

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Escalation in hostilities Gaza and southern Israel

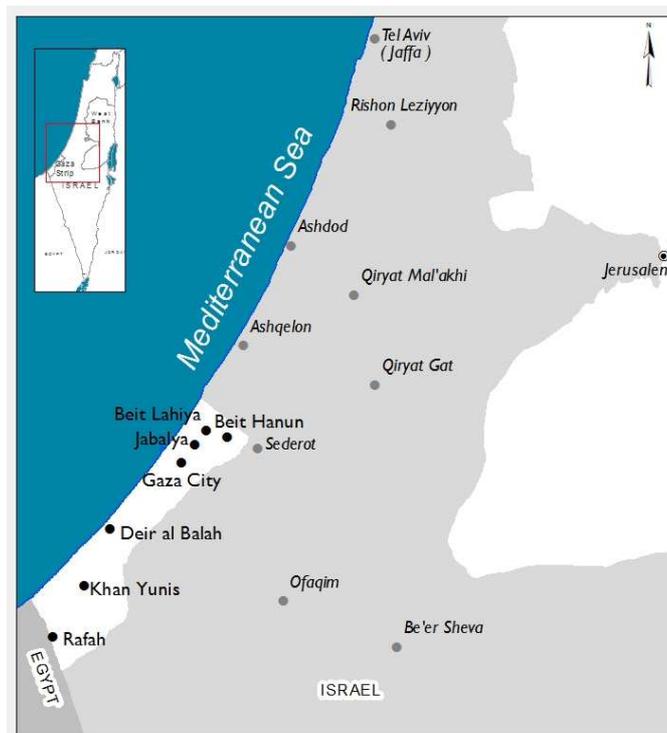
Situation Report (as of 22 November 2012, 1500 hrs)



This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 21 November (1500 hrs) to 22 November (1500 hrs).

Highlights

- An Egyptian-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into effect at 21:00 hrs, 22 November.
- Since 14 November, 158 Palestinians are reported to have been killed; this includes 103 civilians, of whom at least 33 are children and 13 women. 1,269 Palestinians were injured (MoH), the majority civilians.
- Six Israelis (four civilians and two soldiers) were killed and 224 were injured, the vast majority civilians.
- The UN and partner agencies are working to quickly assess and respond to immediate needs and fully resume regular distributions and services.
- Priorities include ensuring proper treatment for the wounded; psycho-social support for those traumatized, especially children; and addressing the shelter needs of those families whose homes have been destroyed.
- The sustained opening of the crossings into Gaza, particularly Kerem Shalom, is critical to facilitate the movement of people and essential supplies.



1,600,000

Affected people in the Gaza Strip (approximately)

1,000,000

Affected people in southern Israel (approximately)

158

Palestinians killed

1,269

Palestinians injured (since 14 November)

6

Israelis killed

224

Israelis injured (since 14 November)

298

Houses destroyed or severely damaged in Gaza

1,700

Houses lightly damaged in Gaza

80

Houses in Israel destroyed or severely damaged

Situation Overview

Following sustained diplomatic efforts, an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into effect at 21:00 hours on Wednesday 22 November, ending eight days of intensified hostilities. According to the agreement, both sides will stop all military activity and following twenty-four hours of quiet, the border crossings between Gaza and Israel will be eased to allow freer movement of goods and people. Despite the firing of rockets from Gaza in the hours after the ceasefire the agreement appears to be holding.

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

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The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.

Coordination Saves Lives



Prior to the ceasefire, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) announced that it had targeted over 50 sites throughout the Gaza Strip overnight (Tuesday/Wednesday) including militants, underground rocket launchers, tunnels and buildings, which the IDF claimed were being used as command and operations centres. Some 16 people are reported to have been killed, including five children, and 20 injured including women and children during the reporting period. Since 14 November, the IDF reported targeting over **1,500** sites throughout the Gaza Strip. An estimated 298 homes have been destroyed or sustained major damage. The public infrastructure also damaged or destroyed includes health facilities, schools, bridges, universities, mosques, media and research centers, sports facilities, in addition to security, police and government buildings associated with Hamas; according to the IDF, the targeted sites were used for military purposes. The Protection Cluster reports¹ that, in total, at least 158 Palestinians are reported to have been killed between 14 and 21 November. This includes 103 civilians, including at least 33 children and 13 women. The Gaza Ministry of Health reports that 1,269 Palestinians were injured, the majority of whom are believed to be civilians.

Approximately, 130 rockets were fired from Gaza on Wednesday (before the ceasefire came into effect), primarily into southern Israel. One house in Be'er Sheva sustained a direct hit, resulting in major damage. In total, the IDF reported that 1,506 rockets were fired from Gaza between 14 and 21 November, of which 58 struck urban areas in Israel. Some 420 rockets which were heading for urban areas were intercepted by the Iron Dome Missile System. During the course of the offensive six Israelis (four civilians and two soldiers) were killed and 224 injured, the vast majority of whom are civilians, according to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Some Israeli citizens remain displaced due to damage to their homes and schools in southern Israel remained closed Thursday despite the cease fire. Many others, who had earlier fled the affected areas, are now returning to their homes.

