

UNITED NATIONS

**OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF
HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS**

Occupied Palestinian Territory



الامم المتحدة

مكتب لتنسيق الشؤون الانسانية

للاراضي الفلسطينية المحتلة

P.O. Box 38712 East Jerusalem
Phone: (972) 2 – 5829962 / 5825853, Fax: (972) 2 – 5825841

Beit Lahia Waste Water Treatment Plant – Floods

Humanitarian Situation Report #1

27 March 2007 – 8 pm



Photos: UNRWA / OCHA

1. Facts on the ground

At 9.30 this morning a large wave of effluence from an emergency filtration basin at the waste water treatment plant in Beit Lahia in north western Gaza flooded into the nearby Bedouin village of Um Al Nasser. Four people are reported dead and a further 18 injured while dozens of homes have been destroyed and damaged from the flood waters. The cause of the over flow has still to be determined however there has been concern for a number of years at the lack of capacity at the treatment plant to absorb the ever expanding volume of effluence.

Estimated Casualties / Damage

Deaths:	4
Injuries:	18
Missing people:	11
Houses destroyed/damaged:	96

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Health / UNRWA

2. Humanitarian impact and immediate needs

- Relocation of between 250 and 300 families to a temporary camp situated on higher ground between the bedouin village and the former Israeli Nissanit settlement.
- The western side of the main effluent lake at the waste water treatment plant is believed to be weak and could be close to collapse if not reinforced immediately. A further 800 houses could be affected in the event of additional flooding.

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS Occupied Palestinian Territory		الأمم المتحدة مكتب لتنسيق الشؤون الإنسانية للأراضي الفلسطينية المحتلة
--	---	--

P.O. Box 38712 East Jerusalem
Phone: (972) 2 – 5829962 / 5825853, Fax: (972) 2 – 5825841

- The flash flooding has led to the discovery of four unexploded Israeli artillery shells. More unexploded ordnance can be expected to be found
- Immediate provision of tents, blankets, mattresses, food and water is required to those who have moved to the camp.
- Concerns exist over the spread of communicable diseases in the absence of basic sanitary provision and the prevalence of sewage displaced into households

3. Relief Provision – coordination matrix

SECTOR	AGENCY	ITEM	STATUS
Shelter	UNRWA	300 tents. (150 tents x 10 persons), 150 (tents x 5 persons).	Sent to Jabalia distribution office. 15 workers on standby
	ICRC with PRCS	Tents (100 can be made available)	Pending
Drinking Water	UNRWA	6 water tanks (1,000 litres each) to be located in the temporary camp	Sent to Jabalia distribution office
	MSF	2 water tanks (2,000 litres and 500) + 300 jerrycans (20l)	
	Islamic Relief	500 jerrycans (20l)	
	UNICEF/PRCS	100 family water kits	
Food	UNRWA	*Procurement of tinned meat and bread for immediate consumption. * Assessment for longer term food needs * 100 cooking kits	Pending
	WFP	Willing to supplement ongoing food baskets with fresh food including vegetables	Pending
	ICRC	100 family food parcels (one month)	
	Islamic Relief	500 food parcels	
Sanitation	UNICEF/PRCS	100 hygiene kits	
	ICRC	2 hygiene kits to each family	
	UNRWA	Construction of basic latrines and showers if necessary	
NFIs	UNRWA	* Stocks have been sent to the area for distribution - blankets (761), mattresses for 5 persons (531) and single mattresses (835). * Additional on-going procurement of 1239 blankets and 1165 mattresses * 100 cooking kits * 1 x kerosene lamp per family	Pending
	ICRC	On standby with additional NFIs including blankets and mattresses where required.	Pending
	MSF/Medical Relief Services (MRS)	50 mattresses and 50 blankets	
	Islamic Relief	1000 mattresses and 500 blankets	Pending distribution
Health	MSF	Mobile clinic to be operated by MRS	In the camp (UNRWA will provide tents for them).

	PRCS	Erection of triage tent to provide PHC services	
	WHO	Willing to provide technical assistance in relation to surveillance systems and health education	
Infrastructure	UNRWA	Relief teams and engineers on site (9)	
	Gaza Municipality	Provision of bulldozers, tractors and water tankers	
	UNDP	30 engineers on standby	
	Civil Defense	Mobilisation of all CD forces to northern Gaza with the exception of Rafah staff	
Coordination	UNRWA (lead) OCHA / UNSCO (support)	Sitreps Relief coordination matrix Media	Gaza / Jerusalem

4. Coordination

- An emergency coordination meeting took place at UNSCO at 3 pm with UN agencies, NGOs and PA civil defence.
- UNRWA has informed the IDF about the relocation of homeless families to the camp inside the former northern settlement block and no objections have been raised by the IDF.
- A meeting took place at 4.30 pm between UNRWA, UNSCO, OCHA and the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU)
- A meeting will take place between the UN and the Northern Gaza Governor on 28 March at 9am.
- An emergency coordination meeting will take place at UNSCO at 2 pm.

