

One long fast

With the holy month of Ramadan coming to an end on the night of Monday 29 August, thousands of Palestinians in Gaza have had to break their fast in poverty aggravated by the protracted Israeli blockade.

The family of Adnan Saber Yassin pictured here breaking the fast with lentils fatta – a dish made of lentils and crisped bread soaked in broth –



has been suffering from unemployment since 2003, when Palestinian workers from Gaza were banned from entering Israel.

“In those days we used to live a good life,” he told Oxfam. “I had a good salary, I would make up to NIS 200 a day (US\$56.90), I could build our house and set up my own family, but everything changed overnight. We had never thought we’d end up depending on humanitarian aid.”

With one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, nearly 80 percent of people in Gaza depend on some form of humanitarian assistance to survive. Despite high levels of food aid, the World Food Programme recently found that 66 percent of families in Gaza still do not have enough food to eat. Around 40 percent of all items that Israel allows into Gaza are food items destined for grocery shelves, but this is of little help to families who cannot afford even basic food goods. The average family in Gaza spends over 60 percent of their money on food. Many families used to fish, raise sheep and chickens, or grow some of their own food, but with access to the sea and open land heavily restricted it has become increasingly difficult to undertake these initiatives under the Israeli blockade.

Oxfam helped the Yassin family build a chicken farm and make some savings through the sale of broilers in a project funded by CCUK, but they would need more support to turn it into a long-term sustainable livelihood.

The family of 10 living in Zeitoun was also forced to flee during Operation Cast Lead, when tanks surrounded their house and shelled it, destroying most of it and the neighbourhood. Till today, two and a half years later, the Yassins still live without windows and under cracked ceilings.

“With some of the money (from the project) I have now repaired the cracked walls and repaired parts of the roof, although we don’t have more money to install new windows,” Adnan said. “In the last two winters we’ve had to make do with plastic sheets.”

Despite the hardships, Adnan’s oldest son has just graduated in IT from the University College of Applied Sciences, an Oxfam partner, and the older daughter is studying at university.

“My son is now looking for a job,” Adnan said. “I’m not holding my breath, any kind of job would be helpful right now. Everything needs money, but thank God we manage to get by.”

1. Headlines

- **Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions:** There were reports this week that the Israeli military carried out 18 airstrikes, 6 shellings, and 1 incursion across the perimeter into Gaza, as compared to 53 airstrikes and 7 shellings reportedly carried out by the Israeli military the week prior.

There were reports this week of Palestinian militants firing 42 home made rockets (HMR), 19 Grad rockets, and 18 mortars towards Israel or Israeli forces, as compared to 20 mortars, 44 home made rockets (HMR), and 22 Grad rockets that were reported to have been fired the week before.

6 Palestinian civilians were reportedly killed and 37 others were reportedly injured this week as a result of Israeli military operations. Last week, 5 Palestinian civilians were reportedly killed and 60 others were reportedly injured as a result of Israeli military activity.

5 Palestinian militants were reportedly killed and 10 others, including 3 Hamas police officers, were reportedly injured this week as a result of Israeli military activity. Last week, 13 Palestinian militants were reportedly killed and 5 others, also including 3 Hamas police officers, were reportedly injured by Israeli military activity.

1 Israeli civilian was reported injured this week as a result of Palestinian militant activity. 1 Israeli civilian was reportedly killed and 27 others were reportedly injured last week as a result of Palestinian militant activity.

Since January 23, 2011, Oxfam calculates there have been 35 Palestinian civilians reportedly killed, 355 Palestinian civilians reportedly injured, 38 Palestinian militants (including Hamas officers) reportedly killed and 47 militants reportedly injured as a result of Israeli military activity. There have also been reports of 2 Israeli civilians reportedly killed, 30 Israeli civilians reportedly injured and 4 Israeli soldiers reportedly injured as a result of Palestinian militant activity during the same reporting period.

- **Fishermen:** There were 3 reports of Israeli naval vessels opening fire on Palestinian fisherman this week, with no injuries reported. There was 1 report of an Israeli naval vessel opening fire on Palestinian fishermen last week, with 1 injury reported.