In Gaza, most of the families who had fled their homes and sought refuge in emergency shelters set up in UNRWA and other schools in recent days have now returned home: UNRWA and public schools are scheduled to re-open on Saturday. Municipalities throughout the Gaza Strip have started to remove rubble. Local sources estimate that approximately 100 tunnels under the border with Egypt were damaged as a result of Israeli airstrikes. However, other tunnels have resumed operations and there are reports of goods, including fuel, construction materials and food, being transferred through.

However, despite the ceasefire there remain a number of key humanitarian priorities. These include:

- mitigating the risk of explosive remnants of war (ERW) through risk awareness activities and urgent removal of ERWs.
- ensuring treatment of the wounded and others in need of healthcare.
- addressing the psychological impact on families, especially children.
- ensuring that the shelter needs of those families whose homes have been destroyed or severely damaged are quickly addressed.
- rehabilitating critical infrastructure, including the Wadi Gaza coastal bridge, that has been damaged.

UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross Movement and civil society are working to quickly assess and respond to these needs. They are also working to fully resume regular distributions and provision of essential services to the 80 percent of Gazan households who were receiving humanitarian support prior to the current escalation.

It is particularly critical at this time to open the crossings into the Gaza Strip in order to facilitate the movement of people and essential supplies. However, it is also essential that the prevailing blockade is lifted to ensure adequate and consistent supplies of fuel, construction materials and other commodities, to allow recovery activities and to facilitate the exports and transfers of goods that are critical to building a sustainable local economy.

Crossings

Erez: the crossing operated today (22 November) as per prior to the recent escalation. The checkpoint operated by the Hamas authorities controlling access to the crossing on the Gaza side also resumed normal operations.

¹ Information is collected by OHCHR, PCHR, Al Mezan and B'Tselem, with reference to Ministry of Health, Gaza, data.

Kerem Shalom: the crossing operated according to its pre-14 November schedule and between 125 to 150 truckloads of goods entered Gaza during the day.

Rafah Crossing: the crossing remains open as normal. Yesterday, around 570 people exited to Egypt and approximately 350 others entered Gaza.

Fuel and electricity

On Thursday, over 800,000 liters of fuel have reportedly been transferred to Gaza via the tunnels, including some 350,000 litres of diesel to the Gaza Power Plant (GPP). However, this supply remains insufficient and the GPP has continued to operate only one of its four turbines, maintaining scheduled outages at 8-12 hours a day. Electricity supply from Israel and Egypt continued uninterrupted. Most fuel stations across Gaza resumed normal activities. While dozens of tunnels were destroyed or seriously damaged by airstrikes, initial reports indicate that damage to the tunnels dedicated to the transfer of fuel have been limited.

Humanitarian needs and response



Protection

The Protection Cluster will continue its work relating to the documentation of incidents resulting in civilian casualties.

Psycho-social support programmes are a key priority and members of the Child Protection Working Group are preparing to conduct an assessment of the psychosocial impact of the recent conflict on children. Emergency interventions targeting the most vulnerable communities will focus on direct counselling of children and support services for parents.

33

Palestinian children killed since 14 Nov



Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

Initial estimates indicate that at least 298 houses have been either destroyed or sustained major damage during air strikes and other attacks between 14 and 21 November. Most of these houses are in Gaza city and areas in northern Gaza. Additionally, more than 1,700 houses have sustained minor damage.

Yesterday, prior to the declaration of the ceasefire, the number of displaced people seeking shelter in 14 UNRWA schools reached almost 12,000. The agency distributed some 9,600 blankets, and the same number of mattresses, and 950 hygiene kits to the displaced families. Following the ceasefire, people began rapidly returning to their homes. As of 15.00hrs on Thursday, there were no displaced people sheltering in UNRWA schools.

298

Families displaced following damages to their homes



Food Assistance

Food distribution to displaced and other families affected by the recent hostilities continues. On Thursday, the World Food Programme (WFP) was able to transfer five trucks carrying 180 metric tonnes (MT) of food to Gaza through Kerem Shalom; an additional 19 truckloads are still needed for the November-December distribution cycle. Yesterday, WFP distributed 6.48 MT of canned tuna and 4.2 MT of date bars to approximately 10,000 displaced people staying temporarily in UNRWA schools in northern Gaza, which is sufficient to cover their needs for seven days. Through its implementing partner, CHF, WFP also provided food for two months to 10,000 people in Khan Younis who had been affected by the violence.

