

Breaking the impasse: ending the humanitarian stranglehold on Palestine

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The upcoming Israeli–Palestinian meeting in Annapolis, Maryland provides an opportunity to address the humanitarian crisis, which is an essential step for successful negotiations leading to the end of the occupation of Palestine, and for delivering a just settlement and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Since January 2006, the people in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) have faced increasing suffering due to an array of policies adopted by the government of Israel and Western donors in the aftermath of Hamas' victory in the parliamentary elections. For its part, Hamas has failed to stop armed Palestinian groups from undertaking indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israel. These attacks are unacceptable and must end. The Israeli government's blockade of the Gaza Strip constitutes collective punishment and cannot be justified.

As a result of policies that include the severance of international aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel's suspension of the transfer of tax revenues, the number of people in the occupied Palestinian territory experiencing deep poverty nearly doubled in 2006, to more than one million.¹ In the first half of 2007, 58 per cent of Palestinians were living below the poverty line, and 30 per cent in extreme poverty.² Essential-service delivery and Palestinian institutions were seriously undermined, and the economy declined alarmingly,³ contributing to unprecedented factional violence among Palestinians.

The promise of the Annapolis meeting can only be achieved if negotiations end the siege of Gaza, lift debilitating restrictions on the movement of people and goods, and end settlement expansion in the West Bank, while ensuring all parties uphold international humanitarian and human-rights law and protect civilians. As UN Under-Secretary General John Holmes stresses, 'it is increasingly hard to see how the desperately needed political progress in the peace process can be made on the back of the kind of human suffering we are seeing today'.⁴

Progress towards peace will equally require the meeting to establish an inclusive process engaging all political actors and relevant stakeholders, including civil society, refugees, and women, in efforts to resolve the final-status issues that have been at the heart of decades of conflict. If there is to be an inclusive process, there will have to be

an immediate end to the aforementioned policies that are dividing the Palestinian people. A divided Palestine is not the basis on which to negotiate a lasting peace.

This briefing note considers the current situation in the Gaza strip and the West Bank, and draws out some important considerations and challenges for the Annapolis meeting and the process of securing peace.

Siege on the Gaza strip

The government of Israel has stepped up what the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and others have referred to as its 'siege' of the Gaza Strip, following Hamas' takeover in June 2007. According to sources close to the Israeli government, their policy sought to ensure 'no development, no prosperity and no humanitarian crisis'.⁵ Already insecure and impoverished, Gazans have continued to live under dire conditions since June. The Israeli government has stopped virtually everything (except basic foodstuffs and medicines), as well as almost all citizens, from entering and leaving the Gaza Strip. These actions have had an adverse impact on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who are supported by programmes run by Oxfam International and its partners in the water, health and agricultural sectors.

Palestinian actors also bear responsibility for the suffering of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. In June 2007, Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip following violence in which both Fatah and Hamas committed grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Since then, both sides have continued to act without due regard for the rule of law.⁶ In addition, armed militant groups continue to fire rockets indiscriminately into Israel and on the Gaza Strip's boundary crossings.⁷ These violent attacks against Israeli citizens must end immediately, as should all violations of international humanitarian law committed by any party.

On 19 September 2007, the Israeli Security Cabinet declared the Gaza Strip a 'hostile territory'. It said that it was responding to rocket attacks by Palestinian militants against Israeli citizens. The Israeli government subsequently began reducing the supply of fuel to the Gaza Strip, and on 28 October, it closed down the Sufa boundary crossing, making the expensive and inadequate Kerem Shalom crossing the one remaining entry point for a limited number of goods.⁸

Despite assurances from Prime Minister Olmert that the Israeli government will 'take into consideration all humanitarian needs in Gaza', the hardship faced by 1.4 million Gazans is increasing daily – as observed by Oxfam International through its work with partners in water, health, and agricultural sectors.

The World Food Programme (WFP) reported that in the six weeks prior to 29 October, only 41 per cent of humanitarian and commercial food-import needs were met, compared with 84 per cent at the beginning of August.⁹ This is in the context of reports that Gazans are becoming the most food-aid-dependent people in the world – some 75 per cent of Gazans were already totally or partially dependent on food aid for basic nutritional needs before the siege.¹⁰ If the situation continues and the Karni crossing is not reopened, this figure could soon rise further.

