

## FACTSHEET: CRISIS IN PALESTINE (Spring-Summer-Fall 2006)



### Why is there a Crisis in Palestine?

While life has never been easy for Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories (i.e. West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem), the situation has gotten dramatically worse since January, 2006:

1. Ongoing Military Occupation and Economic Sanctions: In January, 2006, following the election of Hamas to lead the Palestinian government, 1) Israel ceased transferring customs taxes due the Palestinians under the Paris Protocol of the Oslo Accords, 2) Israel virtually closed the West Bank and Gaza to commerce and travel, and 3) Western governments ceased to provide any international aid to the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority. Israel's actions denied the PA half of its traditional operating revenues, and killed commerce; and the actions of Western governments denied the PA of 25 percent of its revenue support.
2. Military Assault on Civilians and Civilian and Commercial Infrastructure. In June, 2006, Israel launched an unbridled assault on Palestinians, especially in Gaza, as the result of the capture of an Israeli soldier at a border post. Israel's military operations have wrought millions of dollars of damage to Gaza's civilian, governmental and commercial infrastructure, and have resulted in the death of hundreds of Palestinians.

### How badly have Israeli and Western Sanctions impacted Palestine?

Israeli and Western Sanctions on the Palestinians have been devastating in all sectors: social, civil order, health, education, and governmental services.

#### Health:

- PA Ministry of Health staff go on strike on August 29<sup>th</sup>.<sup>1</sup> The majority of hospitals in the West Bank have stopped most of their medical interventions.<sup>2</sup>
- World Health Organization (WHO) announces PA Ministry of Health (MoH) is near collapse.<sup>1</sup>
- Critical shortage of drugs and medical materials, in spite of direct donations made by different international and UN agencies.<sup>3</sup>
  - E.g. In Hebron, maternity wards are closed, 112 MoH primary health care centers, only emergency services for most severe cases are provided
  - E.g. In Hebron and Nablus, all MoH pharmacies are closed

#### Education, Welfare, and Civil Unrest:

- 1,726 public schools (affecting 750,000) in the Palestinian territories are closed because of the Ministry of Education strike due to non-payment of salaries.<sup>4</sup>
- World Food Programme reports that 70 percent of Palestinians in Gaza depend on outside assistance, up 30 percent in one year. Over 50 percent of Palestinians overall depend on outside assistance for food needs.<sup>5</sup>
- Dozens killed in September and October due to civil unrest and non-payment of salaries of security forces.<sup>6</sup>

	2005	2006	2007	2008
GDP (US\$ million)	4,044	2,910	2,835	2,851
real growth rate	6.3%	-24.5%	-4.3%	-1.0%
GDP per capita (US\$)	1,152	802	754	735
real growth rate	2.7%	-27.1%	-7.4%	-4.2%
GDI per capita (US\$)	1,657	1,199	1,089	1,020
real growth rate	4.3%	-30.0%	-10.8%	-8.3%
Unemployment Rate	23%	40%	44%	47%
Poverty Rate	44%	67%	72%	74%

World Bank projections of the economic malaise of the West Bank and Gaza, under the current scenario: illegal Israeli removal of tax transfers to the Palestinian Authority; Israeli occupation restrictions on Palestinian movement and commerce; and denial of international aid. Source: "West Bank and Gaza Update," World Bank, September, 2006, p. 10

Commerce and Movement:

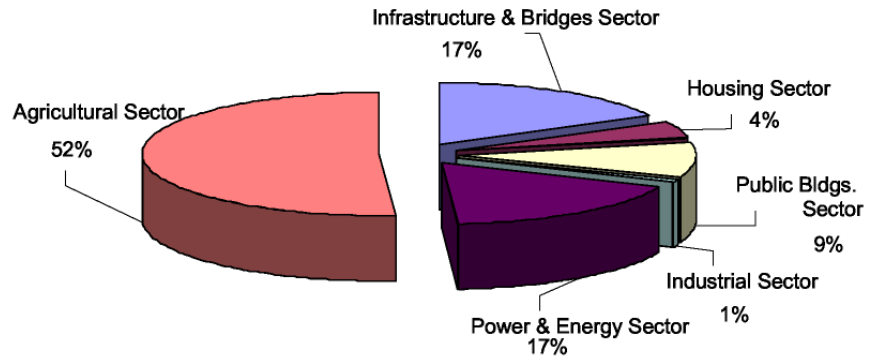
- Israeli closure system on West Bank Palestinians currently comprises 528 checkpoints and physical obstacles. This is up 11 percent from January, 2006, and 40 percent from August, 2005.<sup>7</sup>
- Civilian travel into and out of Gaza has been effectively closed since June 25<sup>th</sup>. Israel virtually shut down Gaza exports at end of June, 2006, continuing through September.<sup>8</sup>

**How badly has Israel’s military assault impacted Palestine?**

Following the capture of an Israeli soldier in late June, Israel has imposed broad collective punishment on the entire Palestinian population. Key bridges, roads, electrical stations, agricultural assets and other civilian infrastructure have been gratuitously targeted by Israel. Attacks resulting in the death of civilians skyrocketed in the summer of 2006.

