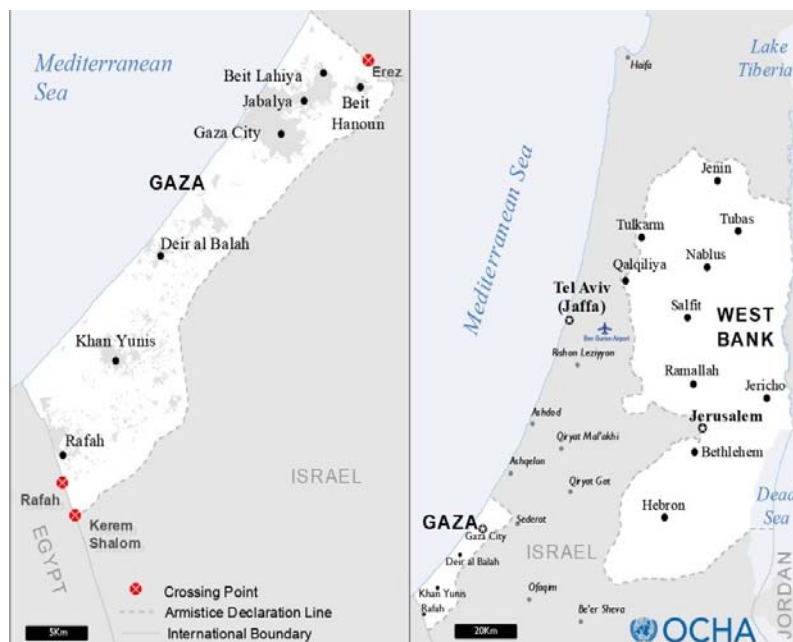




This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 17 July (1500 hrs) to 18 July (1500 hrs). The next report will be issued on 19 July.

Highlights

- An Israeli ground incursion, alongside intense shelling and airstrikes, triggered mass displacement and a sharp increase in casualties overnight.
- The impact of hostilities on Palestinian children has been particularly devastating: 59 killed (11 in the past 24 hours) and 637 injured since 8 July; around 58,000 are estimated to be traumatized.
- 48,000 persons hosted at UNRWA shelters and another 700 displaced families hosted by relatives, are in need of emergency food and other assistance.
- The vast majority of households receive electricity only four hours a day, due to damage to ten feeder lines; water supply has been further undermined.



268

Palestinians killed, including at least 193 civilians, of whom 59 are children and 33 women¹

2,296

Palestinians injured, of whom 637 are children and 393 women²

1,890

Families whose homes are destroyed or severely damaged rendering them uninhabitable.

48,000

Displaced people hosted at 43 UNRWA schools

80%

Of the population receive electricity 4 hours a day.

Situation Overview

On the night of 17 July, the Israeli military launched a ground incursion into the northern and southeastern Gaza Strip, involving infantry troops, backed by tanks, engineering, and intelligence units. According to the Government of Israel, the objective of the ground offensive is to destroy tunnels leading into Israel, to prevent the infiltration of Palestinian armed groups and subsequent attacks. This came a few hours after a failed attack by a Palestinian armed cell that reached southern Israel through a tunnel.

The incursion was preceded by a heavy barrage of artillery fire from Israeli troops, combined with intense shelling from gunboats, as well as airstrikes, which continued until 8 am today. The level of fear among the civilian population across Gaza, children in particular, rose dramatically. Tens of thousands, particularly in areas closer to Israel in northern Gaza and middle

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.

² Data on injuries is provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza.

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

areas, began fleeing rapidly their homes in the dark, amidst bombardments. Nearly 25,000 reached 43 UNRWA schools habituated as emergency shelters or temporary safe spaces, bringing the total number of displaced people hosted by UNRWA to 48,000. It is estimated that more than 11,000 additional people have been displaced since the start of the emergency, after their homes were destroyed or severely damaged, and are currently hosted by relatives and neighbors.