The reductions in the supply of food have significantly increased the price of food items, including a 28 per cent increase since June in the price of wheat flour,¹¹ and a 50 per cent rise in the price of chicken in September alone.¹² In contrast, the price of locally grown food items including vegetables has collapsed, because farmers are unable to export their crops and are dumping produce on the local market. For example, farmers

are now forced to sell boxes of tomatoes and boxes of cucumbers for \$1.30 per box, while the production costs are \$2.60 per box of tomatoes or cucumbers.¹³

The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU), an Oxfam International partner, fears a major water crisis if the Israeli government does not allow it to import urgently needed spare parts to repair its water pumps. These pumps are needed to keep 135 water wells, 33 CMWU sewage-pumping stations, and three sewage-treatment plants operating. Each pump it is unable to repair will leave thousands of people without water. Despite efforts by humanitarian agencies to ensure access for water-equipment spare parts, the Israeli government has refused the entry of critical spare parts since May 2007, claiming security risks.

In the first two weeks of November, following Israeli government restrictions on fuel supplies, seven water wells in Gaza City have been out of action or only partially working, due to a lack of sufficient diesel. Some 50,000 people have been directly affected, receiving 75 per cent less water than before. Unless normal fuel supplies are resumed immediately, other water wells across Gaza may no longer be able to operate, threatening a public-health crisis.

Destroying the Gaza economy

The 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access established that the Karni crossing – with its state-of-the-art security equipment – would become the Gaza Strip’s main commercial crossing. However, Karni was closed in June 2007.

Given that Karni was the biggest and best-equipped crossing for commercial trade, its closure since 13 June, combined with the recent closure of the Sufa crossing, has resulted in a further breakdown of the already struggling economy.¹⁴ The inability to import raw materials to support the Gaza Strip’s industrial and construction sectors, compounded by the abrupt loss of export outlets, has caused some 65,000 workers to be laid off, also affecting up to 450,000 dependants.¹⁵ If the closure continues, the unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip is expected to rise to what the World Bank calls an ‘unprecedented’ 44 per cent by 2008.¹⁶

The impact of the siege of the Gaza Strip on businesses and employees – and hence on Gazan households – is clear. OCHA reports that private-sector losses have reached \$60m in the last four months, and WFP warns of a progressive collapse of the economy as internal production halts and the remaining livelihoods deteriorate.¹⁷ According to Nasser El Helou, who runs two companies in the Gaza Strip employing 57 workers: ‘I have had to give my workers 50 per cent of their salaries and then a third. Now my workers only come in two days each week. They will all have to be fired one after another, when I start eating my capital’.¹⁸

The Israeli government has denied entry for many items essential for agriculture and production – for example an estimated \$370m of building materials for United Nations and private-sector projects.¹⁹ One of Oxfam International’s partners, PARC (the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee), along with other agricultural organisations, urgently need irrigation networks, plastic for greenhouses, fertilizers, pesticides, packaging material, fencing equipment, seeds, and seedlings. The lack of this material jeopardises PARC’s livelihoods projects, which alleviated the suffering of almost 1000 poor farmers and provided local food assistance to 4000 poor households between July and November. Even cocoa for biscuit manufacturing is not allowed in.²⁰ Exports are

also affected – PARC has 20 tonnes of Fairtrade couscous awaiting export, resulting in thousands of dollars of losses for 150 farming families, affecting 1050 individuals.²¹

The closure of the Karni crossing is isolating the Gaza Strip from the West Bank. Oxfam International's partners fear that this could ultimately mean that the only access to the Gaza Strip would be via Egypt. The Rafah crossing for pedestrians between the Gaza Strip and Egypt has been closed since June 2007 and although it should be reopened, this should be in addition to – not as a substitute for – the Gaza Strip's other crossings.