Since January 23, 2011, Oxfam calculates there have been 49 reports of Israeli naval vessels opening fire on Palestinian fisherman, with reports of 2 fishermen 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:** There was 1 airstrike reported this week on the tunnels beneath the border between Egypt and Gaza, resulting in the death of 4 tunnel workers, ranging in age between 18 and 24 years old. 3 additional injuries to tunnel workers were also reported as a result of the airstrike. There were 5 airstrikes on the tunnels reported last week, with no tunnel related injuries or fatalities reported.

In 2010, 43 Palestinian workers, including 5 child labourers, reportedly died in tunnel related accidents and another 88, including 1 child labourer, were reportedly injured.

- **Palestinians in the access restricted area (the so-called “buffer zone”):** There were no reports this week of the Israeli military opening fire on civilians in the access restricted area. Last week, there were 3 incidents reported in which the Israeli military reportedly opened fire on civilians in the access restricted area, with 1 fatality and 1 injury reported.

Since January 23, 2011, Oxfam calculates there have been 58 reports of the Israeli military opening fire on civilians in the buffer zone, with 9 civilians reportedly killed and 34 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 6 out of 7 days this week, with reports of 2,565 Palestinians entering Gaza from Egypt, 3,671 Palestinians leaving Gaza for Egypt, and 60 denied entry to Egypt. Last week, the Rafah border crossing was open 5 days with reports of 1,956 Palestinians entering Gaza from Egypt, 4,087 Palestinians leaving Gaza for Egypt, and 41 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 reported being overwhelmed by the volume of Palestinians from Gaza attempting to use Rafah border crossing, which resulted in some delays. Hamas officials 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 is buying 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:** 597 tons of cooking gas reportedly entered Gaza this week via the Kerem Shalom crossing, as compared to 632 tons of cooking gas reported to have entered Gaza the week before. The 597 tons of cooking gas entering Gaza this week represents 34 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. The one tunnel equipped with a cooking gas

pipeline was reportedly destroyed in an Israeli air strike in December 2010. Although this tunnel started functioning again in February, it was damaged soon after and is now used irregularly to transport limited quantities of cooking gas. The ongoing shortage has created huge demand for cooking gas in the local market. The Gas Station Owners' Association has indicated that of the 28 gas stations that supply cooking gas, only between 10 and 15 are operational due to the overall shortage. As gas stations are unable to meet the local demand for cooking gas, a rationing system remains in place, with customers reporting a waiting time to refill of over 1 month.

- **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:** No exports were reported to have left Gaza this week or the week before. The last truckload of exports to exit Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing was 1 truckload of flowers reported to be destined for the Netherlands on May 13, 2011.

Since 2007, and despite Israeli government promises this past December 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.

The limited exports now leaving Gaza are allowed as a result of an agreement between Israel and the Netherlands permitting limited exports of seasonal agricultural items. The agreement resumed on 28 November 2010.

**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 897 truckloads of supplies entering Gaza, which represents 31 percent of the pre-blockade weekly average.** Last week, Kerem Shalom crossing was also open 5 out of 7 days with reports of 1,311 truckloads of supplies entering Gaza, representing 46 percent of the pre-blockade weekly average.

Following the permanent closure of Karni crossing in early March, Kerem Shalom is now the sole permanent crossing through which goods enter Gaza. While Karni could accommodate up to 1,000 trucks a day, Kerem Shalom can only 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 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 is.

While imports remain limited, and raw materials severely restricted, exports remain banned almost entirely except for limited truckloads of strawberries, carnations 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

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of the population and the relatively small size of the local market. Until crossings are fully opened 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.**

2. Humanitarian trucks (week):

Truck originator	Total for week 21- 27 August
Bulk grains (human and animal)	129
Aggregates (for UNRWA, USAID, and UNDP)	73
UNRWA	69
ICRC	1
UNDP	5
ANERA	2
Water Authority	5
Islamic Relief	1
Commercial	612
Total trucks for the week	897
Percentage of pre blockade average (first 5 months of 2007)	31%

3. Fuel deliveries (week)

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
21- 27 August		0	0	597 MT
	Percentage of need *	0		34 %
Previous week		0	0	632 MT
* 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				

Request* of Industrial Fuel to the Power Plant via Israel (week):

Industrial diesel from Israel	Previous week	21- 27 August
0	0	0
Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply capacity of 80 MW		0%

