



# EUBAM Rafah

## European Union Border Assistance Mission Rafah

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### **EUBAM STILL OPERATIONAL**

December 2007

- EUBAM has maintained its full operational capability despite the Hamas take over in the Gaza Strip. On 13 June 2007 the EUBAM Head of Mission, Lt. General Pietro Pistolese, declared a temporary suspension of operations at the Rafah Crossing Point (RCP). During the 18 months the EUBAM monitors were present at the terminal, a total of 443,975 passenger crossed through RCP.
- Under the present circumstances, and taking into account the importance of having the border open and ready to continue with the implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access, EUBAM will stay in the region and maintain the operational capacity to deploy at short notice.
- There are other objectives that EUBAM can achieve other than monitoring RCP: capacity building through training programmes and evaluation systems constitutes a key element of the EUBAM's mandate. In recent weeks there have been discussions with Palestinian officials in order to determine training needs in a variety of border management fields, and the Mission has focussed on preparing the relevant training packages.
- In terms of the broader EU contribution to the region, officers from EUBAM have been providing support to EUPOL COPPS, the EU's mission that supports the Palestinian Civil Police (PCP), in two areas: the audit of the PCP and the preparation of training courses. The audit process involves EUBAM officers assisting EUPOL COPPS advisers to observe several PCP districts headquarters and police stations in the West Bank in order to identify training and support needs. So far as training is concerned, EUBAM has produced Border Police and Customs input which EUBAM officers will deliver during a Public Order training course to be run by EUPOL COPPS at the Jericho Training Centre.
- The EU was invited to play a third party role through the Agreement on Movement and Access reached by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority on November 2005. From then until 25 June 2006 RCP was fully operational, and the European monitors were doing their duty: to actively monitor, mentor and the Palestinian Authority border control. During this period 279,436 passengers crossed through the Crossing Point. EUBAM has never had an executive mandate; Palestinian the security and customs officials did all the work at the terminal.
- Since Corporal Gilad Shalit was captured on 25 June 2006, RCP has been closed for normal operations and open on an exceptional basis only. Considerable efforts were made to mediate the resumption of normal operations, and to at least ensure that the crossing was open as often as possible. EUBAM efforts resulted in RCP being open for 83 days between 25 June 2006 and 13 June 2007, allowing nearly 165,000 people to cross.