

UN aid official warns of 'disastrous consequences' of power cut in Gaza

14 June 2017 – A senior United Nations humanitarian official in the occupied Palestinian Territory warned today about the disastrous consequences of a further reduction in electricity supply to the Gaza Strip on the living conditions of two million Palestinians.

A further increase in the length of blackouts is likely to lead to a total collapse of basic services, including critical functions in the health, water and sanitation sectors, said UN Humanitarian Coordinator Robert Piper in a statement.

The people in Gaza should not be held hostage to this longstanding internal Palestinian dispute, he added, calling on the Palestinian Authority, Hamas and Israel to put the welfare of Gaza's residents first.

This year marks 50 years since the start of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, which resulted in Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territory.

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Early this week, the Israeli cabinet agreed to a reduction in the supply of electricity to the Gaza Strip, following a decision by the Palestinian Authority to reduce its monthly payments for that supply by 30 per cent.

The reduction will bring most households and service-providers down to 2 hours or so of power per day, he said.

Hospitals, water supply, waste water treatment and sanitation services have already been dramatically curtailed since mid-April and depend almost exclusively on a UN emergency fuel operation.

An additional reduction in electricity will require the delivery of one million litres of fuel monthly, under the UN operation, to keep minimum functions operating at 186 essential facilities across the Strip.

The UN has already appealed to the international community to support its limited humanitarian efforts to prevent the collapse of vital life-saving, health, water, sanitation and municipal services, Mr. Piper said.