

Cooking gas crisis

Abed (left) who works at Al-Sumna Bakery in Gaza City says his bakery will have to close down in two days' time as they will run out of cooking gas. "There is no gas at all", Abed said on Monday morning. "We have been left without supply for the last 25 days and we're using up our last reserves." Other bakeries have already shut down.



According to the chief of the Gaza union of gas station owners, Mahmoud Al-Shawwa, the problem started over a month

ago when Israeli authorities started using the Kerem Shalom crossing to transfer cooking gas, instead of the Nahal Oz fuel terminal. "Kerem Shalom is not equipped to transfer the amount of gas needed daily in the Gaza Strip", Al-Shawwa said, reporting that as of Monday 16 November, 30 gas stations were closed. As opposed to Nahal Oz, Kerem Shalom has no warehouses where fuel and gas could be stored and transfer can only happen through a direct pipe connection linking Israeli with Palestinian trucks. Israeli authorities justify the use of Kerem Shalom on security grounds. In September, a total of 2,500 tons of gas were transferred to Gaza, down to 1,600 in October and a meagre 400 tons in the first two weeks of November. According to Al-Shawwa, the 1.5 million population of Gaza needs 4,500 tons of gas per month in summer, and 6,000 tons in winter. The current shortage has been felt mostly by bakeries and hospitals but families are expected to be affected soon. "Within three days, we will be facing a real crisis", Al-Shawwa said. In November and December last year, there were also reductions in cooking gas supplies causing Gaza bakeries to shut down in the run up to Israeli military operation 'Cast Lead'.

1. Headlines

- **Mortars/rockets/casualties/incursions:** According to reports, 2 rockets were directed by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza at Israeli forces this week (as compared with 3 rockets which were reportedly directed by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza at Israeli forces in the week ending 31 October). There were reports of 2 Israeli military incursions and 3 shellings (compared with 1 Israeli shelling and 5 military incursions reported in the previous week). There were reports of 1 Palestinian child killed and 1 Palestinian child injured by the Israeli army as they approached the fence between Gaza and Israel. There were no reports of Israeli casualties. In the previous week there were reports of 2 Palestinian injuries and no Israeli casualties.
- **Tunnel related fatalities:** No accident was reported this week in the tunnels in Rafah under the Egypt-Gaza border. In the previous week, 1 Palestinian was killed as a result of a tunnel collapse.
- **Fishermen:** There was 1 reported incident of a Palestinian fisherman being fired at by Israeli naval vessels this week, while there was 1 incident reported the previous week. Israeli forces prohibit Palestinian access to fishing areas within three nautical miles from the coast by opening "warning fire" on some fishermen.

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- **Farmers in the “buffer zone”:** Like last week, there were no incidents reported of Israeli troops shooting Palestinian farmers in the “buffer zone.” However, one Palestinian child was killed and one child injured by the Israeli army as they approached the fence between Gaza and Israel. Israeli forces prohibit Palestinian access to farming land along the fence by opening “warning fire” on people approaching this so-called “buffer zone”.
- **Rafah border crossing:** This week, the Rafah border crossing opened 4 out of 7 days to process the large numbers of pilgrims bound for Mecca, allowing 2,692 people to leave and 130 to enter Gaza. The previous week 5,020 people left and 1,151 entered Gaza, as the crossing was opened to pilgrims for 6 days.
- **Power plant and electricity supply:** 2.9 million litres of industrial fuel were delivered to Gaza. This was 83% of the 3.5 million litres of fuel needed weekly to operate Gaza’s only power plant at the current maximum export capacity of 80Mw. The previous week, 1.5 million litres of industrial fuel was reportedly delivered to Gaza. Since, mid October the majority of the fuel has been transferred through the fuel installation station at the Kerem Shalom crossing in the far south of Gaza which is much slower and costs significantly more to use than the Nahal Oz crossing.
- **Cooking gas:** 49 tons of cooking gas entered Gaza, 2% of the normal weekly need of 1,750 tons. The previous week, 310 tons of cooking gas were reported to have entered Gaza, the majority of which went through the new limited facilities at the Kerem Shalom crossing which are slower, inadequately equipped and cost significantly more to use. *(Read our story on page 1)*
- **Diesel/petrol:** 30,000 litres of petrol and 123,000 litres of diesel were reportedly delivered to Gaza this week for the exclusive use of UNRWA. The previous week 179,000 litres of petrol had been delivered to UNRWA. This year, small amounts of fuel for the open market have been allowed into Gaza from Israel on just four occasions since a ban on fuel imports was put in place by the Government of Israel in October 2008.
- **Truckloads of humanitarian supplies:** 625 truckloads were permitted entry during the week, as compared with 481 trucks allowed into Gaza during the previous week. This is the equivalent of 47% of the pre-blockade weekly average.
- **Local press freedom:** It was reported that Hamas authorities in Gaza prevented a meeting of the International Federation of Journalists in Gaza. In the same week they also forcibly entered the offices of Gaza news agency Ramatan and stopped a news conference from going ahead. The management of Ramatan reportedly closed their offices indefinitely in protest at the Hamas raid. Oxfam partner Palestinian Centre for Human Rights criticised Hamas actions that interfere with press freedom.

