

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Access Support Unit (ASU) Pre-Clearance Mechanism (PCM): Version 2 (v2)

August 2024

Prepared by

Access Support Unit (ASU)

United Nations Access Support Unit (UN ASU)

I). Overview

1). Background

In order to consolidate and better streamline *United Nations* (UN) access mechanisms in the *occupied Palestinian territory* (oPt) in January 2022, under the leadership of the UN *Deputy Special Coordinator* (DSC), *Resident Coordinator* (RC), and *Humanitarian Coordinator* (HC), the UN system in oPt embarked on a process of streamlining and enhancing coordination between various UN entities engaged on access issues across the oPt with a view to:

- a). utilizing all available capacities and increasing efficiency;
- b). ensuring synergies and avoiding fragmentation/overlapping; and
- c). ensuring coherence of advocacy and maximizing political leverage.

As such, in January 2023, a consolidated *Access Support Unit* (ASU) project combining both access of people (formerly the *Access Coordination Unit* (ACU) and goods and materials (formerly the *Project Management Unit* (PMU) implementing the *Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism* (GRM) was established.

The GRM was created following the 2014 conflict between Israel and Gaza and within the framework of the 2014 Cairo Agreement as a tripartite agreement between the *Government of Israel* (GoI), the *Palestinian Authority* (PA) and the UN. The purpose of the GRM was to facilitate the entrance and use of much-needed construction and other dual-use materials required for post conflict reconstruction, humanitarian response and economic development in the Gaza Strip – and the monitoring of those items to ensure they are not ‘redirected’ for military use by armed groups.

The GRM was a rare example of functional cooperation between the PA and GoI. Although, in name, the GRM implies a limited reconstruction mandate, it was widely used to facilitate the entrance and use of various dual-use materials for infrastructure and other projects needed for both humanitarian support, early recovery and development projects in Gaza, including in the context of implementing *Ad Hoc Liaison Committee* (AHLC) commitments and recommendations.

While the current war in Gaza has in the short term led to the suspension of the GRM activity thereby putting the GRM on hold since 7 October, the ASU rapidly adapted to the changing situations and was able to respond quickly and effectively using the CHI mechanism.

2). Additional Actors and Terminology

The term “humanitarian partners” refers to all the actors supporting the humanitarian response in Gaza, such as UN agencies, government departments, *non-governmental organizations* (NGOs), and companies (such as private logistics providers).

The term *Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories* (COGAT) is the *Israeli Defense Force* (IDF) unit that oversees Israeli policy within the oPt. The *Coordination and Liaison Administration* (CLA) is the unit within the COGAT that is responsible for the Israeli government policy in Gaza.

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The term *Critical Humanitarian Items* (CHIs) refers to any item that is not food, medicine, fuel, water or basic shelter equipment. Although the term “dual-use” has not been in use since the GRM was put on hold, anything other than food, medicine, fuel, water or basic shelter equipment risks being rejected at the crossing unless it is precleared through the ASU mechanism.

3). Current Mechanism

On January 11, 2024, ASU commenced coordinating the pre-clearance process for CHIs. The *World Food Programme's* (WFP) Palestine Logistics Cluster has a supporting role in pre-clearance coordination with its humanitarian partners. The ASU receives *Pre-Clearance Requests* (PCRs) for CHIs from humanitarian partners and then submits them to COGAT. The ASU manages the communication between these partners and COGAT, specifically in delivering COGAT's responses to humanitarian partners. The ASU also **communicated** with COGAT shortly before pre-approved CHIs arrive at Israeli inspection points to ensure successful entry.

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II). Requests

Humanitarian partners submit PCRs through the [Access Support Unit \(ASU\) Pre-Clearance Mechanism \(PCM\) Pre-Clearance Request \(PCR\) form](#).¹ They must provide information about the person making the request, the item itself, and the item's "supply chain."

1). Humanitarian Partner Information

Overview

Humanitarian partners must submit the following information about the partner making the request.

- Requester Name,
- Humanitarian Partner,
- Job Title and Email,
- Contact Number, and
- Secondary Contact.

