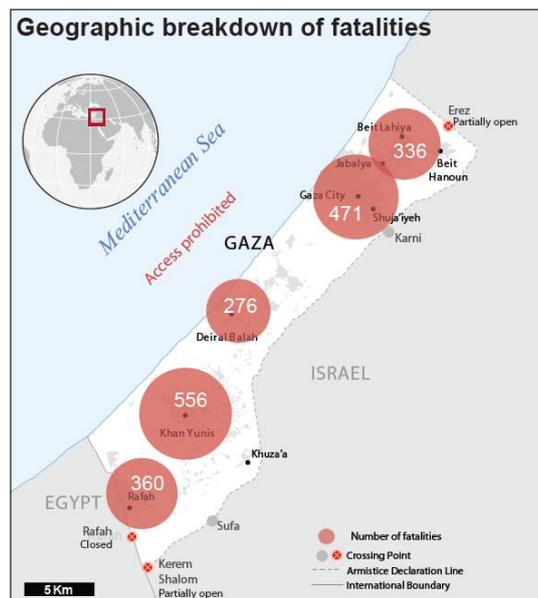




This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. This report covers the period from 26 August (08:00 hrs) to 27 August (08:00 hrs). The next report will be issued on 28 August.

Highlights

- An open-ended ceasefire brokered by the Egyptian government and agreed by the armed groups in Gaza, the Palestinian Authority and Israel entered into force yesterday at 19:00.
- The Palestinian fatality toll has reached 2,104 of whom 1,462 have been identified as civilians, including 495 children, according to preliminary assessments.
- Tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have today left emergency shelters. However, over 100,000 people, whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged, will need longer-term shelter solutions.
- Despite extensive repairs, electricity outages of 18 hours a day continue in most areas across Gaza, disrupting service provision.



2,104

Palestinians killed, including 1,462 civilians, of whom 495 are children and 253 are women.¹

69

Israelis killed, including four civilians. One foreign national also killed in Israel.

108,000

People had their homes destroyed or severely damaged

6

High-rise buildings destroyed since Sunday.

18

Hours of scheduled electricity outages are implemented across Gaza.

Situation Overview

An open-ended ceasefire brokered by the Egyptian government and agreed by the armed groups in Gaza, the Palestinian Authority and Israel entered into force yesterday at 19:00. If it continues to hold, this agreement will have ended the longest, deadliest and most destructive escalation in hostilities affecting the population of Gaza since the beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1967, with serious impact on Israelis as well.

The terms of the agreement, however, were not officially released. According to media reports, in addition to a complete cessation of military action by both sides, the agreement calls for a further opening of the crossings with Israel and Egypt to allow the easier flow of goods, including humanitarian aid and reconstruction equipment, alongside the transfer of control over the Gaza side of the crossings to the Palestinian Authority; a reinstatement of the six nautical miles fishing limit into the Mediterranean sea; and the relaxation of access restrictions into areas up to 100 metres from Gaza's perimeter fence with Israel. Other issues, including Hamas' demand to open a seaport and airport in Gaza and to release Palestinian prisoners, as well as Israel's demand to disarm militant groups in Gaza and obtain the remains of two Israeli soldiers, are expected to be dealt with in the context of indirect negotiations scheduled to start in a month.

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

This morning, as the ceasefire appeared to be holding, tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) begun to return to their homes, either to resettle, to assess damage or to collect belongings. However, it is estimated that over 18,000 housing units have been either destroyed or severely damaged, rendering more than 108,000 people homeless. The provision of temporary housing solutions to these people is one of the major challenges facing the local authorities and the humanitarian community in the coming period. Additionally, the mass movement of civilians, children in particular, into areas that were intensively targeted by airstrikes and shelling, raises once again the concern about Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). This poses an imperative on all relevant actors to adopt immediate measures to prevent further casualties, including the rapid clearance of built up areas and critical facilities, and awareness raising campaigns amongst the most vulnerable.

