

# UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION UPDATE

## OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

4 APRIL 2008

### UNICEF'S EMERGENCY PROGRAMMES FOCUS ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, CHILD PROTECTION AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

- In February, there were no stocks of 85 out of 416 essential drugs in Gaza.
- Water and sanitation systems suffer from chronic shortages and limited networks.
- Across the West Bank, schools have fallen behind on the curriculum due to school days lost to military operations, closures, and curfews.
- Many children suffer from trauma and present symptoms of stress and anxiety.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

## OVERVIEW

2008 has offered little promise for children thus far.

At least 33 children were killed in conflict-related violence between 27 February and 3 March. In January, an Israeli missile targeting the Ministry of Interior in Gaza injured 26 children attending a nearby wedding. In Nablus, at least 18 children were injured in the largest full-scale military operation since February 2007. As of mid-March, 39 children had died in conflict, compared with 10 children over the same period last year.

Gaza has been almost entirely sealed off since June 2007. Over one million dollars of UNICEF supplies including critically-needed pumps and accessories to operate water and sewage treatment facilities, as well as computers and photocopiers for schools, have been barred from entering Gaza for months. In February, 1,782 truckloads of goods were allowed into Gaza, an 86% decline from last year.

Across the West Bank, the closure regime is tighter than ever, with 580 obstacles to movement in February 2008, up from 376 when the Access and Movement Agreement was signed in November 2005. At least 57 structures including 25 inhabited buildings were demolished in the West Bank in January, the highest number since February 2006, when 64 structures (6 inhabited), were destroyed. The 723-km separation barrier is 57% complete.

UNICEF's programmes focus on health, education, child protection and adolescent development, targeting communities where the needs are greatest. This support is needed more than ever to help prevent further deterioration in children's well-being.

## ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

### HEALTH

At least 3 children have died after experiencing delays or/and denials for their permits to exit Gaza for medical treatment, not available within the Gaza Strip, since the beginning of the year.

Water and sanitation systems suffer from chronic shortages and limited networks. On average, households consume about half of the internationally recommended daily amount of water for consumption, hygiene and cleaning needs. Clean water is also hard to obtain in Gaza because salinity and sewage have seeped into the coastal aquifer.

In Gaza, around 60,000 cubic meters of sewage are dumped into the sea everyday because of fuel, electrical and spare parts shortages. Sewage is spilling into streets.

Infant and under five mortality rates have seen little changes since 2000, and 70 per cent of all infant deaths are due to prematurity, congenital malformation and pneumonia. Iron deficiency anemia affects more than 50 per cent of under-fives. Many children are stunted and children lack vitamin A & D, and iodine.

### EDUCATION

On 31 March, teachers re-started strike to protest economic conditions.

Students are falling behind in terms of the curriculum and in learning achievement. "Unified" or standardized exams conducted in UNRWA schools in Gaza for grades four through nine revealed 40 per cent failure rates in Arabic, and 50-60 per cent failure rates in Mathematics and English. Across the West Bank, schools have fallen behind on the curriculum due to school days lost to Israeli military operations, closures, and curfews. In February, schooling was disrupted for at least one day for 7,668 children due to curfews,

There were eight incidents during February in which schools were damaged or attacked as a result of IDF and / or Palestinian factional activity; six incidents in Gaza two in the West Bank, In January, an UNRWA school in Gaza was damaged in an exchange of fire with the IDF, and then ransacked two days later by militants. The American School was also attacked twice.

Across oPt, most schools operate double shifts because there aren't enough classrooms to accommodate students. In Gaza, school construction and urgent repairs, including for toilets and windows, has been suspended for months because materials have not been allowed in.

Enrolment rates have dropped from 96.8 per cent in 2000 to 91.2 per cent in 2007. Violence in classrooms is pervasive.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

Children and their families are living with increasing violence, poverty, insecurity, and depletion of normal support services and mechanisms.

In a 2007 study in Gaza on the psychosocial effects of war on children and parents, researchers found that 40% of children reported anxiety symptoms of likely clinical significance, and 40% reported signs of trauma such as insomnia and agitation. Other signs of stress included anxiety, 59%; low school achievements, 42%; and aggressive behaviour, 40%.

At end-February, there were 307 Palestinian children being held in Israeli detention, including three under administrative detention. Three girls are held in the adult female section of the prison and have no access to educational programmes. Forty children are between 12 and 15 years old.

## **ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

Seventy-eight per cent of children killed in 2007 were adolescents aged 13-17, and almost all children in Israeli detention centres are between 15 and 17 years old.

Adolescents complain of boredom, stress, limited recreational facilities and programmes. The constant violence surrounding them triggers extreme emotional duress and feelings of great insecurity among an already vulnerable group of children. Drop out rates are rising at the secondary school level, primarily due to low learning achievements, poverty and early marriage.