Humanitarian Partner Section

- From this section, no personally-identifiable information about the requester is shared with COGAT. ASU will remove personally-identifiable information when it is not required, such as when included in file names.
- Humanitarian partners are typically UN or government agencies, *international non-governmental organizations* (INGOs) or local *community-based organizations* (CBOs), *Red Cross or Red Crescent* (RCRC) societies, and companies (such as a medical manufacturer or private logistics provider). If the partner is a national branch of an international entity, they must specify the country.

Contact Numbers Section

- The requestor must specify the country code for both contact numbers, as well as on which messaging applications (ie. iMessage, Signal, WhatsApp) the primary contact is reachable.
- The secondary contact may be copied on ASU emails to the partner. If ASU cannot reach the primary contact, they may communicate with the secondary contact by phone.

¹ HERC, 2024a. Additional resources on COGAT dual-use guidance is available on the [Gaza Pre-Clearance page](#) of the Humanitarian Emergency Response Coalition (HERC) Gaza Database (Humanitarian Emergency Response Coalition [HERC], 2023c).

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2) Item Information

a). General Information

Humanitarian partners must submit this information about the item:

- Item Name,
- Quantity,
- Description,
- Image(s),
- Technical Specifications, and
- Primary Cluster.

Image(s) Section

- The actual item must be fully visible. Partners should not upload design sketches in this section;
- The personal name of the requestor should not be included in the filename of the image. To preserve requester's anonymity, ASU cannot submit images that include the personal names; and
- If a partner submits a single Excel file for multiple PCRs, they should not paste images directly into the file. COGAT cannot open these files.

Primary Cluster Section²

- Pre-clearance for many items requires additional information, so humanitarian partners must categorize their items by cluster and subcategory through the form.
- Any cellular, internet, or satellite network compatible devices (including all telephones, tablets, computers, and ethernet devices) should be categorized as "*Emergency Telecommunication (ETC)*".
- Any body armor, armored vehicles, or bulletproofing construction items as "Protection."

² Additional guidance on which cluster CHIs should be categorized as are available on the [Gaza Pre-Clearance page](#) of the Humanitarian Emergency Response Coalition (HERC) Gaza Database (HERC, 2023c).

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b). Additional Information Required for Certain Categories

Depending on the category of the CHI, the ASU PCM form may require partners to submit additional information or documentation. This table, provided by COGAT, lists most (but not all) of the additional information and documents required for specific CHIs PCR.

Item Category	Product Catalog	Chassis Number	Protection Specification	Team Members List	Building Plan	Material List	Pipe Diameter	Cluster Endorsement	COGAT ETC Form
Auxiliary Equipment (& Accessories)	X								
Construction Equipment					X	X			
Desalination Units	X					X	X	X	
Electricity (& Accessories)	X								
ETC, Internet, and Telecom Devices	X								X
Food Preparation Equipment	X								
Flow Meters	X						X	X	
Hospital Equipment	X								
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	X			X					
Plumbing Equipment	X						X	X	
Temporary Structures					X	X			
Vehicles (Armored)		X	X						
Vehicles (Regular, non Armored)		X							

Most categories require that partners submit a *product catalog*. The catalog is a document from the manufacturer that includes key information such as product features, size and weight dimensions, materials, safety requirements, and certifications. These are some of the categories, separated by cluster, that require complex additional information:

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Emergency Telecommunication (ETC) Items

For any device that has cellular, internet, or satellite network connectivity, ASU must submit an additional form to COGAT on behalf of humanitarian partners. This is the additional information that partners must provide to ASU for this form:

- To whom will the items be assigned, and if they will use the item in a stationary location, multiple positions, mobile, or other arrangements?;
- Are the items being used in a stationary location, multiple positions, mobile, or other arrangements?;
- Provide a full address for these locations, including city and street name; and
- Provide contact information for the people responsible for the items inside Gaza, including full name, email address, and telephone number.