[...] A brighter future for Gaza and for Israel depends on a sustainable ceasefire. It is up to the parties to live up to this responsibility... Any peace effort that does not tackle the root causes of the crisis will do little more than set the stage for the next cycle of violence. Gaza must be brought back under one legitimate Palestinian Government adhering to the PLO commitments; the blockade of Gaza must end; Israel's legitimate security concerns must be addressed... The Secretary-General urgently calls on both parties to return to meaningful negotiations towards a final status agreement that addresses all core issues and ends the 47-year occupation.

Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General, 26 August

Hostilities and casualties

Israeli airstrikes and Palestinian mortar and rocket fire continued yesterday uninterrupted until 19:00, resulting in additional casualties on both sides, alongside significant property losses in Gaza.

Since the last situation update, at least three Palestinians have reportedly been killed, including two children. This brings the cumulative death toll among Palestinians since 7 July to at least 2,104, according to preliminary data collected by the Protection Cluster from various sources, including 377 persons who could not be yet identified or their status established. Of the initially verified cases, 1,462 are believed to be civilians, including 495 children and 253 women, and 265 members of armed groups. Additionally, approximately 25 Palestinians accused of collaborating with Israel have reportedly been killed in Gaza by armed groups since 21 August (not included in the fatality toll above).

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, as of 20 August, 10,224 Palestinians, including 3,106 children and 1,970 women and 368 elderly, have been injured. Preliminary estimates indicate that up to 1,000 of the children injured will have a permanent disability.

In one of the yesterday's incidents, at around 13:15, a vehicle belonging to the Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation (GEDCO) travelling in Beit Lahia town was directly hit by an Israeli air strike, reportedly killing two workers on their way to repair transmission lines damaged during previous bombardments. Since the start of the Gaza emergency, at least 14 electricity, water and waste water technicians employed by local utilities have been killed during Israeli attacks and at least ten other have been injured.

Also yesterday in Beit Lahia, at around 18:30, an Israeli air strike targeted and destroyed a five-storey building, comprising ten apartments, resulting in no casualties. This is the sixth high-rise building to be razed to the ground since Sunday, in the context of policy of intensified destruction of structures alleged by the Israeli military to be the 'command centres' of armed groups or from whose vicinity projectiles have been fired. This policy has added to the number of displaced and depleted the number of housing units available to the long-term homeless.

While most of the rockets and mortars shot yesterday by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza into southern Israel fell in open areas or were intercepted by the Iron Dome system, one of the mortars hit and killed two Israeli men, one of whom was a civilian while the status of the other is unclear. This brings the cumulative Israeli fatality toll to 69, of whom at least four were civilians, including one child, in addition to one foreign national killed in Israel. Dozens of other Israelis, including at least six children, have been directly injured by rockets or shrapnel.

Displacement

Despite the announcement of the ceasefire, the vast majority of IDPs spent the night in shelters and with host families. As of yesterday evening, their number was estimated at 475,000 persons, including over 289,000 hosted in 85 designated UNRWA schools, 35,000 in seven government shelters supported by UNRWA, nearly 14,000 registered in 17 government schools managed by MoSA, and some 141,000 residing with host families, who have been registered and reached by various partners.

Today, as the ceasefire appeared to be holding, there has been a massive movement of IDPs out of emergency shelters. As of this afternoon, almost 233,000 IDPs had left the UNRWA shelters and approximately 54,300 remained. New estimates of the number of IDPs in government schools and with host families were not available at the time of writing. It remains uncertain how many of the IDPs left temporarily, for example to gather personal items from their homes, to return for the night.

There has been also significant displacement in southern Israel, particularly among communities which are in range of mortar fire from Gaza, which the Iron Dome system is unable to intercept. Many families had evacuated at the beginning of the conflict in July, relocating to family and friends in more northerly locations, but returned during the extended ceasefire period,

only to evacuate their homes again since the resumption of hostilities last week. This movement has reportedly intensified after the killing of a four-year-old boy in one of the affected communities by a mortar shell fragment on Friday, with hundreds reportedly leaving yesterday. According to some sources, as many as 70 per cent of the 40,000 residents of communities near Gaza may have left their homes. Media reports have indicated that the ceasefire has not triggered so far significant return to these communities.