Tightening the noose on the Gaza Strip is diminishing the opportunities for future economic recovery, as regular customers purchasing products from Gazan producers seek new suppliers. As time passes, the long-term economic impacts of the closure are becoming increasingly difficult to reverse, directly undermining the viability of a future Palestinian state.²² Given the economic mandate of the Quartet Special Envoy, Tony Blair, he can and should play an important role in marshalling the support of the international community to end the siege. He also has a mandate to strengthen Palestinian government institutions, such as public services, ministries, and financial systems – which have been crippled first by the 2006 financial boycott and then by subsequent measures against Gaza. Mr Blair will need the active support of all Quartet members to tackle both of these issues.

Intra-Palestinian reconciliation and the engagement of all Palestinian parties in the democratic process will be key to the success of any future peace deal. Western governments can help this by abandoning what many diplomats and commentators have described as a 'West Bank first' approach: supporting the Ramallah government, and people and institutions in the West Bank, while accepting the economic, social, and political isolation of Gaza.²³ The current Western policy of freezing Hamas out of the political process, despite its electoral mandate, undermines those Palestinians who argue for negotiated solutions.

Matrix of control: hardship in the West Bank

Palestinians in the West Bank are also struggling to cope with the consequences of ever tighter Israeli government restrictions on the movement of people and goods, including a lengthening wall, under the guise of security, while Israeli settlements expand on Palestinian land.

Israeli settlements have grown rapidly since the start of the Oslo peace process, with a 63 per cent increase in the number of settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. With Israeli government support, 450,000 Israelis have moved into these occupied areas, in direct violation of international humanitarian law. Through its settlement infrastructure, Israel has effectively confiscated 40 per cent of land in the West Bank.

Movement restrictions have grown with settlement expansion. They are applied through an array of checkpoints, road barriers, road gates, trenches, earth mounds, and the wall, as well as frequently changing permit regimes. These restrictions amount to a form of collective punishment that has devastating consequences for Palestinian livelihoods, education, health, and family life.²⁴ According to Save the Children, 27 per cent of households in the West Bank face problems accessing health services due to military checkpoints.²⁵

The World Bank reports that there has been a 'hollowing out' of the Palestinian economy, with its productive capacity severely undermined, making Palestinians ever

more dependent on international assistance. The Bank reports further that as restrictions have intensified since 2000, Palestinian incomes have dropped by a third.²⁶

The UN reported in October that, despite an earlier Israeli government pledge to remove 24 roadblocks and one checkpoint as a confidence-building measure ahead of Annapolis, in fact only two in 563 of these movement restrictions had been removed.²⁷ The Israeli government is also planning to significantly reduce the number of checkpoints through which humanitarian supplies can enter or leave the West Bank, from 12 to six.²⁸ However, planned restrictions also include the containerisation and inspection of all humanitarian supplies, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency fears it will be unable to import 20 per cent of its assistance, because it consists of items difficult to transport in containers or on pallets.²⁹

The greatest manifestation of the Israeli government's violation of Palestinians' human rights is the wall. Israeli citizens have a right to be secure, and Israel maintains that the wall is serving its security concerns. This assertion has been challenged by many analysts, including both Israelis and Palestinians. What is clear is that the wall has created disproportionate suffering. It isolates communities, preventing them from accessing farm land, schools, medical care, and jobs, as well as creating enclaves between the wall and the Green Line³⁰.

The wall and its associated regime are resulting in forced displacement, denying Palestinians the right to an adequate standard of living and to self-determination.³¹ The route of the wall, 80 per cent of which is being built on occupied Palestinian land, and its associated regime, were declared illegal in an advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2004. This was reaffirmed in UN General Assembly Resolution A/ES-10/15, which demanded that Israel comply with the legal obligations identified in the ICJ advisory opinion.

Opportunity for change

Annapolis provides a renewed opportunity for all actors to reflect on past policy failures and consider what actions need to be taken to alleviate immediate suffering and to achieve an independent Palestinian state living side by side with a secure Israel.

Many Israeli businesses, human-rights groups, and other commentators have long highlighted the economic, social, and political costs not just to Palestinians but also to Israelis as a consequence of their government's actions. These voices argue that the occupation and, most recently, the stranglehold on Gaza – with its infringements of international humanitarian law, and unacceptable levels of suffering – are not a path to peace and security.

