



# **UNRWA**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Children Pay the Price as UNRWA Operations in Gaza are Grinding to a Halt**

UNRWA warned on Thursday that the Agency's Gaza operation is grinding to a halt because of the lack of access in and out of Gaza. The principal goods terminal, Karni, remains closed for the seventh consecutive day. As a result, shortages of food, fuel and construction supplies are jeopardizing every element of UNRWA's Gaza operation at the moment. John Ging, UNRWA's Director of Operations in Gaza said that "the food distribution to 830,000 people will not commence as planned next week, unless Karni opens and a solution is found to get the containers quickly through the port of Ashdod, where there are also massive delays because of the fallout from the conflict with Lebanon."

The Agency has just one week's fuel supply remaining. Since the Gaza Power Plant was destroyed by an Israeli airstrike in late June, the operation of UNRWA health clinics is heavily dependant on generator power. "If we run out of fuel, this will be extremely serious in terms of the storage of medical supplies and the operation of medical equipment at UNRWA's 18 health centers throughout the Gaza Strip," John Ging said.

As for construction supplies, UNRWA highlighted that almost none have entered Gaza since late June, which is a particular problem as the Agency prepares for the return of its 194,000 students next week. "The work to repair the schools damaged in the military operations over the past two months is not finished as supplies have run out," John Ging said. The long-awaited extension to the UNRWA vocational training center in Gaza City is also half-finished and with no alternative accommodation available, UNRWA has been forced to postpone commencement of the seven technical courses involved until November. "Children are once again paying the price in this conflict," Ging stated.

Ging described the overall humanitarian living conditions in Gaza, as "miserable, frustrating and still deteriorating." He said that "the opportunities opened up by last year's disengagement by Israel from the settlements in Gaza are fading. The prospects are very worrying as Gaza is now cut off economically from the outside world and even keeping our humanitarian operations going is an expensive struggle".

UNRWA is now facing a bill of some 1 million dollars from its Israeli shipping agents in demurrage charges directly arising from the closures of Karni crossing.

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