Water and electricity

Following the ceasefire, GEDCO teams resumed intensive repairs of damaged electricity lines. However, only little progress was achieved so far in the areas that sustained the most severe damage, such as Beit Hanoun, Eastern Gaza city, Johr Ad Deik, Al Bureij, Al Maghazi, Khuza'a and East of Rafah. Therefore, scheduled power cuts across Gaza continue for up to 18 hours per day, on average, with Gaza City suffering 20 hours of outages per day. While nine of the ten Israeli feeder lines are working, the Gaza Power Plant remains off, following the damage sustained by an Israeli airstrike on 29 July.

The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility estimates that 75 per cent of the water network has been rendered functional after receiving emergency repairs and supplies water on a regular basis. As a result, 25 per cent of the population, located in Gaza city and Jabalia, receive water supply for six to eight hours once every five days; 50 per cent receives water supply once every four days; 15 per cent, located in Rafah, receive water supply once every two days; and 10 per cent receive water supply once a day.

Emergency education

Nearly half a million children in Gaza were unable to return to primary and secondary schools this week, the scheduled start to the new academic year. Schools currently used as shelters will require varying degrees of rehabilitation in order to be ready for normal schooling. Initial repairs must also be carried out in war-damaged schools, and unexploded ordnance will need to be cleared to restore safety. UNRWA is coordinating with the Ministry of Education a three-phase plan. The first phase expands ongoing psychosocial activities; the second phase involves enhancing learning skills; and the third phase will be a return to education in school buildings.

Key humanitarian priorities:

Temporary shelter and housing solutions to IDPs: immediate and short term plans to accommodate the tens of thousands of families who were rendered homeless are urgently needed.

Sustained opening of crossing: is vital, alongside the removal of restrictions on the entry of materials for rehabilitations and reconstruction.

Explosive Remnants of War (ERW): rapid clearance of built-up areas and critical facilities, as well as awareness raising campaigns amongst the most vulnerable, are urgently needed.

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

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

Beit Hanoun (Arba-Arba): Operational.

Kerem Shalom: Open as per its regular operating hours (08:00-16:00).

Rafah: Open from 09:00 to 15:00.

Humanitarian needs and response



Protection

Needs

- At least 373,000 children require direct and specialized psychosocial support (PSS). Children are showing symptoms of increasing distress, including bed wetting, clinging to parents and nightmares.
- Specifically, there is a need to increase the number of structured activities and specialized PSS support, as opposed to PSS first aid, for children and families identified as requiring a referral to such services.
- Up to 1,500 orphaned children will need sustained support from the child protection and welfare sectors.
- Thousands of explosive remnants of war (ERW) infest civilian areas affected by conflict, causing a major threat, especially to children, farmers, humanitarian workers and IDPs returning home. UN premises have also been contaminated by ERW.

Response

- Protection Cluster members are investigating incidents to identify possible violations of international law, as well as consolidating information on civilian fatalities.
- CPWG partners are providing PSS interventions in shelters and in host families.
- PRCS continues to provide PSS interventions through UNWRA and governmental schools/shelters.
- UNICEF has reached 750,000 people in Gaza with life-saving and child protection SMS text messages, targeting the most vulnerable communities in Gaza.
- The Sawa Child Protection Helpline has thus far provided counselling to a total of 2,812 callers.
- Since 8 July, UNRWA Community Mental Health Programme (CMHP) has conducted 16,084 PSS sessions for parents and recreational activities for children. CMHP also coordinated and supervised the implementation of sessions by other partners. Numbers of reached beneficiaries are currently being updated.
- CFTA has organized open days in the Khan Yunis and Tomoh has conducted five open days in the neighbourhood of Sheikh Radwan of Gaza city; both are providing PSS support through structured group activities to the communities of Ad Darraj, Northern Remal, Jabalia El Balad, Deir Al Balah, and Khan Yunis.
- ERW awareness campaign for families in UNRWA shelters continues. Radio and TV ERW awareness messages are broadcasted several times a day to spread awareness about the danger posed by unexploded ordnance.
- UNMAS is undertaking risk assessments in five governorates, and mainly for UNRWA installations. Clearance operations are being conducted by EOD police.