Estimates of fuel supplied to the power plant from the tunnels

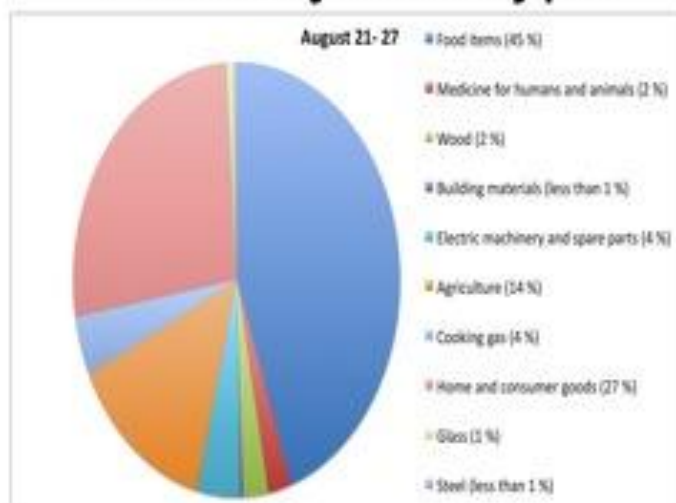
Diesel from the tunnels beneath the Gaza-Egypt border	Previous week	21- 27 August
	2.1- 2.8 million litres**	2.1- 2.8 million litres**
Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply of 80 MW	60-80%	60-80%

*The power plant has not requested any industrial fuel to be transferred from Israel since January 5, 2011

