

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Emergency

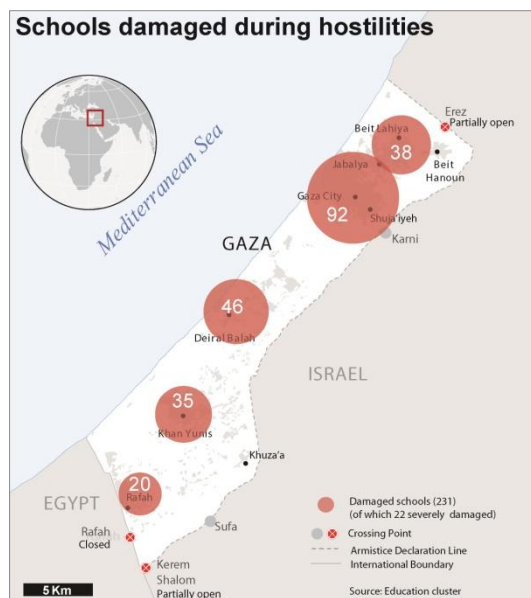
Situation Report (as of 12 August 2014, 0800 hrs)



This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. This report covers the period from 11 August (0800 hrs) to 12 August (0800 hrs). The next report will be issued on 13 August.

Highlights

- The 72 hour-long ceasefire is holding into its second day, with no violations reported.
- The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has declined, but at least 335,000 people still remain in emergency shelters or with host families. These numbers are expected to rise again if hostilities resume.
- Alternative housing will be needed for the approximately 100,000 people whose homes have been destroyed or severely damaged.
- The number of child fatalities, at 459, exceeds the combined number of children killed in the two previous conflicts in Gaza, 350 in 2008-9 and 35 in 2012.
- An exceptional food distribution is ongoing, targeting families (730,000 people) who do not regularly receive food assistance from UNRWA and WFP.



1,962

Palestinians killed, including at least 1,417 civilians, of whom 459 are children and 238 are women.¹

67

Israelis killed, including 64 soldiers, three civilians including one foreign national.

335,000

People hosted at UNRWA, government shelters and with host families.

459

Child fatalities, exceeding the combined number of children killed in the conflicts in 2008/9 and 2012.

16,700

Homes in Gaza have been destroyed or severely damaged.

Situation Overview

The 72-hour ceasefire, which entered into effect at midnight on Sunday, is holding with no incidents recorded during the reporting period. Negotiations between the parties on reaching a permanent ceasefire have resumed following the return to Cairo of the Israeli delegation. There has been a decline in the numbers seeking refuge at emergency shelters as people take advantage of the continuing calm to check if their homes are still inhabitable or their contents salvageable. However, the majority of the population has to cope with severe shortages in water and power services and explosive remnants of war are posing a major threat. The first phase of an initial joint needs assessment is planned for Wednesday, 13 August.

Hostilities and casualties

Since the last update, the Protection Cluster has recorded a further two fatalities. Both are civilians who died from injuries sustained previously. This brings the cumulative death toll among Palestinians to at least 1,962, according to preliminary data collected by the Protection Cluster from various sources, including 319 persons who could not be yet identified or their status established. Of the initially verified cases, 1,417 are believed to be civilians, including 459 children and 238 women. The

¹ Data on fatalities and destruction of property is consolidated by the Protection and Shelter clusters based on preliminary information, and is subject to change based on further verifications.

+ For more information, see “background on the crisis” at the end of the report

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Coordination Saves Lives

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Some 226 have been identified as members of armed groups. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, as of 17:00 on 10 August, 9,986 Palestinians, including 3,009 children and 359 elderly, have been injured.

There were no reports of firing by Palestinian factions into Israel during the reporting period. Since 8 July, three civilians in Israel have been killed, including one foreign national, and dozens directly injured by rockets or shrapnel. The total of Israeli military fatalities stands at 64.