5. Summary background information

The Beit Lahia waste water treatment plant was built in 1976 and was originally designed to serve up to 50,000 habitants in north eastern Gaza. The total population of the area served by the plant is now over 200,000 and continues to rise.

The combination of an ever increasing volume of waste and insufficient capacity has led to effluence overflowing from filtration basins into the surrounding sand dunes creating a small lake that now covers over 110 acres. In 1995 the affected area was 13 acres. Previous flooding albeit not on the current scale occurred in 1989 and 1992.

In response to rising concerns by the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) at the expansion of the lake, an emergency filtration basin was dug out and completed in September 2006 in order to add additional capacity to the existing seven basins. The excavation of the additional filtration basin was seen as a temporary but necessary measure pending the building of a new waste water treatment plant near the Islamic cemetery in eastern Jabalia.

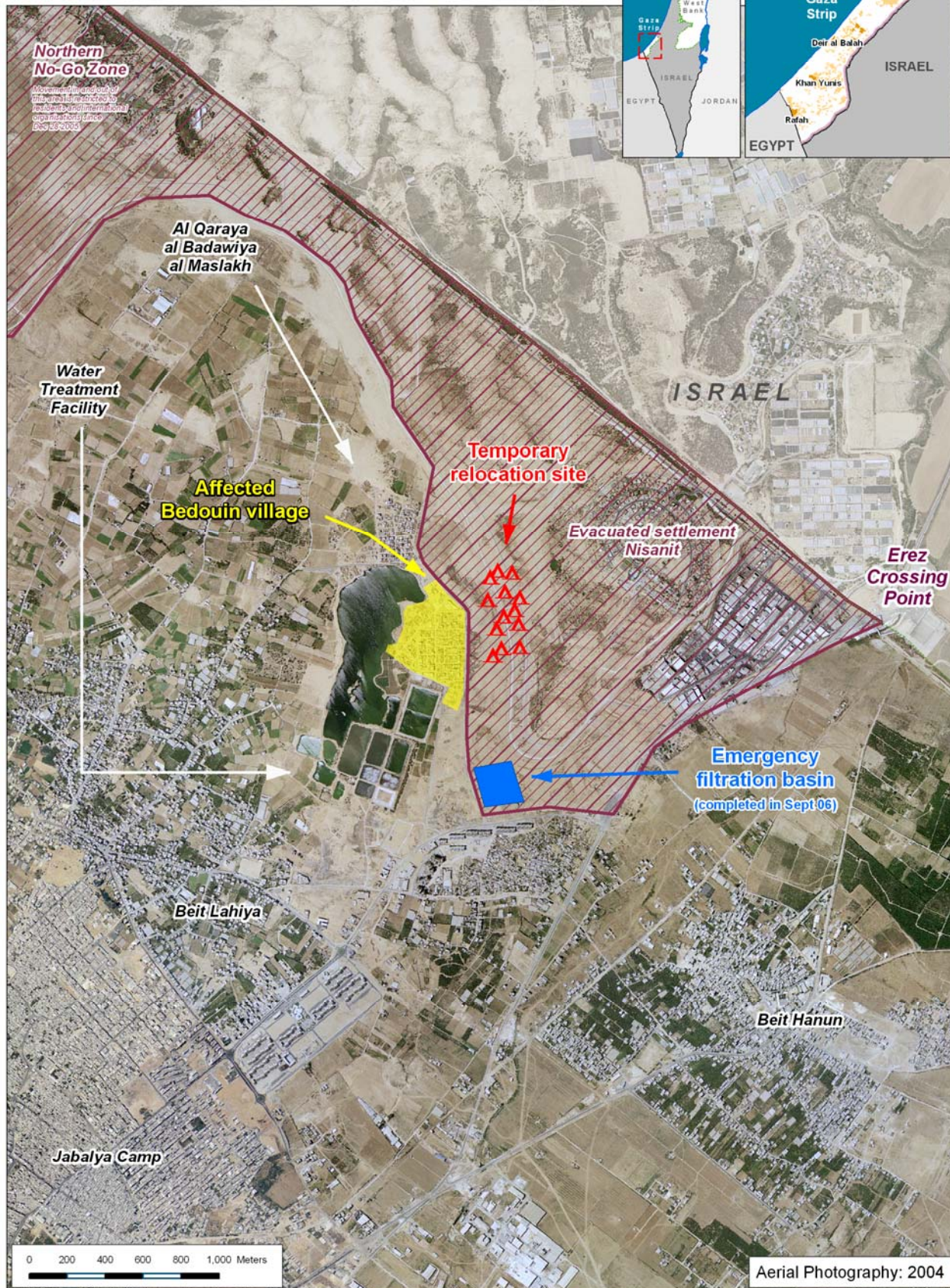
END



The Gaza Strip Beit Lahiya

27 March 2007

Waste water treatment plant flooding



The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.