**based on OCHA estimates of 300,000- 400,000 litres of diesel per day

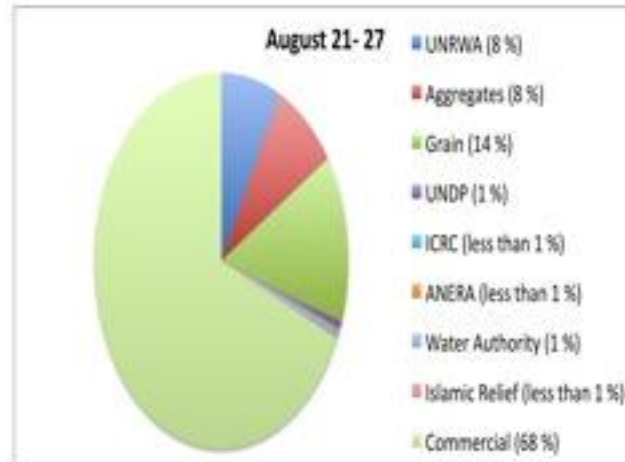
4. Weekly Charts

Weekly truckloads of commercial goods entering Gaza by item type

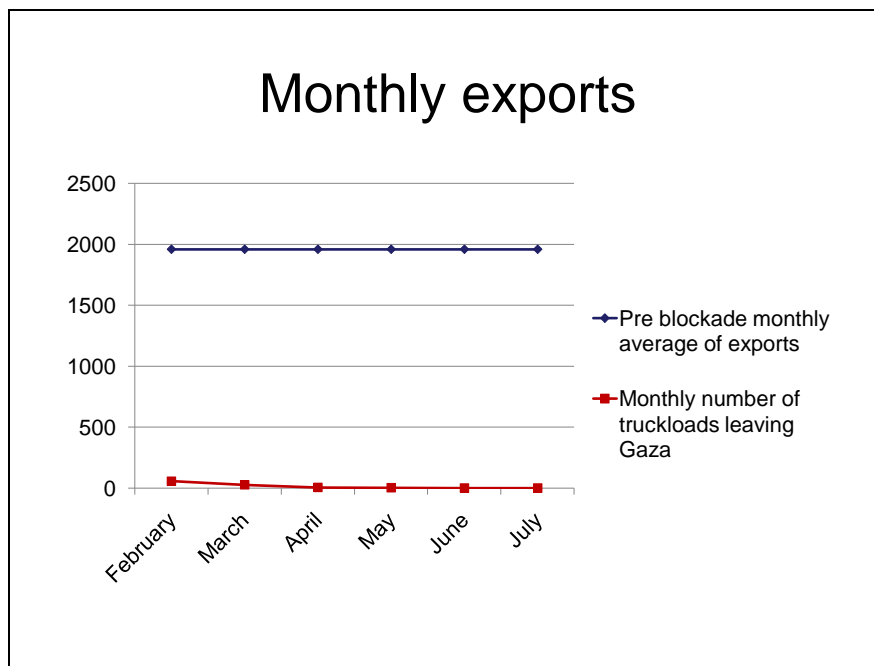


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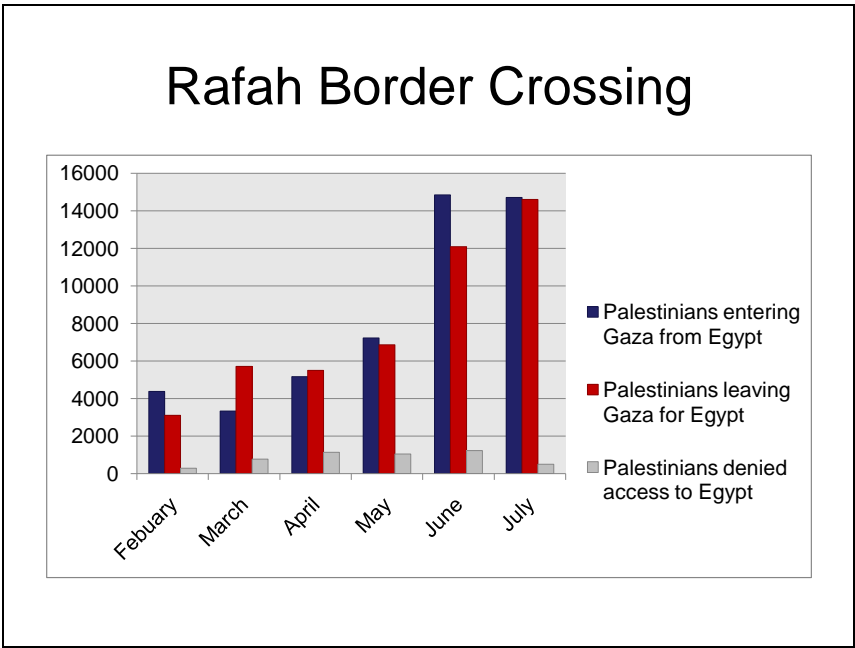
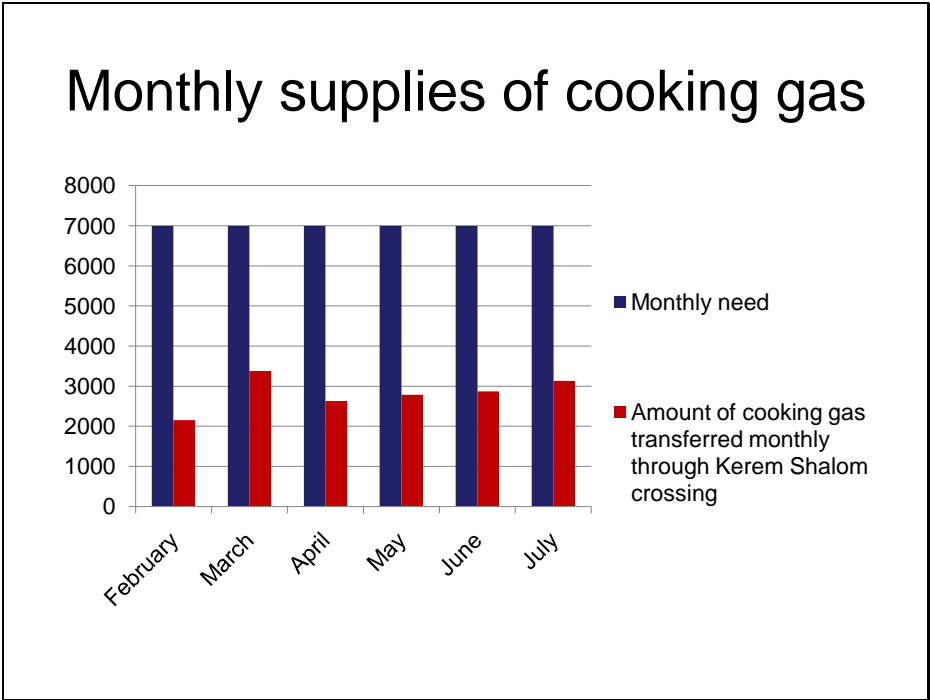
Weekly truckloads entering Gaza by provider



5. Monthly Charts



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