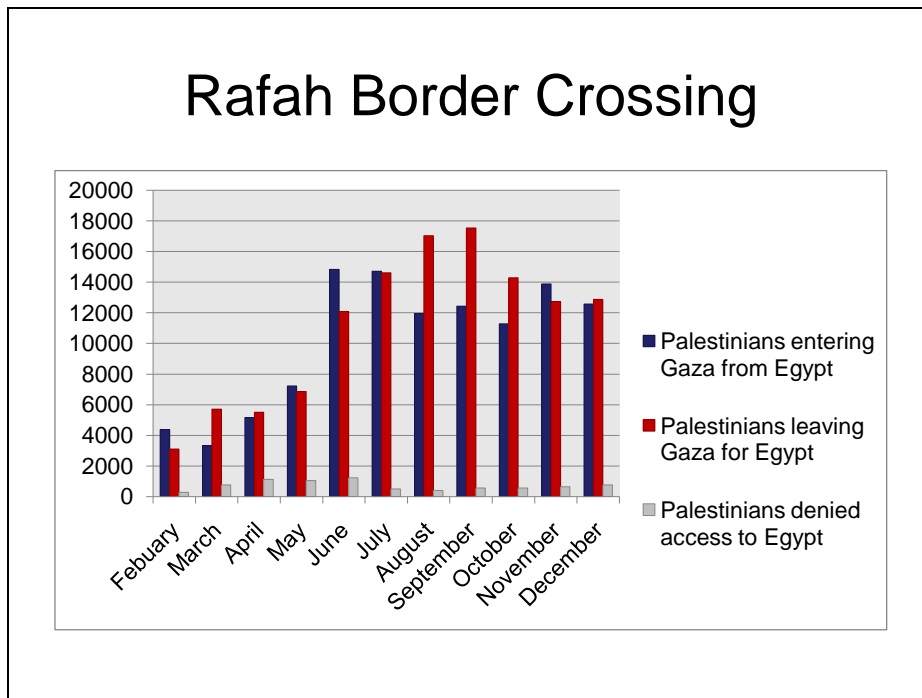


15 – 21 January Weekly trucks entering Gaza by service provider

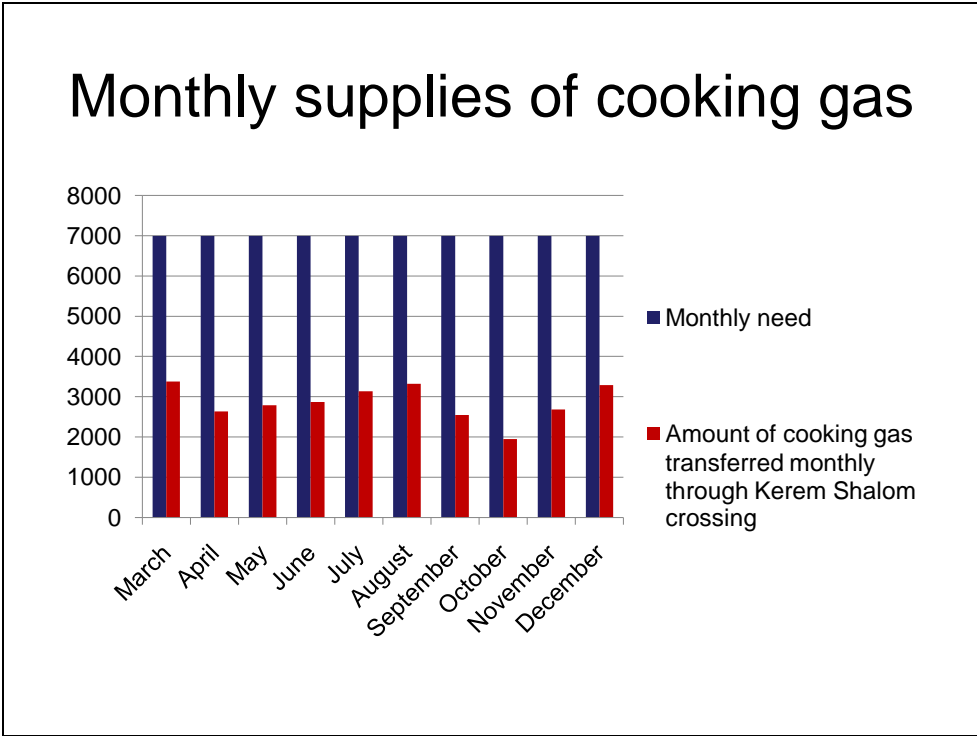
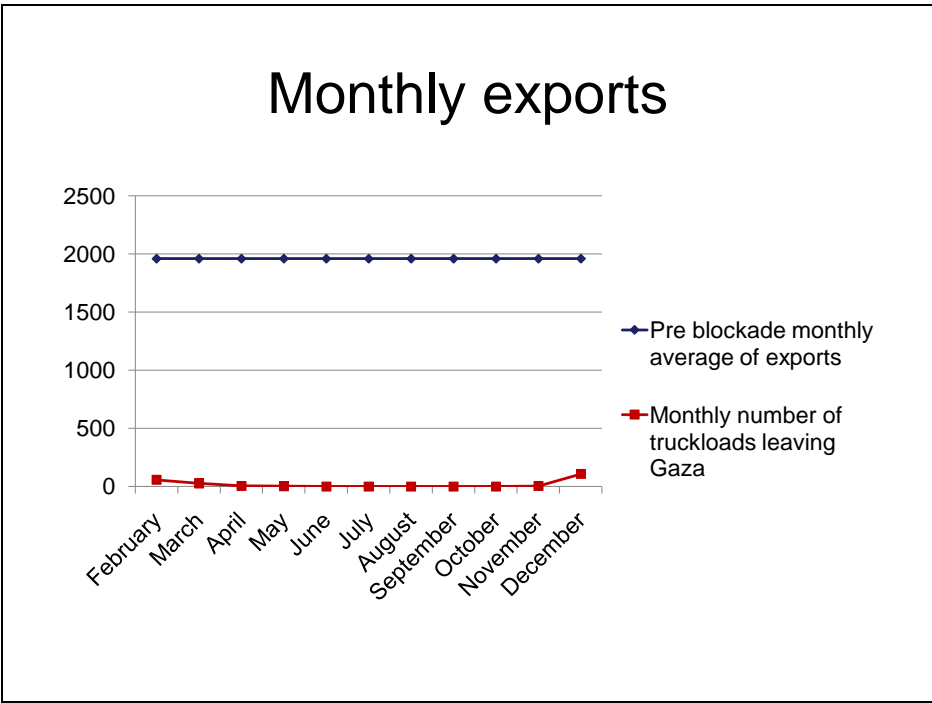




5. Monthly Charts



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