Health Items

- For most hospital equipment, COGAT requires a separate product catalog for each item. Hospital equipment includes most electronic medical devices, such as ventilators, autoclaves, or lab centrifuges.
- For oxygen concentrators, COGAT also requires a supervision contact. Specifically, COGAT requests the contact information for humanitarian partners' head of logistics in Gaza. COGAT requires that the head of logistics be willing to carry out periodic supervision of the CHIs. Pre-approval will not be granted if the humanitarian entity or the head of logistics refuses to agree to these conditions.

Protection Items

- For *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*, COGAT requires a "team members list". This is a list of personnel who will utilize the PPE items in Gaza, including their first and last names, nationality, and national identification/passport numbers.
- For *Armored Vehicles (AVs)*, COGAT requires both a Chassis or *Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)* and "Protection Specifications" to be included in the catalog or technical specifications documents. Partners must highlight or otherwise mark this information in the documents, especially if the document is in another language (ie. Hebrew).

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Items

- For sensitive WASH equipment, such as desalination units, plumbing equipment, or flow meters, COGAT requires an official endorsement from the Gaza coordinator of the [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\) State of Palestine \(SoP\) Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Cluster](#).³
- After a partner submits these items to ASU, ASU communicates with the WASH Cluster Gaza Coordinator to request their endorsement. ASU will contact the humanitarian if the WASH cluster coordinator requires additional information about the request or the partner.

³ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2023.

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3). Supply Chain Information

Overview

Humanitarian partners must also submit this information about the item's "supply chain." The supply chain summarizes the transit route of the item(s).

- Sending Entity,
- Procuring or Donating Entity,
- Location of Manufacture,
- Entry Corridor,
- Receiving Entity or Entities,
- Governorate(s) of Use or Distribution,
- Location(s) of Use or Distribution, and
- Purpose(s) of Use or Distribution.

Sending Entity

The sending entity is the party responsible for overseeing the transit of the item to Gaza, which is not always the party actually moving the item. If a humanitarian partner is paying a private logistics provider to take the item to Gaza, the partner should list themselves, not that provider, as the sending entity. Similarly, if a UN agency is transporting an item on behalf of an INGO partner, the INGO should still be listed as the sending entity.

Entry Corridor

All CHIs enter Gaza through a specific humanitarian corridor. On the ASU PCM PCR form, corridors are named after the country or territory in which humanitarian convoys begin before traveling to Gaza.⁴ Requestors who are not certain which corridor should select the most likely one. If the expected corridor changes, partners should contact ASU as soon as possible so ASU can coordinate with COGAT.

From Jordan, ASU can also coordinate the entry of CHIs being carried (by hand or car) on humanitarian personnel convoys. However, for certain CHIs (ie. ETC or PPE items), ASU is only able to coordinate entry on behalf of SUNOs.

Location(s) of Use or Distribution

For location(s), partners should be as specific as possible, optimally providing *Global Positioning System* (GPS) coordinates as decimal degrees. If partners plan to use or distribute the CHI in the North governorate, they must provide, at a minimum, the names of specific cities, towns, or villages wherein the items will be used or distributed.

⁴ Partners should refer to the [Palestine Logistics Cluster - Standard Operating Procedures \(SOPs\). 12 August 2024](#) for an overview of the different entry points into Gaza (Palestine Logistics Cluster, 2024b).

III). Responses

After receiving the PCR from ASU, COGAT will respond by notifying ASU if the PCR is pending, missing information, pre-approved, or rejected. ASU will notify humanitarian partners of COGAT responses and coordinate necessary follow-up communication with COGAT.

1). Pending or Missing Information

For pending requests, COGAT will often (although not always) request additional information for the submissions. When COGAT requests additional information (ie. more specificity on location), ASU will notify partners of these requests and submit additional information back to COGAT.

2). Pre-Approval

When responding with a pre-approval, COGAT will issue a specific “reference number” for the pre-approval. This number must be resubmitted back to ASU through the [July 2024 Equipment Inspection Coordination \(EIC\) form](#) as explained in Section IV: “Entry Coordination”;⁵

When receiving pre-approval, humanitarian partners should note that pre-approvals are never universal. They are unique to the singular transit of an CHI. Each pre-approval is only valid once. For example, if a UN agency receives pre-approval for one shipment of an item, that pre-approval does not apply to any subsequent shipments by that same agency for that item.