Because of Israel’s severe, ongoing military oppression, Palestinians in Gaza subsist in deplorable conditions:

- 70 percent of Gazans unable to cover their daily food needs without assistance.<sup>9</sup>
- Only 30 percent of Gazans have a regular income.<sup>10</sup>
- Most Gaza residents have power for only 6-8 hours per day.<sup>10</sup>
- On average, there are six hours of water every two days.<sup>10</sup>
- WFP increased its food aid to assist 220,000 from 160,000 (non-refugees), i.e. 50 percent of the non-refugee population.<sup>10</sup>



Part No.	Sector	Estimated Cost (\$)
1	Infrastructure & Bridges Sector	\$7,912,078
2	Housing Sector	\$2,049,521
3	Public Buildings Sector	\$4,223,020
4	Industrial Sector	\$348,792
5	Power & Energy Sector	\$7,918,441
6	Agriculture Sector	\$23,546,023
<b>TOTAL COST (\$)</b>		<b>\$45,997,873</b>

Pie Chart and Table, Source: UN Development Programme: Assessment of Damages caused by the Israeli Defense Forces Operations in the Gaza Strip, September, 2006, for period June 26 through August 28

<sup>1</sup> “Palestinian Health Ministry in financial crisis,” WHO, September 1, 2006

<sup>2</sup> “Of note this week,” Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, October 10, 2006

<sup>3</sup> “The suspension of aid has led to a serious deterioration in access to health care for Palestinians,” Medecins sans frontieres, September 21, 2006

<sup>4</sup> “Six months without pay sparks teachers’ strike in Gaza and West Bank,” UNICEF, September 5, 2006

<sup>5</sup> “70 per cent of Palestinians in Gaza need international food aid to survive – UN,” World Food Programme, September 19, 2006

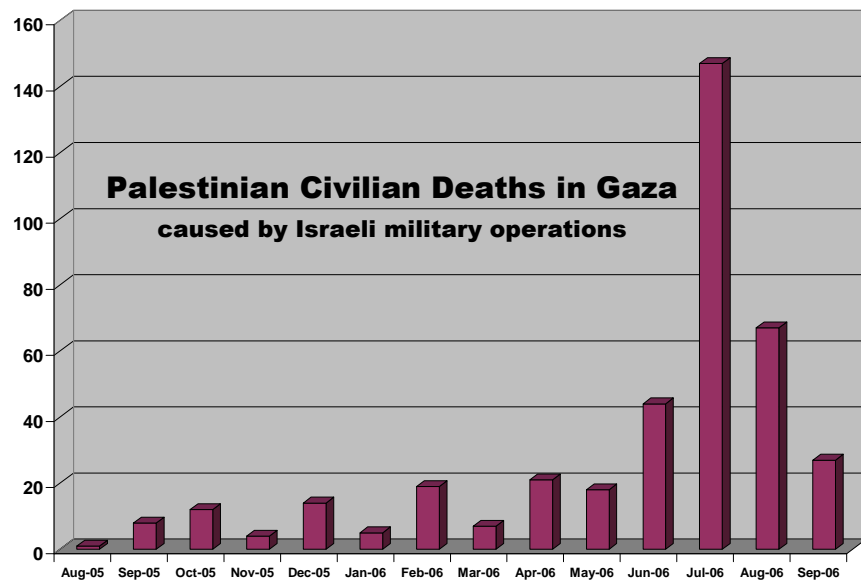
<sup>6</sup> “Of note this week,” Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, October 10, 2006

<sup>7</sup> “West Bank Closure Count and Analysis,” Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, October 12, 2006

<sup>8</sup> “Twentieth Report, Implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access,” United Nations, September 4, 2006

<sup>9</sup> “Humanitarian factsheet on Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories,” UN DPI, August 9, 2006

<sup>10</sup> “WFP operational update: occupied Palestinian territories,” WFP, August 16, 2006



Source: Aug-05 – July-06: “Special Report: Israel’s ongoing attack on the Gaza Strip,” Negotiations Affairs Department, PLO, August 9, 2006. Aug-06 – Sept-06: Middle East Policy Council, www.mepec.org, accessed Oct. 13, 2006