Prior to entering Gaza, the Israeli military announced that the “No Go” zone along Gaza’s perimeter fence had been expanded from 300 meters to 3 kilometers from the fence. Tens of thousands of people residing within this area in the Rafah and Khan Younis governorates have received Israeli warnings to evacuate their homes.

Initial reports indicate that the ground incursion and related shelling resulted in extensive damage to electricity infrastructure, including up to ten lines from Israel, from which most electricity in the Gaza Strip is purchased. As a result, some 80 per cent of the population is receiving electricity during only four hours a day, down from 12 hours previously. This has further undermined the operation of water and sewage facilities, many of which have been damaged, disrupting or cutting water supply to over half of Gaza’s population. Repairs on two of the ten lines were carried out this morning, following prior coordination with the Israeli military.

Since the end of the humanitarian pause yesterday afternoon and until today at 15:00, at least 11 Palestinian children have been killed during Israeli attacks. This brings the death toll among Palestinian children since the start of the emergency to 59, or 22 per cent of all fatalities.

Yesterday at around 5:30 pm, an Israeli missile fired from the air hit the house of the Shuhebar family in the Sabra neighborhood west of Gaza City, killing three children of the same family - Afnan and Waseem, both 8 years old, and Jihad, 11 years old - while they were feeding poultry, which their family keeps on the rooftop. Another two children, 8 and 16 years old were injured, the first of whom is in a critical condition.

Human rights organizations estimate that since the start of the emergency the Israeli army has targeted and destroyed approximately 300 homes, many of which were the residences of alleged members of armed groups. The targeting of civilian homes is a violation of international humanitarian law, unless the homes are being used for military purposes. Attacks against military objectives must be proportionate, offer a definite military advantage in the prevailing circumstances at the time and precautions must be taken to prevent harm to civilians and civilian property /infrastructure. In case of doubt, buildings ordinarily used for civilian purposes, such as homes, are presumed not to be legitimate military targets.

Since the start of the emergency a total of 268 Palestinians have been killed, of whom, according to preliminary information, at least 72 percent (193 people) are believed to be civilians, 18 per cent (47 people) are members of armed groups, and the status of the remainder (28 people) cannot be determined as of yet. The proportion of civilians among the fatalities, is well above the one recorded during the previous large offensive in the Gaza Strip in November of 2012 (“Operation Pillar of Defense”), when 60 per cent of the fatalities were civilians (99 out of 165). This continues to raise concerns about respect for the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in attack under international humanitarian law.

Indiscriminate firing by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza into Israel also continued during the past 24 hours with most falling in open areas or intercepted by the Iron Dome system. Since the start of hostilities, one Israeli civilian has been killed and a few others injured by rocket and mortar fire. One Israeli soldier has been also killed during the ground incursion, possibly by friendly fire.

“It is outrageous that children in Gaza continue to pay such a heavy price in a conflict for which they have no responsibility. Children on both sides of the conflict must be protected from this senseless violence. Those who are in a position of command have an obligation to keep children out of the line of fire”, Maria Calivis, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East & North Africa.

Updates on Gaza Crossings

Erez: Open for humanitarian cases only.

Beit Hanoun (Arba-Arba): The authorities in Gaza announced that the crossing is closed until further notice.

Kerem Shalom: closed yesterday due to two separate security incidents and remained closed today. Although usually closed on Fridays, CLA Erez had expressed its willingness to keep the crossing open, if necessary. Kerem Shalom will be closed tomorrow as per its regular operating schedule.

Rafah: No updates available. Reports indicate that around 200 civilians gathered at Palestinian side of the crossing last night, seeking refuge due to the ground incursion.

Humanitarian needs and response



Needs

- At least 58,000 children require direct and specialized psychosocial support (PSS) on the basis of families who have experienced death, injury or loss of home over the past ten days.
- Explosive remnants of war present a major hazard to the population, particularly to children. Risk education targeting children remains a major need.