1,085,000

receive food aid (regular caseload)

Education

Schools across Gaza remain closed on Thursday. More than 462,000 students enrolled in basic and secondary school have missed at least six school days. Since the beginning of the Israeli offensive in Gaza, a total of 50 educational facilities, including 47 schools and three kindergartens, have sustained varying levels of damage. The schools include 39 run by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), seven UNRWA schools and one private school.

50

Schools sustained damages since 14 Nov

The MOEHE and UNRWA will open schools that do not pose ERW risks to students on Saturday, (24 November). UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) teams surveyed 13 damaged schools today in North Gaza and West Gaza directorates. In one of the visits, an unexploded F16 missile was found next to a severely damaged school (Tal El Rabee). UNRWA's maintenance staff is conducting assessments of the 14 schools which were used as shelters and making minor repairs to prepare the schools to receive students on Saturday.

General Coordination

Upon the entry into force of the ceasefire, OCHA began preparations towards an Inter-cluster Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA), which will be carried out by the inter-cluster group in Gaza between 24 and 30 November. It will include assessments at the municipality level with key partners, including local civil society. The findings of the assessment will inform humanitarian programming requirements emanating from the recent escalation and guide resource mobilization.

Funding

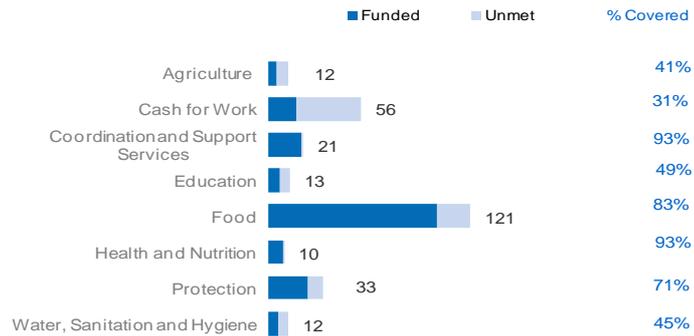
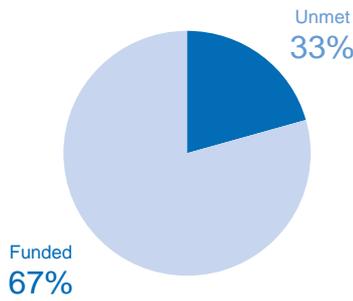
The specific timing of the recent escalation in hostilities poses a challenge in terms of financing the humanitarian response; the 2012 CAP is about to expire and the 2013 CAP is finalized and due to be published in the coming week. To address this situation OCHA has conducted a rapid review of the 2012 CAP and identified specific projects relevant to the expected response that are currently unfunded or only partially funded. These projects will be presented to donors as a priority for funding required to address needs relating to the recent hostilities. Additionally, OCHA, together with the clusters, is coordinating a review of the draft 2013 CAP to identify any relevant Gaza projects that will need a cost revision due to the projected increase in caseload or other parameters.

To date, funding for projects in the 2012 CAP focusing on Gaza and joint West Bank and Gaza projects together received a total of \$186.4 million out of \$277.2 million requested; 67% of requested funds, representing a shortfall of \$ 90.7 million. The average funding level overall for clusters is 63% with only four clusters more than 50% funded; Coordination and Support Services (93%), Food (82%), Health and Nutrition (93%) and Protection (71%). Cash-for-Work, the second-biggest sector after Food, appealed for \$56 million in total but received only 35% of the requested funds for Gaza and joint West Bank and Gaza projects. Together with the Agriculture Sector, Cash-for-Work is the least funded sector in 2012.

Additionally, OCHA has encouraged partners to consider applying to the Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF). The HRF is designed to provide rapid allocation and disbursement of funds to NGOs and UN agencies to support humanitarian activities in emergencies. The fund was used during and after the Israeli military operation "Cast Lead" in 2008/9 to provide approximately US\$ 4.5 million of funding for projects in the Gaza Strip at that time.

Overview of oPt Consolidated Appeal 2012 Funding by sector (in million US\$)

US\$ 416 million requested



Background on the crisis

On 14 November at approximately 1545 hrs, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) launched an airstrike that targeted and killed the acting chief of Hamas’ armed wing, marking the start of the current military offensive (“Operation Defensive Pillar”). This event followed several weeks of intermittent escalations in violence, during which Palestinian armed groups indiscriminately fired rockets into southern Israel, and the IAF attacked various targets inside Gaza.

The last Israeli full-scale offensive in Gaza, which took place between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009 (“Operation Cast Lead”) had a devastating impact on the civilian population, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries, and massive destruction of homes, infrastructure and livelihoods. Since then, limited escalations in violence affecting civilians in Gaza and southern Israel have taken place every few weeks.

The vulnerability of the civilian population in the Gaza Strip has been exacerbated by the intensification of the land, air and sea blockade imposed by Israel following the Hamas takeover of Gaza in June 2007. Despite some easing measures implemented since mid 2010, the blockade is still ongoing.

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