The Israeli government must start by ending the siege of Gaza and opening the Karni crossing. This would be a significant demonstration at Annapolis of Israel's commitment to a peace process, and its concern for the welfare of ordinary Palestinians. The Israeli government announcement to allow the export of strawberries and flowers is a welcome sign but falls far short of the steps Israel needs to take to end the suffering of the wider population.

Despite their ongoing tensions, Fatah and Hamas alike should recognise that opening the Karni crossing is in the interests of the Palestinian people and may help to defuse current tensions and growing violence. It is vital that the international community puts pressure on all sides to open the crossings. As the *de facto* authority in Gaza, Hamas must stop armed Palestinian groups from firing rockets into Israel, and all involved

parties must also ensure the protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law as a top priority.

With respect to the siege of Gaza, Western powers have mostly left the UN to negotiate alone. Its efforts at the highest level with all parties should be commended.³² However, without the backing of the wider international community, the Karni crossing has remained closed for five months. The situation is not helped by the virtual silence of most EU governments on Gaza.

Behind the scenes, Arab states have been pressing the West about the need for action on Gaza, and are seeking to encourage reconciliation among Palestinians. One European Council diplomat explained that Gaza has been put into the 'deep freeze' while EU member states focus solely on the final-status issues at Annapolis. Another EU diplomat said, 'Member states have become imprisoned by the conference timetable', unwilling to do or say anything that may upset Israel or the USA ahead of Annapolis.

Furthermore, despite current stepped-up activity, Western powers have consistently failed to put sufficient pressure on the Israeli government to stop its illegal acts in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. Governments will have to ensure that all sides uphold international law and that violations of human rights are not rewarded.

Protection of civilians and an inclusive peace process

Multiple attempts to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict have failed, in large part due to the failure of the peace agreements to bring substantive improvements in the lives of ordinary Palestinians and Israelis, as well as to address final-status issues.³³ This has been compounded by the failure to put into place effective international protection mechanisms for civilians.

The Annapolis meeting provides another opportunity to alleviate the humanitarian crisis, restart negotiations leading to the end of the occupation, and deliver a just settlement and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis alike. Political negotiations will need to deliver urgent results on the ground for Israelis and Palestinians – including an end to the siege of the Gaza Strip and to movement restrictions in the West Bank, and an end to violence on both sides. Peace will certainly not be achieved by punishing civilians under occupation, which may well harden feelings towards Israel and increase frustration.

Fears have already been expressed that a failed meeting could result in a new wave of violence. To maximise the chances for a credible and sustainable peace process, the international community, especially the Quartet and Arab states, should support an inclusive process that engages all political actors and stakeholders, including Hamas. This requires the international community to stop pursuing its policy of selective engagement, and to start supporting intra-Palestinian understanding and co-operation, as promoted by Saudi Arabia. An inclusive peace process should also allow for the participation of civil society, women, and refugees.

The Gaza Strip and the West Bank are a single territorial unit whose integrity should be preserved. As long as both remain under occupation, the international community must hold Israel – the occupying power – responsible for ensuring the welfare of Palestinians. All responsible actors and the international community must uphold their

obligations under the Geneva Conventions and take immediate steps to ensure the protection of civilians.

Recommendations

I. To reduce the suffering of the Palestinian people, allow for economic development, and improve conditions for the people, Oxfam International recommends that:

- 1 All parties concerned must take immediate steps to end the siege of the Gaza Strip by opening and protecting the crossings – especially Karni, but also Erez and Rafah. They must provide unimpeded movement and access for the people of the Gaza Strip, for goods, and for humanitarian aid and workers. The Quartet should put pressure on the Israeli government and Palestinian actors to implement the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access.
- 2 The government of Israel must stop building settlements, must lift movement restrictions and outposts, and dismantle the wall, in compliance with the 2004 advisory opinion of the ICJ.
- 3 The Palestinian Authority and donors should ensure that humanitarian aid is delivered to Palestinians according to need. There is also an urgent need for the reactivation of development in Gaza, and this should be used to back clear poverty-reduction strategies.