Damage to houses and schools

Following a series of assessments by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, it is estimated that 8,800 housing units have been totally destroyed, requiring reconstruction, and 7,900 were severely damaged and are uninhabitable until major repairs can take place. This is over 160 per cent higher than the equivalent figure, approximately 6,400, recorded during the “Cast Lead” military operation in Gaza in 2008/9. Another 5,600 housing units have suffered major damage but are still inhabitable in part, while 33,500 have suffered minor damage. The estimated total cost for reconstruction and repair of these homes is approximately US\$ 534 million.

The previous ceasefire also allowed teams from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) to conduct initial assessments of educational facilities damaged during the hostilities. According to the findings a total of 230 schools have sustained some type of damage, including 25 schools entirely destroyed or severely damaged, which are not usable by the start of the new school year, which will not start on 24 August as scheduled.

Displacement

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in emergency shelters has declined with the continuation of the ceasefire. As of yesterday afternoon, there were 209,172 IDPs hosted in 87 UNRWA schools, (down from 237,000 in 90 UNRWA schools the previous day) and 15,869 in seven government shelters supported by UNRWA, (down from 26,000 the previous day). There is no update available on the additional 13,000 IDPs who were taking refuge in 16 other government shelters or the nearly 110,000 IDPs residing with host families who have been registered and reached by various shelter partners; the actual number of IDPs with host families is believed to be higher.

UNRWA’s hygiene and water campaign for shelters was launched on 10 August, involving the dissemination of information on water conservation, appropriate hygiene practices and treatment of scabies and lice. UNRWA has also continued to provide food, water and non food items to IDPs sheltered in its schools and, with other agencies, to the IDPs taking shelter in government schools. Health teams in each shelter, including a doctor, a nurse, and a health educator, are monitoring nine health issues of concern, and are providing health education to the displaced. However, access to medical care, including medication for chronic diseases, remains problematic.

Exceptional food distribution

An exceptional one-off food distribution by UNRWA, the World Food Program (WFP) and the MoSA campaign targeting families who do not regularly receive food assistance continues today. The campaign aims at improving the coping capacity of the entire population, which is affected by the lack of income and the rise in food prices. Eligible families, which include those currently in shelters, will receive 10kgs of rice and 30kgs of wheat flour regardless of the family size. Each parcel equals about 44 per cent of the calorie requirements for an average family for one month. The regular food assistance provided by UNRWA and WFP to core beneficiaries are separate initiatives and will continue as per the usual schedule.

Electricity

The Gaza Power Plant (GPP) remains inoperable following an Israeli airstrike on 29 July. The volume of electricity purchased now from Israel and transferred via nine feeder lines has increased (108 Megawatts), and together with the supply from Egypt (28 Megawatts) meets nearly 30 per cent of the estimated demand. As a result, Gaza’s electricity company is preparing to implement a new distribution scheme, entailing cycles of six hours of supply followed by 12 hours of outage. However, the majority of households in the areas most affected by bombardments, including eastern Gaza City (Toufah, Shaa’f and Ash Shuja’iyeh), Beit Hanoun, Khuza’a and eastern of Rafah, are not likely to benefit from this due to the severe damage sustained to the internal distribution network.

Gaza has a tremendous potential. People are very entrepreneurial, they're well educated, they have markets abroad, in Israel and the West Bank. The blockade has to be lifted in order that Gaza can thrive.

Mr. James Rawley, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, 11 August.

Key humanitarian priorities

Humanitarian space: access for humanitarian workers to carry out life-saving activities should be maintained, among other reasons, to complete search and rescue operations in several areas, and repair critical water and electricity infrastructure. Removal of the threat of numerous UXO in built up areas is vital.

Joint needs assessments: must be launched in the coming days to inform interventions by humanitarian organizations. This is contingent on an extension of the ceasefire.

Additional fuel supply: needed to operate backup generators at essential facilities, including water, sanitation and health, for longer hours.

Strengthen response to IDPs: improving priority response to IDPs in non-UNRWA facilities and with host families; ensuring common standards of response to IDPs throughout the Gaza strip, including comprehensive and common registration.

Erez: Open for movement during normal working hours on 12 August (08:00-16:00).

Beit Hanoun (Arba-Arba): Operational.