2. Fuel deliveries (week)

		Diesel	Petrol	Cooking Gas
8-14 November		123	30	49
	Percentage of need *		29%	23%
Previous week		0 litres	0 litres	412 tons
* Fuel association 2006 estimates - ** Imports of diesel and petrol were exceptionally authorized on 27 July, 4 August and 24 September 2009 since October 2008				

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Delivery of Industrial fuel to the Power Plant (week):

Industrial diesel	Previous week	8-14 November
	1.5 million litres	2.9 million litres
Percentage of amount required to operate at maximum supply capacity of 80 MW		83%

3. Humanitarian trucks (week):

Truck originator	Total for week 8-14 November
UNRWA	32
WFP	12
UNICEF	2
NGO:	1
ICRC	2
Electricity company:	17
Commercial:	424
Palestinian Authority:	4
Karni crossing:	129
Total trucks for the week	625
Percentage of weekly average before the blockade (April 2007)	47%

5. External links to further reports

UN OCHA Protection of Civilians Weekly Report: 4-10 November 2009

http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_protection_of_civilians_weekly_report_2009_11_10_english.pdf

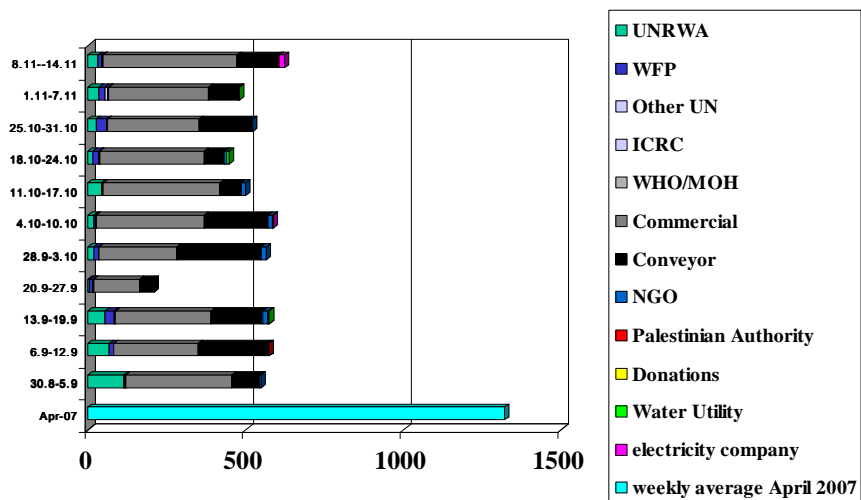
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7. Trend Charts

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Truckloads of humanitarian goods passing weekly into Gaza september, october and november 2009 compared to the pre blockade april 2007 weekly average



Fuel passing weekly into Gaza september, october and november 2009 in comparison with fuel association 200 estimates of weekly need