II. To focus international action where it can do most to protect civilians, Oxfam International recommends that:

- 4 The government of Israel and Palestinian actors must ensure the protection of civilians by respecting international humanitarian and human-rights law. The Quartet must hold all parties accountable for violations.
- 5 Palestinians should work towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation, which the Quartet and Arab states should support.
- 6 The government of Israel, the Ramallah-based government, and the Quartet should engage with all parties to the conflict, including Hamas, and hold an inclusive peace process. This process should allow for the participation of civil society, women, and refugees.

Rider

Oxfam International (OI) has been working in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel since the 1980s. Along with 27 Palestinian partner organisations in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, OI works on agricultural development, food security, and microfinance; emergency and primary health care; water, sewage, and public health; protection of civilians and rights of women, refugees, and workers. In Israel, OI supports 25 partner organisations. OI partners in Israel work to promote a just sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Based on Oxfam's first-hand experience, we are concerned about the increase in poverty and suffering for Palestinians. OI believes that all people in the Middle East region should be free from violence, coercion, and deprivation. Ensuring these basic rights for ordinary women, men, and children is fundamental to the success of any peace process. OI believes that Palestinians and Israelis alike have the right to live in peace within secure and recognised borders. OI is against the use of violence against civilians in any form and calls on all parties to protect civilians from harm.

OI has a rights-based approach and its analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its eventual resolution is rooted in international humanitarian law and human-rights principles. Based on these principles, OI seeks a just and lasting solution based on international law, in which both Palestinians and Israelis will enjoy human security and peace. OI believes that the international community has a legal and moral responsibility to engage effectively in resolving this conflict. OI also believes in a two-state solution.

Notes

¹ OCHA (2007) 'A Year of Decline, the Financial and Institutional Status of the Palestinian Authority', Special Focus 1 and 2, East Jerusalem. For further reading see Oxfam International (2007) 'Poverty in Palestine: the human cost of the financial boycott', Briefing note, Oxford: Oxfam.

² Seventy per cent of households in the Gaza Strip and 56 per cent of households in the West Bank surveyed between April and May 2007 lived below the poverty line, including 42 per cent and 26 per cent respectively living in extreme poverty. UNDP (2007) *Development Times*, No. 1, July, p. 2, www.undp.ps/en/newsroom/publications/pdf/other/dtpov.pdf.

³ For further reading see Oxfam International (2007) 'Poverty in Palestine: the human cost of the financial boycott', Briefing note, Oxford: Oxfam.

⁴ UN Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes speech to the WFP Executive Board, 22 October 2007 at www.ochaonline.un.org/OchaLinkClick.aspx?link=ocha&docId=1073917

⁵ See also International Crisis Group (2007) 'After Gaza', International Crisis Group Middle East Report No. 68, August, p. 24, footnote 210.

⁶ For an overview of violations see Al-Haq Briefing Document, 'Human Rights during and after Hamas' Seizure of Power in the Gaza Strip', September 2007.

⁷ For an analysis of Israeli and Palestinian violence, see UN OCHA (2007) 'Israeli–Palestinian Fatalities since 2000 – an analysis of key trends', Jerusalem, August, and the latest UN OCHA Gaza Situation Reports and Humanitarian Briefing Notes at: www.ochaopt.org/documents/CAS_Aug07.pdf

⁸ WFP reports that deliveries via Kerem Shalom cost them three times as much as via the Karni crossing. In addition, the capacity of Kerem Shalom is lower than the United Nations Relief and Works Agency estimates for minimum daily food-transfer needs.

⁹ WFP (2007) 'Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping', Report 16, October.

¹⁰ MAP (2007) 'Emergency Appeal for the Palestinian People', www.map-uk.org/pages/Emergencies.html; WFP (2007) 'Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping', Report 16, October.

¹¹ As reported by Kirstie Campbell, World Food Programme's Emergency Coordinator for Gaza, 22 October 2007. See http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/kirstie_campbell/2007/10/drip_feeding_gaza.html

¹² OCHA (2007) *The Humanitarian Monitor* No. 17, September, p. 1, www.ochaopt.org/documents/HM_Sep07.pdf

¹³ Interview with Oxfam International partner, 25 October 2007.