Similarly, no pre-approval constitutes a “blanket approval” for that type of CHI. Each humanitarian partner must apply for their own pre-approval each time they plan to transit CHIs into Gaza. For example, if one INGO receives pre-approval to transit an item into Gaza, this does not grant pre-approval to any other INGO for transiting that same item.

3). Rejection

When COGAT notifies ASU of a rejected request, they usually do not provide a reason for rejection. However, partners do have the opportunity to request clarity on the reason for rejection. Similarly, through the mechanism they may either appeal for reconsideration with additional information or re-submit an amended request that may resolve objections that COGAT has to the request (ie. the donor or location of use in Gaza). COGAT usually does not respond to requests for clarity on rejection nor appeals for reconsideration. However, ASU will still advise partners on additional options should they receive a rejection.

⁵ In July 2024, COGAT changed the [previous COGAT EIC form](#) and renamed it the *Good Coordination Template (GCT)*. For consistency, ASU continues to use the term “EIC” form with humanitarian partners (HERC, 2024b and 2024c).

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IV). Entry Coordination

1). Equipment Inspection Coordination (EIC) Form

In addition to CHI pre-clearance, the ASU can also coordinate the actual acceptance of pre-approved CHIs through Israeli inspection points. Humanitarian partners must request entry coordination in advance and receive tentative approval a week before the requested time.

Humanitarian partners must complete and email the [July 2024 COGAT Equipment Inspection Coordination \(EIC\) form](#) to the ASU focal point at least 48 hours (10:00 AM Jerusalem time) before a pre-approved item arrives at an Israeli inspection point. Regardless of the specific humanitarian corridor through which the CHI is transiting to Gaza, partners are expected to submit the EIC form to ASU.

The ASU PCM is not involved in the actual transportation of CHIs into Gaza. Rather, ASU PSM ensures that when pre-approved items arrive at an Israeli inspection point, the Israeli officers have been notified in advance that it has been pre-approved. Similarly, the ASU PCM is a separate process from customs clearance.⁶

2). Egypt

Overview

For CHIs traveling from Egypt to Gaza, Kerem Shalom (across from Karem Abu Salem on the Palestinian side) is currently the only Israeli inspection and entry point for humanitarian items. However, there are two separate entry points through which Egyptian aid convoys may enter Gaza. After crossing through the Kerem Shalom, humanitarian convoys will either enter Gaza immediately through Karem Abu Salam or travel north to enter Gaza through Gate 96.⁷

If humanitarian partners are missing information required for the EIC form (ie. driver's identification or trailer license plates), they should communicate directly with the [Gaza Operations team of the ERC](#). If partners are unable to receive this information from ERC, they should communicate with the El-Arish, North Sinai focal points from [the Palestine Logistics Cluster](#) and the [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) (OCHA). Relevant contact emails can also be found at the bottom of these SOPs.

⁶ If partners need logistical support transporting CHIs into Gaza, they should reach out to the *World Food Programme's* (WFP) [Palestine Logistics Cluster](#). Additional customs and importation resources for the Gaza response are available on the [Logistics page](#) of the Humanitarian Emergency Response Coalition (HERC) Gaza Database (HERC, 2023b).

⁷ Convoys heading to Gate 96 cross through the Israeli side (Kerem Shalom) but not the Palestinian side (Kerem Abu Salem) into Gaza. After crossing through Kerem Shalom, Gate 96 convoys travel north on the Israeli "Fence Road" until they reach Gate 96. Regardless of Egyptian entry point, humanitarian partners should follow the procedures in the [Egyptian Red Crescent's \(ERC\) Gaza Response SOPs for Importation \(Version 4\)](#). (Egyptian Red Crescent, 2024).

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Kerem Abu Salem

For pre-approved CHIs that are entering through both the Israeli side (Kerem Shalom) and the Palestinian side (Kerem Abu Salem), humanitarian partners must complete and email the EIC form to the ASU focal point at least 48 hours before a pre-approved item arrives at Kerem Shalom.