Gaps and Constraints

- Major electricity outages continue to hamper communication with staff and partners on the ground. Most child protection services remain closed.
- Core child protection interventions to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation are limited and systems to detect, prevent and respond to cases of child abuse in shelters and host communities remain weak.



Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

Needs

- It is estimated that 18,080 families (consisting of approximately 108,500 individuals) whose homes were totally destroyed or heavily damaged are in need of emergency NFI kits. In the medium term, they will require cash assistance to cover rental fees and basic household items.
- Emergency shelter repair items are needed for about 5,800 families (34,800 individuals), whose homes were damaged but are still inhabitable. Another 38,000 families (an estimated 228,000 individuals), whose homes sustained minor damage need basic NFI assistance such as nylon and plastic sheets.

Response

- As of yesterday, 287,034 people were provided with shelter in 85 designated UNRWA schools across the Gaza Strip and 31,251 individuals were sheltered in seven government shelters supported by UNRWA. In addition, 13,810 people were being provided with shelter in another 18 government schools and 140,895 IDPs registered with MoSA were hosted with relatives and reached by various shelter partners.
- Shelter and WASH partners have provided household NFIs to 57,572 families and hygiene NFIs to 96,303 families since the beginning of the emergency. Standard household NFI kits include two mattresses and four blankets. Sometimes kitchen sets are also included; IDPs residing in shelter do not normally receive kitchen sets since there is no available capacity to cook. Such items are normally distributed to either IDPs with hosting families or those residing in damaged, but still inhabitable houses. Standard hygiene NFI kits usually include soap, shampoos, toothpaste, tooth brushes, towels, tissues paper and basic cleaning supplies.
- Through its partners in Gaza, UNFPA delivered 2,000 hygiene/dignity kits to displaced women.

Gaps and Constraints

- Cash assistance of more than US\$ 74 million is needed for 18,080 families to cover rental fees and urgent expenses.

- Emergency shelter kits are needed for 22,256 displaced families.
- Shelter NFIs such as plastic sheets and tarpaulin are needed for 38,000 families (approximately 228,000 individuals) whose homes sustained minor damage.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

This section will be covered of the Situation Report of 29 August.



Health and Nutrition

Needs

- Health facilities damaged and/or closed due to insecurity, as well as continuing problems of access of staff to clinics, have hindered the delivery of health services. Four Ministry of Health (MoH) primary health clinics which were totally destroyed in the past month are located in areas of great need and alternatives are urgently required for residents (Ash Shuja'iyeh, Juhor al Dik, Khuza'a and Khan Yunis). Overall, four of the 32 hospitals and thirty of the 97 primary health care centres in the Gaza Strip remain closed today according to the Ministry of Health.
- The presence of thousands of UXO in urban areas represents a public health hazard, especially for children.
- The health situation in shelters varies depending on the location of shelter, crowdedness and management. Disease surveillance systems are active in UNRWA-operated shelters and medical teams have been designated to all, providing medicines and referrals.
- The pediatric hospital An Nasser reports 180 per cent bed occupancy rate because of the closure of the damaged Ad Durra Pediatric Hospital which has raised Ministry of Health concerns about possible communicable disease outbreak due to the crowded conditions.
- A number of hospital generators have broken down or need spare parts and maintenance due to overload caused by electricity shortages and prolonged use.
- Continuity of care, quality follow up of casualty cases that have been discharged and rehabilitation of patients, especially of amputees, at the community level needs active follow-up.

