



## EGYPT: PALESTINIANS STRANDED ON THE AL- AREESH AND AL-RAFAH BORDERS

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*The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 185 countries.*

### In Brief

This DREF Bulletin is being issued based on the situation described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 100,000 (USD 81,300 or EUR 60,350) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the needs in this operation, or to replenish disaster preparedness stocks distributed to the affected population. This operation is expected to be implemented over three months, and will be completed by 18 October 2007; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 18 January 2008). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

This operation is aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity."

#### Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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*All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red](#)*

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*Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief* and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

### Background and current situation



The internal fighting in Gaza which ended with Hamas taking full control of Palestinian Authority institutions, including security, and the ensuing political developments led the European observer team that had been stationed at the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt to withdraw. As a consequence, the border crossing between Gaza and Egypt has been closed since 15 June 2007.

Approximately 4,500 Palestinians have been stranded on the Egyptian side of the border crossing- 3,500 in Al-Areesh and 1,000 in Rafah- all of whom are residing with relatives or host families. There are also 110 Palestinians waiting at Al-Areesh airport awaiting deportation.

Life for these thousands of stranded Palestinians is one of frustration, fear and occasional violence as they wait to hear when they might be allowed home to Gaza. After being in the searing desert heat for more than a month, frustration can boil over into anger as they become increasingly cash-strapped and in need of food and drink.

On 16 July 2007, a group of around 100 who were being held by police at Al-Areesh airport, 50 kilometres west of Rafah, tried to force their way out which resulted in violent confrontation with the police and injury to three Palestinians, one critically. The Palestinians in the airport, who include women and children, last week launched a hunger strike in protest against conditions there until they received assurances they would be allowed to leave. According to several reports, the Palestinians are sleeping on the floor, sharing one toilet and have nowhere to take a bath or shower.



**Women with their children waiting to cross the border.**

In Al-Areesh town, families sleep on what patches of green they can find or on the beach. Some try to hawk their possessions, usually jewellery or mobile phones.

### Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Secretary General of the Egyptian Red Crescent took a long visit to AL Areesh and Rafah to assess the humanitarian situation of the stranded Palestinians and held a number of meetings with several concerned authorities.

Actually, the Egyptian Red Crescent branch in Al-Areesh is coordinating with the local authorities to supply food parcel and hygiene kits for each individual sufficient for ten days.

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A quick survey of the families stranded is being carried out by the Egyptian Red Crescent, though there are difficulties in identifying accurately the individuals and their hosts. The survey indicated that there is no sheltering problem, but there is a need to cover the cost of daily expenses including meals and basic hygiene items for most of the affected people.



**Thousands of Palestinians waiting to get their passports.**

The distribution of the food parcels will be carried out by a committee comprising of the Egyptian Red Crescent and the local governorate authorities to ensure that all beneficiaries are those Palestinians stranded as a result of the border closure. The Egyptian Red Crescent is planning to repeat this process every ten days until the borders are open again. And, 5,000 parcels are needed within the coming few days.

Each food parcel will contain the following items:

- § 1 kilo of sugar
- § 2 kilos of rice
- § 2 bottles cooking oil
- § 1 kilo of butter
- § 5 packets of macaroni
- § 3 boxes of processed cheese
- § 2 kilos of beans
- § 2 packets of biscuits
- § 1 box of tea
- § 2 cans of beef
- § 1 can of tuna fish
- § 1 kilo of oriental sweets
- § 1 package of detergent

The Egyptian Red Crescent will also support daily meals for the Egyptian Red Crescent nursery, which will be open to accommodate 200 Palestinian children for free.

The Egyptian Red Crescent has requested financial assistance from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) to carry out their humanitarian assistance and to contribute to the local effort to respond to this emergency situation. The attached budget has been established in close cooperation with the Egyptian Red Crescent headquarters, the Red Crescent local branch in Al Areesh and the Regional Office of the International Federation.



**Image of Palestinians waiting at the Al Rafah border.**

## **Coordination and Harmonization of Efforts:**

The International Federation contribution through this DREF intervention is being implemented by the Egyptian Red Crescent and coordinated with the ICRC. Since this humanitarian situation has been arising frequently in the

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past few years with the continued closure of the border crossing, and since the assumption is that the current crisis will prevail for some time to come, it is necessary to plan beyond the current emergency response through DREF. Therefore, a continued monitoring of the situation will be coordinated with Egyptian Red Crescent as well as ICRC.

A longer term emergency plan (including the construction and equipping of a warehouse in the Al-Areesh area, and the reinforcement of the branch capacity to respond to these chronic needs) is considered as part of the current Movement strategy together with the provision of relief, shelter and hygiene facilities.

An UN Inter Agency assessment mission was undertaken earlier this month to monitor the situation.

### **PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 5,000 FOOD PARCELS AND 200 DAILY MEALS**

<b>SUPPLIES</b>	
5,000 FOOD PARCELS	<b>86,100</b>
200 DAILY MEALS FOR CHILDREN	<b>4,317</b>
<b>PERSONNEL</b>	
INCENTIVES FOR VOLUNTEERS	<b>1,000</b>
<b>VISIBILITY</b>	
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	<b>2,083</b>
TOTAL	<b>93,500</b>
<b>PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SUPPORT (6.5%)</b>	<b>6,500</b>
<b>TOTAL CHF</b>	<b>100,000</b>

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