Gate 96

For pre-approved CHIs that are entering Gaza through Gate 96, entry coordination of pre-cleared items should be done through both WFP and ASU. First, partners should submit the EIC form to ASU 48 before arrival to Kerem Shalom. Second, before the items are manifested (typically 24 hours before sending), partners should email the [WFP Palestine Logistics Cluster cargo contact](#).⁸

3). West Bank & Israel

Humanitarian partners must complete and email the EIC form to the ASU focal point 48 hours before a pre-approved item arrives at an Israeli inspection or entry point. ASU can coordinate the entry of pre-approved items into Gaza through any northern crossing point.⁹ However, humanitarian partners are responsible for coordinating the entry of pre-cleared items through any Israeli port of entry (ie. Ashdod Seaport or Ben Gurion Airport).

4). Jordan

There are several separate coordination processes for CHIs entering Gaza through Jordan. If a humanitarian partner is coordinating cargo entry from Jordan through the Logistics Cluster, they should email the [Palestine Logistics Cluster cargo contact](#). Organizations should also share confirmation of COGAT pre-approval (specifically the COGAT tracking number) with the relevant humanitarian logistics partners, such as the [Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization \(JHCO\)](#).

ASU can also coordinate the entry of CHIs being carried (by hand or car) on humanitarian personnel convoys. However, for certain CHIs (ie. ETC or PPE items), **ASU is only able to coordinate entry if they are being carried by SUNOs**.¹⁰

⁸ Palestine Logistics Cluster, 2024a. Partners should also follow the procedures in the Logistics Cluster's [Palestine - Standard Operating Procedures \(SOPs\) - Fence Road convoy, 1 August 2024](#) document (Palestinian Logistics Cluster, 2024b).

⁹ As of August 16, 2024, of the available northern crossing points, Erez East (between Erez and Beit Hanoun) and Erez West (a new crossing on Gaza's northern border between Al-Atara and Zikim), COGAT will typically open only one during a period of time. Thus, it is important that partners are aware of at which northern crossing point their pre-approved items are expected to arrive.

¹⁰ For additional information on staff rotation convoys, partners should review the ASU [Humanitarian Team Rotation \(HTR\) In and Out of Gaza Through Kerem Shalom](#) document (Access Support Unit, 2024). Additional documents about personnel convoys are available on the [Logistical Resources page](#) of the Humanitarian Emergency Response Coalition (HERC) External Database (HERC, 2023d).

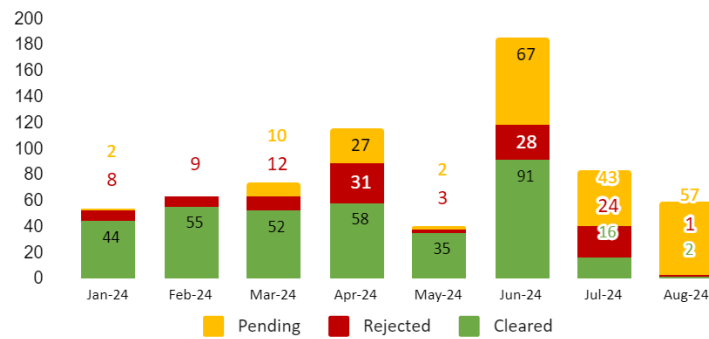
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V). Facts & Figures

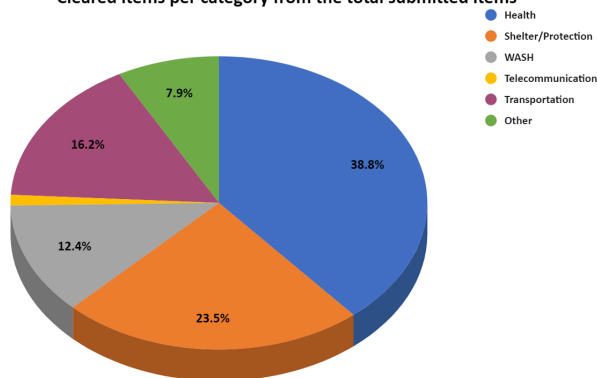
There are currently a total of 50 partners using the ASU CHIs PCM.¹¹