Response

- 22 Health Cluster partners reported on more than 170 activities which are ongoing, fully implemented or planned.
- A total of US\$10.8 million in drugs, medical disposables, fuel and other items have been donated for the health sector in Gaza since 7 July, with the majority of donations destined for the Ministry of Health. Drug donations have maintained drug stocks without further deterioration (at 28 per cent zero stock) but without allowing real gains to chronically low drug levels.
- The reactivation of the Health Cluster has been endorsed by the Interagency Standing Committee in light of the emergency in Gaza and need for higher visibility of the health situation and coordinated health strategies through the UN cluster system and with other partners.

Gaps and Constraints

- Health assessments have been delayed due to the continuing lack of security for data collectors as well as health staff in outlying clinics and mobile clinics.



Needs

- IDPs are in need of food and other immediate assistance.
- The entire population of Gaza has been affected by the conflict and almost all need food and other assistance to recover.
- Over 100,000 people whose homes were destroyed or damaged beyond repair will need food and other assistance for a longer term.
- Families relying on agricultural-related livelihoods need food, other immediate assistance and support in re-establishing their sources of income. An early recovery to re-establish their livelihoods and production capacity is required.
- Restock with animal vaccination against FMD, Brucellosis, Chlamydia and Sheep pox are needed for 64,000 head of small ruminants and 20,000 head of cattle.
- Livestock sector also requires fodders, water and other veterinary care.
- Humanitarian access to allow for provision of food and other emergency assistance to the civilian population should be consistently assured.

Response

- The regular food assistance to more than one million UNRWA and WFP core beneficiaries is ongoing.
- In addition, at least 506,000 out of around 730,000 people have been reached by the one-time exceptional food distribution to affected families who are not receiving regular food assistance implemented by UNRWA, WFP and the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- Food assistance for those people who have their houses totally or severely damaged is ongoing. A new project is targeting additional 18,000 households who will receive food baskets.
- WFP, in cooperation with UNRWA, is providing ready-to-eat emergency food rations to IDPs in UNRWA and government shelters on a daily basis.
- WFP continues to provide food assistance to IDPs hosted with relatives and to patients and hospital staff.
- The emergency voucher for hosted families is targeting 23,000 households.
- Food Security Sector (FSS) partners are delivering complementary food distributions to IDPs at UNRWA and government shelters.

Gaps and Constraints

- There is a lack of a proper mechanism to identify the most vulnerable groups relying on agricultural-related livelihoods and being heavily affected by the conflict.
- Electricity shortages are affecting the storage capacity of fresh food for both shops and households.
- The price of some food items has gone up, including fresh fruit, vegetables and eggs, due to the large damage sustained to farms and agricultural lands, among other reasons.
- Immediate emergency funds to cover massively increasing food needs of IDPs and returnees are required.



Needs

- 220 schools (141 government, 75 UNRWA schools and four private schools) are in need of repair, including 22 schools which were completely destroyed.
- UNRWA and government schools are not ready for the new school year which was scheduled to start last Sunday.
- The current ceasefire must last so that unexploded ordnance clearance, damage assessments and repair work to damaged educational facilities, as well as preparation for the new school year, can take place.

Response

- UNRWA, in coordination with MoEHE and partners, planned to implement a three-phase back-to-school plan in war torn Gaza this week, to help students and teachers start to transition into a new school year. The plan includes PSS interventions, and implementing a new technology, UNRWA's satellite TV education programs and self-learning material for all children.
- The Education Cluster is also working with service providers to coordinate a special package for returning school students, with a focus on PSS support and recreational activities.

Gaps & Constraints

- Inadequate funding for cluster activities.
- The need for longer-term shelter for tens of thousands of IDPs will present significant challenges to the operation of schools currently being used as shelters.



Logistics

Needs

- Unrestricted movement of humanitarian cargo from the West Bank and Israel to the Gaza Strip is required.
- Safe and secure humanitarian space to ensure transportation and distribution within the Gaza Strip of relief supplies is needed.