Adolescents have limited access to information on issues of concern to them. For example, while almost all adolescents said they had heard about HIV/AIDS, 91% did not know the three measures needed to protect them from infection.

## **UNICEF ACTION**

UNICEF's current programme of cooperation with the Palestinian Authority is for 2008-2009. UNICEF works with all relevant line ministries, sister UN agencies, and a broad cross-section of local and international NGOs.

## **HEALTH**

In 2008 UNICEF will work with the Ministry of Health to reach more children with improved health and nutrition support, targeting younger children in hard-to-reach areas. UNICEF will also continue to provide safe drinking water and improve sanitation facilities in schools, primary health centers and unserved communities in Gaza. This work will include:

- Providing basic vaccines and related supplies for routine and supplementary immunization.
- Supplying iron syrup, iron and folic acid tablets and vitamin A and D to infants and children; developing a national code on breast milk substitutes; improving monitoring

- systems for iodized salt production; and scaling up use of the Mother and Child Health Handbook, which incorporates new WHO growth monitoring standards.
- Establishing a cadre of 32 trainers on the integrated management of childhood illnesses and educating caregivers on improved monitoring and care for pre-school children.
  - Rehabilitating / building water and sanitation facilities in 10 primary health care clinics and 27 schools in Gaza; and providing drinking water to 300,000 residents and 300,000 students in Gaza.
  - Supplying water tanks, testing and treatment kits to schools, public health centres and unserved or poorly served communities; and providing spare parts for water and wastewater networks.

## **EDUCATION**

In 2008, UNICEF will support the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in improving learning environments, focusing on lowest ranking districts. UNICEF will also provide education tools to make pre-school education more accessible to younger children. It aims to do this by:

- Carrying out standardized testing in Arabic and Math for fourth-graders.
- Supporting training for teachers, supervisors and principals at the 100 lowest-ranking schools in terms of learning achievement, and supplying 500 primary schools in disadvantaged areas with basic materials.
- Training 300 university graduates on classroom management and teaching skills to assist grade one teachers at 50 schools in Gaza.
- Strengthening 100 libraries and conducting extracurricular activities, focusing on girls in disadvantaged areas.
- Developing a zero tolerance policy on violence in schools.
- Delivering life skills education to strengthen children's coping mechanisms.
- Developing the national policy framework on early childhood development and providing educational materials to 100 kindergartens.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

In 2008, UNICEF and partners will support the Ministry of Social Affairs' efforts to build a protective environment for children. This entails providing emergency psychosocial support to children and families in need, policy development, capacity building, and strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems and standards. This includes:

- Providing psychosocial support for 100,000 children.
- Building the capacity of social workers, police and members of the judiciary.
- Training 350 psychosocial professionals and 60 volunteers on crisis intervention, management and referral.
- Supporting awareness raising campaigns on mine risk education reaching 100,000 children and 50,000 parents.
- Supporting better parenting sessions for 24,000 parents living in violence prone areas.
- Supporting the establishment of a national framework for child protection.

## **ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

UNICEF will work with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and partners to improve secondary school retention and reduce violence among adolescents, while improving their knowledge on healthy lifestyles. UNICEF will also work to strengthen national capacity to increase the participation of adolescents. The programme will:

- Provide 13,000 adolescents with after-school remedial literacy and math sessions to enable them to complete secondary school.

- Provide 50,000 adolescents with after-school recreational activities including sports, music, art and free play.
- Provide peer support to 20,000 adolescents living in most vulnerable areas to help them to cope with their stress.
- Provide 13,000 adolescents with life-skills based education (communication & leadership skills and stress management) and knowledge on HIV/AIDS prevention.
- Provide opportunities for adolescents to carry out action research on key topics such as violence, literacy and knowledge on HIV/AIDS, and to develop awareness raising campaigns in their own communities through traditional means and mass media.
- Strengthen implementation and monitoring of the national youth policy.

#### 4. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

UNICEF's CAP was budgeted at US\$ 20.5 million based on the needs assessment framework completed in November 2007. As of 31 March, UNICEF had received US\$ 6.4 million in commitments/disbursements, or around 31% of the appeal target. The breakdown is as follows:

##### 2008 Funded Appeal as of 4 April 2008

Sector	Appeal Target	Donor	Funded	% Funded
Health & Nutrition	7,508,650		-	-
Water & Sanitation	2,792,800		-	-
Education	5,160,000		-	-
Adolescents	2,144,000		-	-
Child Protection	2,973,530	ECHO	233,237	8%
Funds were received but not distributed yet		United Arab Emirates	3,000,000	
Funds were received but not distributed		Norway	963,400	
Funds were committed but not received yet		SIDA (Sweden)	3,200,000	
<b>Total (\$)</b>	<b>20,578,980</b>		<b>7,396,637</b>	<b>36%</b>

Details of the occupied Palestinian Territories' emergency programme can be obtained from:

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