



UNRWA

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1,100 Palestinians Made Homeless in Gaza in 10 Days of Destruction

Gaza – May 10, 2004

In one of the most intense periods of destruction since the start of the intifada, the Israeli military has demolished, or damaged beyond repair, 131 residential buildings in the Gaza Strip in the last ten days. The demolitions have made 1,100 people newly homeless, according to figures released today by UNRWA, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

The destruction in the first 10 days of May brings the total number of people to lose their homes in the Gaza Strip to 17,594.

The majority of the demolitions this month have taken place in Rafah in the south of the Gaza Strip, where 11,215 people had already been made homeless by demolitions since the start of the current strife, and in the region of the Kissufim Road, where a Palestinian attack on May 2 left an Israeli mother and her four children dead.

Peter Hansen, UNRWA's Commissioner-General said: "UNRWA condemns without reservation the May 2 killings, as it does the killing of innocent Palestinians and their children, but international law simply forbids collective punishment. The overwhelming majority of the more than 17,000 Palestinians who have lost their homes in Gaza since the start of the intifada have been guilty of nothing more than living in the wrong place at the wrong time."

UNRWA, the largest humanitarian operation in the occupied Palestinian territory, has been providing these people with water, food, blankets and cash assistance. With funding from donors it has been able to build new shelters in safe places for several hundred of the homeless families, but the Agency's resources are unable to meet the growing humanitarian crisis faced by those without shelter.

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