



**Statement of the Spokesman of Robert H. Serry,
United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process,
On the fuel situation in Gaza**

For immediate release

Jerusalem, 25th April 2008 - Since returning from Gaza on Wednesday, the Special Coordinator has been closely following the fuel situation, and remains extremely concerned at the severe impact that the continued fuel shortage is having on the civilian population, public services, and UN operations in Gaza.

The United Nations is heavily engaged with all parties to try to bring about a resolution of this crisis and see adequate supplies of fuel restored and distributed throughout Gaza.

Israel ceased supply of all fuel supplies to Gaza following the attack on the Nahal Oz fuel terminal on 9th April. Prior to that, 3.8 million liters of diesel fuel and 340,000 liters of benzene were transferred from Israel into Gaza for the month of March. This amount was inadequate to fulfill Gaza's requirements and compares with over 8.8 million liters of diesel and 1.7 million liters of benzene that was supplied a year previously in March 2007.

The Gaza Petrol and Gas Station Owners Association suspended supply within Gaza, protesting the Israeli limitations and citing difficulties involved in distribution of scarce resources.

Israel informed the United Nations late Wednesday of its readiness to deliver 100,000 liters of diesel to Gaza. However, fuel deliveries did not go in yesterday, with Nahal Oz closed and the storage facilities on the Palestinian side of the crossing full according to the Israeli authorities.

The Gaza Petrol and Gas Station Owners Association informed UNRWA yesterday that it would distribute 50,000 liters of diesel to sustain the Agency's humanitarian operations. However, these efforts were thwarted by protests on the Palestinian side of the Nahal Oz crossing and no fuel was delivered.

UNRWA was able to make its food deliveries yesterday, but it will not be able to do so beginning tomorrow, Saturday, when its next deliveries are scheduled, unless it receives diesel by that time.

At this crucial juncture, all parties must act to avert further suffering of the civilian population.

Hamas, which controls Gaza, must ensure conditions to enable the distribution of supplies at Nahal Oz, so that more supplies can come in. Hamas must immediately bring an end to attacks

by itself or any other group against crossings in Gaza. The Special Coordinator repeats his condemnation of such attacks.

Israel must restore adequate supplies of diesel and benzene for the civilian population of Gaza in accordance with international law.

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