¹⁴ Under the terms of the Agreement on Movement and Access the Karni crossing should now export up to 400 truckloads every day. The crossing also has the capacity to import 400 truckloads every day. The Israeli government claim the Kerem Shalom crossing will have capacity to import 100 truckloads a day, but in recent months Kerem Shalom has mostly exported less than half this amount each day.

¹⁵ OCHA (2007) 'Gaza Humanitarian Situation Report', 6–13 July, www.ochaopt.org/documents/Gaza-Situation_Rep_13July07-final.pdf

¹⁶ World Bank (2007) 'Two Years after London: Restarting Palestinian Economic Recovery', Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, 24 September, p. 3.

¹⁷ OCHA (2007) 'Gaza Humanitarian Situation Report', 1–31 October; WFP (2007) 'Vulnerability and Food Mapping (VAM) Food Security and Monitoring Report', 29 October.

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- ¹⁸ Oxfam International interview, 16 October 2007.
- ¹⁹ For value of UN and private-sector projects, see OCHA (2007) 'Gaza Humanitarian Situation Report', 6–13 July, www.ochaopt.org/documents/Gaza-Situation_Rep_13July07-final.pdf
- ²⁰ See joint Oxfam International – Gisha press release, 15 July 2007, www.oxfam.org/en/news/2007/pr070715_gaza_closure_will_cause_humanitarian_dependency
- ²¹ Approximately 30,000 farmers and 35,000 agricultural workers are suffering from the siege.
- ²² World Bank (2007) 'Two Years after London: Restarting Palestinian Economic Recovery', Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, 24 September, p. 3.
- ²³ This approach was described by Robert Malley (Director of International Crisis Group, (ICG)) and Aaron Miller: 'Flood the West Bank with money, boost Fatah security forces and create a meaningful negotiating process. The Palestinian people drawn to a recovering West Bank and repelled by an impoverished Gaza, will rally around the more pragmatic Palestinians.' From: Robert Malley and Aaron Miller (2007) 'West Bank first. It won't work', *Washington Post*, 19 June.
- ²⁴ Human Rights Watch, Israel: Israel's Closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, July 1996, as quoted in Oxfam International (2002) 'Forgotten Villages: Struggling to Survive under Closure in the West Bank', Briefing Paper No. 28, p. 6, Oxford: Oxfam.
- ²⁵ Save the Children (occupied Palestinian territory) (2007) 'Child Rights Fact Sheet', June.
- ²⁶ World Bank, "Two Years after London: Restarting Palestinian Economic Recovery", Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, 24 September 2007.
- ²⁷ OCHA, Closure Update, October 2007, p. 1.
- ²⁸ *Guardian Unlimited*, "UN aid chief attacks new Israeli checkpoint plan", 19/11/2007.
- ²⁹ UN OCHA (2007) 'Fact Sheet: Increasing Need, Decreasing Access – Humanitarian Access to the West Bank', Jerusalem, 14 September, www.ochaopt.org/documents/Fact-sheet-10Sept07.pdf
- ³⁰ The Green Line refers to the 1949 Armistice lines established between Israel and its neighbours (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.
- ³¹ The violation of the right to an adequate standard of living resulted particularly from restrictions on movement and access to services and basic goods. See 'Displaced by the Wall: Forced Displacement as a Result of the West Bank Wall and its Associated Regime', pilot study by Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights and the Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, Bethlehem and Geneva, September 2006 – co-funded by Oxfam GB and Oxfam-Solidarité.
- ³² UN (2007) 'Closure of Gaza crossing draws concern from Ban Ki Moon' 13 July, UN News Centre, www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=23234&Cr=palestin&Cr1=&Kw1=Gaza&Kw2=&Kw3=
- ³³ The final-status issues include negotiations over borders, settlements, Jerusalem, water resources, and the question of Palestinian refugees.

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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please e-mail advocacy@oxfaminternational.org.