58,000

Children in need of psychosocial support

Response

- Protection Cluster members continue monitoring and investigating incidents to identify possible violations of international law.
- The Protection Cluster continues to monitor and crosscheck information on civilian fatalities.
- On 17 July, the Gaza emergency PSS teams conducted 12 visits to injured children in hospitals and homes throughout the Gaza Strip, including to one of the child survivors of the attack which took place on Gaza beach on 16 July. Since 7 July, the Gaza PSS teams have conducted a total of 427 PSS reaching 460 children.
- Since the beginning of the emergency, Save the Children has provided PSS to 467 displaced children who are either staying with host families or who are hospitalized due to injuries suffered from attacks.
- Radio spots continue to alert children and their families on the dangers posed by Explosive Remnants of War. In addition, partners are preparing for the provision of UXO risk education, as soon as the situation allows.

Gaps and Constraints

- Ongoing hostilities continue to impede movement of child protection staff and emergency PSS teams.
- Emergency PSS teams are working at half capacity due to funding constraints.



Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

Needs

- An estimated 1,890 families (approximately 11,300 individuals) whose homes have been either totally destroyed or sustained major damage, rendering their homes uninhabitable, require emergency NFI kits, including mattresses, blankets, hygiene kits and kitchen sets. In the medium term, they will need cash assistance to cover rental fees and basic household items.
- NFI emergency shelter repair interventions, such as nylon and tarpaulin, are needed for 2,410 families (14,400 individuals) whose houses sustained damages but are still inhabitable.

1,890

Displaced families in need of NFIs and cash assistance

Response

- 47,500 people provided with shelter at 43 UNRWA schools.
- On 17 July, truckloads with mattresses, family hygiene kits, and other supplies were distributed to UNRWA shelters.
- In addition to UNRWA's provision of shelter assistance, a total of 7,700 individuals have been provided with shelter assistance to date by different cluster members.

Gaps and Constraints

- Emergency shelter kits for 1,890 families are available in stock and will be distributed by NFI agencies when the security situation allows.
- Cash assistance for 1,890 families to cover rental fees and urgent expenses (US\$ 9,450,000) is needed.

- Shelter NFIs (nylon and tarpaulin and/or assistance to replace broken glass and repair of damaged windows and doors) for 13,000 families are needed in the medium term.
- The lack of security continues to impede delivery of the most urgent shelter/NFI assistance.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Needs

- Most WASH facilities across Gaza impacted, and some paralysed, due to lack of electricity and infrastructure damage; specific information could not yet be collected.
- According to yesterday's reports from WASH partners, only 50 per cent of the sewage pumping and treatment systems are still operating. The mixing of sewage and water constitutes a serious public health hazard of waterborne diseases.
- Due to the ground incursion, eastern wells supplying Gaza City are not accessible for operation which affects access to water for a large number of people. The affected population figures are not yet known
- The landfill of Juhor Ad Dik is not accessible due to the ongoing military ground incursion, which affects the accumulation of solid waste at secondary waste collection sites in Gaza City, with associated public health risks.

50 per cent

Of sewage pumping and treatment systems no longer operate

Response

- UNRWA's sanitation staff worked in all refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, removing solid waste, cleaning the streets, and ensuring that the 11 water wells in Jabalia, Beach, Khan Younis and Rafah camps remain operational.
- UNRWA distributed four trucks containing family hygiene kits and other items to shelters on 17 July.
- UNRWA provided 9,034 litres of emergency fuel to Nuseirat sanitation office.

Gaps and constraints

- As a result of heavy airstrikes, shelling and the ongoing military ground incursion, new information about WASH needs could not be collected.
- The lack of protection during damage repair, operation and assessment remains the biggest constraint, impeding the immediate repair of water and waste water pipelines.