Response

- On 25 August, the Logistics Cluster facilitated the transportation of 510 pallets of food, shelter and WASH supplies into the Gaza Strip.
- On the 26 August, the Logistics Cluster facilitated the transportation of over 22 pallets of food items for distribution within the Gaza Strip.
- Logistics Cluster has provided the humanitarian community three dedicated warehouses and one refrigerated warehouse inside the Gaza Strip.
- Logistics Cluster has also provided five staging areas available in Jerusalem, Hebron, Ashqelon, Ramallah and Nablus for consolidation, palletisation, loading and dispatch.
- Logistics Cluster facilitates coordination of transport services.

Gaps and Constraints

- Cargo transported via the Betunia crossing from the West Bank into Israel is experiencing significant delays due to limited capacity, security equipment, variable cargo prioritisation procedures and limited opening hours.
- Cargo transported via the Tarqumia crossing from the West Bank into Israel is experiencing delays due to increasing number of trucks and complex security procedures.
- The Logistics Cluster is requesting a list of sector cargo priorities for the Gaza humanitarian response in case all cargo requests cannot be delivered in a timely manner due to the security crossing process.

General Coordination

On 25 August, UNDP and OCHA met with the Minister of Public Works and Housing and the Minister of Social Affairs, as well as a representative of the Palestinian Energy Authority and the Manager of the Gaza Power Plant to discuss the energy situation in Gaza and possible ways forward. OCHA provided information on the impact of the lack of electricity on the humanitarian situation and emergency fuel distributions as coordinated by OCHA and delivered by UNRWA. One of the outcomes of the meeting was that a task force of key actors would be established to work in a more concerted way on energy issues; it was proposed that the task force would be chaired by the Palestinian Energy Authority.

The first phase of the joint rapid needs assessment, led by the EOC started on 13 August, and data analysis is ongoing. The second phase of the joint rapid needs assessment started on 18 August, covering 19 municipalities (some 80 assessment staff were involved and at least 250 key informants interviewed, including youth, persons with disabilities and elderly). The remaining six municipalities were covered on 19 August and the eight refugee camps will be covered as soon. Data collected will be entered on tablets and linked directly to a database. The information will be subsequently validated and analyzed, before it is disseminated. Protection and gender concerns have been integrated throughout the process as have questions on the

information needs of affected communities. Clusters and sectors are currently engaged in ongoing analysis of the data generated from the two level needs assessments.

Funding

Yesterday, UNRWA issued a revised version of its Flash Appeal which requests US \$296 million to cover immediate and basic needs during hostilities of up to 360,000 IDPs staying in emergency shelters and families not staying in shelters during hostilities who require food assistance. The appeal also requests support for those who will remain displaced or to support the return of IDPs following cessation of hostilities. A revised version of the Crisis Appeal will follow next week.

Based on available information, funding to the Gaza Crisis Appeal stands at approximately US \$177 million out of a total request of US \$367 million (48 per cent); the vast majority of this represents funding for UNRWA, as well as US \$20 million for WFP food assistance, leaving large gaps to respond in other critical sectors such as Health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Education and Shelter and Non Food Items. Many key UN and NGOs partners identified for the Gaza response have received little to no funding to date for their projects in the Crisis Appeal. The Crisis Appeal is available online at www.ochaopt.org. Donors and recipient agencies are kindly requested to report funding received to fts@un.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, 13 project proposals were approved for a total of US \$3.1 million. Further funding for the ERF is still being sought.

UN humanitarian agencies, in cooperation with NGO partners have applied to the CERF Rapid Response window to cover 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.

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Katleen Maes, Head of the humanitarian Emergency Operations Center in Gaza, maes@un.org, +972 592 911 047
Mr. Ray Dolphin, Analysis, Communications and Protection Unit, OCHA oPt, dolphin@un.org, +972 54 331 1827

For media enquiries, please contact:

Ms. Hayat Abu-Saleh, Communications and Information Analyst, OCHA oPt, abusaleh@un.org, +972 (0) 54 3311816

For more information, please visit www.ochaopt.org