Requests sent to COGAT from 11 January 2024 onwards		Total #	Total %
Request status	Submitted	624	
	Cleared	339	54
	Rejected	92	15
	Pending	167	27
	No longer being pursued	26	4

Status of requests sent to COGAT by ASU since 11 January 2024



Cleared items per category from the total submitted items



¹¹ The 624 requests amount to a total of 6,747,728 items. Additional ASU PCM data analysis is available on the [Gaza Pre-Clearance page](#) of the Humanitarian Emergency Response Coalition (HERC) Gaza Database (HERC, 2023c).

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VII). Additional Resources, Contacts, & Citations

1). Access Support Unit Quick Response (QR) Codes

Access Support Unit (ASU)
Pre-Clearance Mechanism (PCM)
Pre-Clearance Request (PCR)
Form



Access Support Unit (ASU)
Pre-Clearance Mechanism (PCM)
Equipment Inspection
Coordination (EIC)
Form



Access Support Unit (ASU)
Pre-Clearance Mechanism (PCM)
Standard Operating Procedures
(SOPs)



2). Contact Information

United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS) Access Support Unit (ASU) Pre-Clearance:
Manal al Najjar (manala@unops.org).

World Food Programme (WFP): Palestine Logistics Cluster common services queries and info
(palestine.clustercargo@wfp.org & palestine.logcluster@wfp.org). Other relevant Palestine
Logistics Cluster contacts can be found at the bottom of the [Palestine Logistics Cluster webpage](#).¹²

Palestine Logistics Cluster Pre-Clearance Focal Points: Diala Khalaf (khalaf@nrc.no) & Jackson de
Concini (deconcini@medglobal.org).

Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) El-Arish Focal Point: Sherif Arafa
(sherif.arafa@un.org).

Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC): Gaza Operations (gaza.ops@egyptianrc.org).

Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO): General Contact (info@jhco.org.jo).

Humanitarian Emergency Response Coalition (HERC): ASU PCM Database Requests
(Humanitarian.Emergency.Response@proton.me).

¹² Palestine Logistics Cluster, 2021.

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3). Citations

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- Humanitarian Emergency Response Coalition (HERC). (2023 November). *Logistics Page*. Google Drive. <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/4/folders/1qAfGr8fG-Ng93EjO0PTQkZ9eONuOSJs6>
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- . (2024 April 18). *Israeli Coordinator for the Government Activity in the Territories (COGAT) Gaza Equipment Inspection Coordination (EIC) Form*. Google Docs. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kfO1x3n3EDv-RXZy9gg6XaGlxs81paw/pub>
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- Palestine Logistics Cluster. (2021 July 16). *Palestine Logistics Cluster*. Logistics Cluster. <https://logcluster.org/en/ops/pse23a> (archived at <http://web.archive.org/web/20240715124543/https://logcluster.org/en/ops/pse23a>).
- . (2023 November 23). *Egypt - ERC*. Logistics Cluster. <https://logcluster.org/en/search-page?f%5B0%5D=source%3A1225> (archived at <http://web.archive.org/web/20240715124543/https://logcluster.org/en/ops/pse23a>).
- . (2024 August 1). *Palestine - Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) - Fence Road convoy, 1 August 2024*. Logistics Cluster. <https://logcluster.org/en/document/palestine-standard-operating-procedures-sops-fence-road-convoy-1-august-2024> (archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20240814160749/https://logcluster.org/en/document/palestine-standard-operating-procedures-sops-fence-road-convoy-1-august-2024>).

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-. (2024 August 12). *Palestine Logistics Cluster - Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)*, 12 August 2024. Logistic Cluster.

<https://logcluster.org/en/document/palestine-logistics-cluster-standard-operating-procedures-sops-12-august-2024> (archived at <https://web.archive.org/save/https://logcluster.org/en/document/palestine-logistics-cluster-standard-operating-procedures-sops-12-august-2024>).

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