Health and Nutrition

Needs

- Al Wafa Rehabilitation Hospital in Gaza city was evacuated yesterday, including 17 patients in serious condition, staff and international activists, and subsequently shelled and damaged.
- 16 health-related facilities damaged since July 7 (two hospitals, twelve clinics and two nursing care centres) require repair.
- 13 out of a total of 54 Ministry of Health (MoH) primary health centres (PHC) are closed due to their geographic location near targeted sites.
- Updated information on required drugs, disposables, medical equipment and specialists to be provided tomorrow

13

Primary health centres closed

Response

- 13,270 people visited UNRWA clinics on 17 July, up from nearly 9,000 on 16 July, as a result of the humanitarian pause.
- On 17 July, the distribution of 135,000 litres of fuel to MoH hospitals through a grant from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) was completed; the fuel reserves of hospitals are sufficient to operate their standby generators during the coming three weeks.

Gaps and constraints

- Lack of adequate protection of health facilities and personnel, impeding emergency assistance to sick and injured.

- Reduced access for referral cases out of Gaza.



Food Security Sector

Needs

- 47,500 persons hosted at UNRWA shelters and some 700 displaced families hosted by relatives, are in need of emergency food assistance.
- At least 36 fishing boats have been destroyed or sustained damage since the beginning of the emergency. 3,600 fishermen are still in need of re-establishing their livelihoods and require assistance in the interim.
- A minimum of 2,000 farmers require urgent food assistance, as well as other interventions to re-establish their livelihoods, due to damage sustained to livestock, agricultural lands, crops and facilities.

37,780

Palestinians received
food assistance

Response

- WFP, in cooperation with UNRWA, continues to provide daily emergency food rations to IDPs in 36 UNRWA shelters.
- Regular food distribution from UNRWA and WFP through their partners to more than one million people has continued.
- WFP, in partnership with Oxfam GB, continues to provide food vouchers to 685 families hosted by relatives.
- WFP continues to distribute daily emergency food rations to 2,039 hospital patients and staff across the Gaza Strip.

Gaps and Constraints

- As movement is increasingly impeded due to the security situation, access to affected areas and people remains restricted. This has been further compounded by Israeli military ground operations.
- Ongoing military operations pose a risk to the continuation of regular emergency food distributions, potentially leaving thousands of people without access to food.



Education

Needs

- In the last 24 hours, there were no reports of additional schools damaged, perhaps due to decreased access following the ground incursion. In total, 84 schools have been affected by shelling due to their close proximity to targeted sites and are in need of repairs.

84

Schools damaged
by shelling

Response

- Nothing to report.

Gaps & Constraints

- Restrictions on movement to assess impact of hostilities on school infrastructure.
- Still no information available about the condition of the 12 schools located in the Access Restricted Area (ARA).
- Insufficient pre-positioned supplies, such as school tents and teaching/learning materials, to respond to likely scale of need.

General Coordination

UNRWA's Emergency Operations Room (EOR) has switched to 24 hour operations mode, primarily to monitor IDP movement at night. The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) operated by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) convened a meeting in Gaza today with local Heads of Agencies and Cluster Leads to discuss the new situation resulting from ground incursion, including the possibility to open up more shelters (also government shelters), pre-positioning of stocks, the need for a new humanitarian pause, and priority activities to be carried out during such a pause.

On 17 July, the HCT met with donors to discuss preliminary needs and requirements related to the current Gaza emergency. OCHA presented a joint proposal on behalf of the HCT, reflecting the priorities identified by the various clusters and sectors based on preliminary information, in advance of full assessments.