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<p>Oxfam America 226 Causeway Street, 5th Floor Boston, MA 02114-2206, USA +1 617 482 1211 (Toll-free 1 800 77 OXFAM) E-mail: info@oxfamamerica.org www.oxfamamerica.org</p>	<p>Oxfam Hong Kong 17/F., China United Centre, 28 Marble Road, North Point, Hong Kong Tel: +852 2520 2525 E-mail: info@oxfam.org.hk www.oxfam.org.hk</p>
<p>Oxfam Australia 132 Leicester Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia Tel: +61 3 9289 9444 E-mail: enquire@oxfam.org.au www.oxfam.org.au</p>	<p>Intermón Oxfam (Spain) Roger de Llúria 15, 08010, Barcelona, Spain Tel: +34 902 330 331 E-mail: info@intermonoxfam.org www.intermonoxfam.org</p>
<p>Oxfam-in-Belgium Rue des Quatre Vents 60, 1080 Brussels, Belgium Tel: +32 2 501 6700 E-mail: oxfamsol@oxfamsol.be www.oxfamsol.be</p>	<p>Oxfam Ireland Dublin Office, 9 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2, Ireland Tel: +353 1 635 0422 Belfast Office, 115 North St, Belfast BT1 1ND, UK Tel: +44 28 9023 0220 E-mail: communications@oxfamireland.org www.oxfamireland.org</p>
<p>Oxfam Canada 250 City Centre Ave, Suite 400, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 6K7, Canada Tel: +1 613 237 5236 E-mail: info@oxfam.ca www.oxfam.ca</p>	<p>Oxfam New Zealand PO Box 68357, Auckland 1145, New Zealand Tel: +64 9 355 6500 (Toll-free 0800 400 666) E-mail: oxfam@oxfam.org.nz www.oxfam.org.nz</p>
<p>Oxfam France - Agir ici 104 rue Oberkampf, 75011 Paris, France Tel: + 33 1 56 98 24 40. E-mail: info@oxfamfrance.org www.oxfamfrance.org</p>	<p>Oxfam Novib (Netherlands) Mauritskade 9, Postbus 30919, 2500 GX, The Hague, The Netherlands Tel: +31 70 342 1621 E-mail: info@oxfamnovib.nl www.oxfamnovib.nl</p>
<p>Oxfam Germany Greifswalder Str. 33a, 10405 Berlin, Germany Tel: +49 30 428 50621 E-mail: info@oxfam.de www.oxfam.de</p>	<p>Oxfam Québec 2330 rue Notre Dame Ouest, bureau 200, Montreal, Quebec, H3J 2Y2, Canada Tel: +1 514 937 1614 E-mail: info@oxfam.qc.ca www.oxfam.qc.ca</p>
<p>Oxfam GB Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK Tel: +44 1865 473727 E-mail: enquiries@oxfam.org.uk www.oxfam.org.uk</p>	

Oxfam International Secretariat: Suite 20, 266 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7DL, UK
Tel: +44 1865 339100 Email: information@oxfaminternational.org. Web site: www.oxfam.org

Oxfam International advocacy offices:
E-mail: advocacy@oxfaminternational.org

Washington: 1100 15th St., NW, Ste. 600, Washington, DC 20005-1759, USA
Tel: +1 202 496 1170.

Brussels: Rue Philippe le Bon 15, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, Tel: +322 502 0391.

Geneva: 15 rue des Savoises, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland, Tel: +41 22 321 2371.

New York: 355 Lexington Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel: +1 212 687 2091.

Linked Oxfam organizations. The following organizations are linked to Oxfam International:

Oxfam Japan Maruko bldg. 2F, 1-20-6, Higashi-Ueno, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0015, Japan
Tel: + 81 3 3834 1556. E-mail: info@oxfam.jp Web site: www.oxfam.jp

Oxfam Trust in India B - 121, Second Floor, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi, 1100-17, India
Tel: + 91 11 2667 3 763. E-mail: info@oxfamint.org.in Web site: www.oxfamint.org.in

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Tel: + 52 5687 3002 / 5687 3203 Fax: +52 5687 3002 ext. 103.

E-mail: comunicacion@rostrosyvoces.org Web site: www.rostrosyvoces.org