Kerem Shalom: Open today as per its regular operating hours. A total of 248 truckloads of mostly food and medicine entered yesterday.

Rafah: Open from 09:00 to 15:00 on 11 August. On 11 August, 580 dual nationals and foreign residency card holders exited Gaza through Rafah. A total of 181 tons of medicine and medical supplies entered Gaza including 150 tons for WHO, 21 tons from Saudi Arabia and 10 tons from Kuwait.

Humanitarian needs and response

Field teams and humanitarian partners are in the field carrying out assessments today, for inclusion in this section tomorrow.

General Coordination

The joint rapid needs assessment will start on 13 August following preparations in the past days, including liaison with relevant government counterparts, the allocation of staff to various teams, and the conduct of relevant trainings. Various technical authorities have committed their support. The assessment will take place in two phases: an overview at the governorate level, on the first day, followed by an assessment at the municipality and refugee camp level for a period of three to four days, as soon as the situation allows. Data collected will be entered on tablets and linked directly to a database. The information will be subsequently validated and analysed, before it is disseminated. Protection and gender concerns have been integrated throughout the process.

The Deputy Executive Director (ASG) and Regional Director of UNICEF visited Gaza today, including to meet with partners involved in the humanitarian response.

A camp manager, part of the OCHA surge capacity, has been deployed and started revising and elaborating on the response plan and policy with regards to IDPs.

Funding

Mr. Shawqi Issa, Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of Agriculture of the State of Palestine along with the Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. James W. Rawley launched the 2014 Gaza Crisis Appeal which outlines the planned humanitarian response of the HCT, including UNRWA to the current emergency. The appeal is intended to address urgent needs in Gaza and currently requests US\$ 367 million to implement 86 projects in clusters/sectors including Education, Food Security, Health and Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and WASH as well as Coordination and Support Services. The clusters/sectors requesting the largest amount of funds are Food Security and Shelter which are requesting a total of US\$ 293 million together. The appeal is based on the latest analysis of the required emergency assistance to meet the most critical needs of the affected population and will be revised as further information from the ground becomes available and needs assessments become possible. The Crisis Appeal supersedes the estimates presented in the Gaza Crisis Preliminary Needs and Requirements paper of 24 July. The Crisis Appeal is available online at www.ochaopt.org.

The Emergency Response Fund (ERF) is an additional mechanism available to fund interventions in Gaza through rapid and flexible support to affected civilian populations. The ERF has begun processing project applications in regards to the Gaza emergency. To date, ten project proposals were approved for a total of US\$ 2.3 million. Further funding for the ERF is still being sought.

UN humanitarian agencies, in cooperation with NGO partners are in the process of finalizing an application to the CERF Rapid Response window covering urgent needs in food assistance, psychosocial support, WASH, rubble removal and critical drugs.

Background to the crisis

On 7 July 2014, the Israeli army launched a large military operation in the Gaza Strip, codenamed “Protective Edge”, with the stated objective of stopping Palestinian rocket firing at southern Israel and destroying the military infrastructure of Hamas and other armed groups.

This development marked the collapse of the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire understanding reached between Israel and Hamas in November 2012, which has been gradually undermined since December 2013. The latest escalation round started in early June, characterized by an intensification of Israeli airstrikes and rockets launched from Gaza at southern Israel. Tensions further increased following the abduction and killing of three Israeli youths in the southern West Bank, on 12 June, which the Israeli government attributed to Hamas. Overall, in the period leading up to the start of the current operation a total of 15 Palestinians, including one civilian, were killed, and another 58 others, mostly civilians, injured, as a result of Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip; seven Israelis, five of whom were civilians, were injured due to rocket fire.

The current crisis comes against a backdrop of heightened vulnerability and instability. Unemployment increased dramatically since mid-2013, following a halt of the illegal tunnel trade, exacerbating the impact of the Israeli blockade in place since June 2007. Additionally, former de facto government employees, including the security forces, have not been paid salaries regularly since August 2013 and no salaries at all since April 2014. Delivery of basic services has been also undermined due to an ongoing energy crisis, involving power outages of 12 hours per day.

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