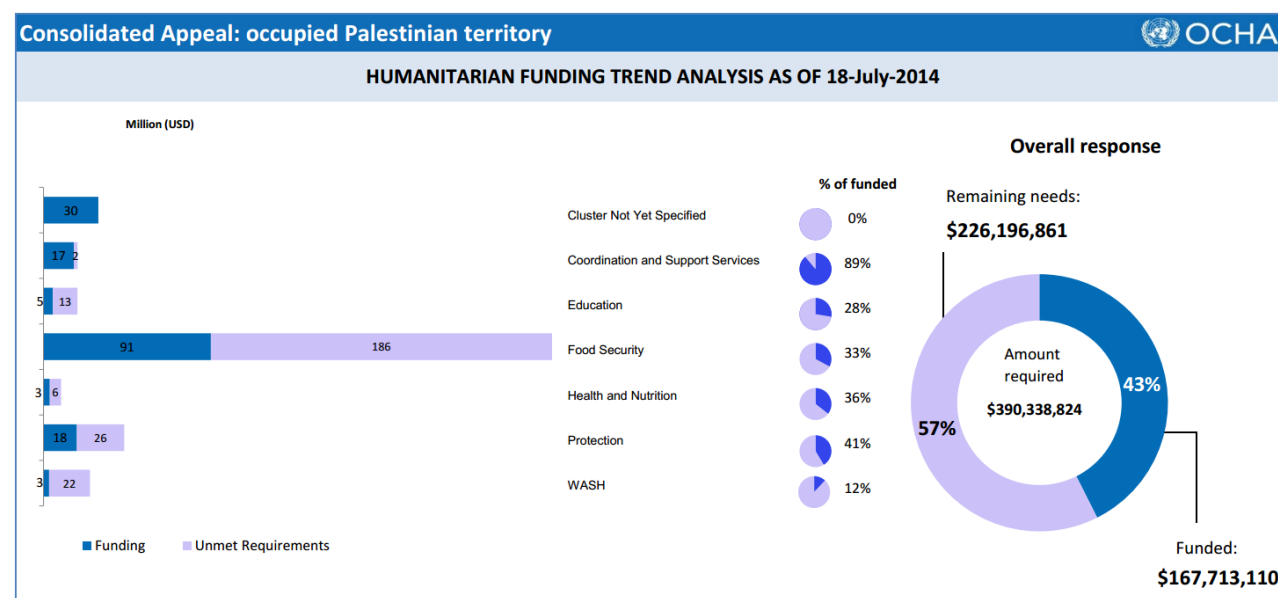
Funding

A number of bilateral contributions have already been received from donors who have provided funding for urgent needs in the most critical sectors. Based on initial cluster / sector analysis it is estimated that US \$ 40 million is needed for immediate assistance in Gaza, excluding UNRWA's requirements. A number of clusters have also made a preliminary estimate of a further US \$87 million that is needed for medium term interventions once the security situation permits. All estimates are based on initial information; revisions, as new assessments come in, will be communicated to donors.

UNRWA has issued an emergency flash appeal worth \$60 million to respond to the most pressing humanitarian needs of the people of Gaza, including the tens of thousands taking shelter in its facilities. New funding will enable UNRWA to respond to needs in shelter, food, health and psychosocial of internally displaced persons (IDPs), while replenishing emergency supplies and preparing for vital interventions necessary after a cessation of military activities.

The 2014 Strategic Response Plan (SRP) for the oPt has received US\$ 168 million (43 per cent) out of a total request of US\$ 390 million. Nearly 90 per cent of 1.9 million vulnerable people targeted in the SRP are in Gaza. Gaza-specific projects have received 32% of their requested funding. The HCT is currently undertaking an exercise to identify the most urgent SRP projects that if funded would help support the response in Gaza, as well as any new needs.

The Emergency Response Fund (ERF) is an additional mechanism available to fund interventions in Gaza through rapid and flexible support to affected civilian populations. Currently, the ERF is processing one project application in regards to the Gaza emergency. A number of donors have come forward with expressions of interest or pledges for the ERF including Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, and Switzerland, as well as Italy, which is a new donor set to come on board. Further funding for the ERF is still being sought.



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 on early June, characterized by an intensification of Israeli airstrikes and Palestinian shooting rockets at southern Israel. Tensions further increased following the abduction 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 firing.

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 an ongoing energy crisis, involving power outages of 12 hours per day.

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