

# Occupied Palestinian Territory: Escalation in hostilities Gaza and southern Israel



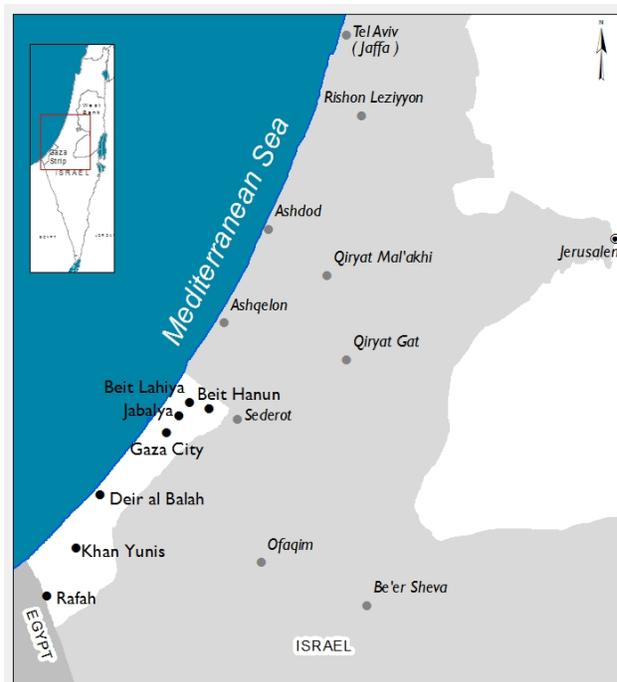
Situation Report (as of 5 December 2012)



This update is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It outlines the humanitarian community's response to the immediate humanitarian needs in Gaza arising from the escalation in hostilities in Gaza and southern Israel.

## Highlights

- The Egyptian-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas continues to hold.
- An Inter-cluster Rapid Assessment (IRA) documenting the humanitarian needs emerging from the hostilities was completed by 28 November.
- Addressing the basic humanitarian needs of approx. 3,000 people still displaced due to the loss of, or damage, sustained to their homes is a key priority.
- Other key challenges include rehabilitation of damaged residences, schools and productive assets; provision of psychosocial support to children; clearance of explosive remnants of war; and supply of essential drugs and disposables out of stock.
- The financial requirements to respond to the priority needs as a result of the escalation in violence in 2012 through the first half of 2013 are estimated at \$ 60-70 million.<sup>1</sup>



<b>103</b> Palestinian civilians killed	<b>450</b> Houses destroyed or severely damaged in Gaza	<b>3,000</b> People still displaced with hosting families in Gaza	<b>80%</b> of Gazans were already receiving humanitarian assistance prior to this escalation	<b>\$12-13 m</b> Required to respond to immediate needs for remainder of 2012.	<b>\$60-70 m</b> Required to kick-start response in the first 6 months of 2013
<b>1,399</b> Palestinians injured, mostly civilians (14-21 November)					

## Situation Overview

The Egyptian-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, which entered into force on 21 November, has largely held so far. Moreover, following the commitment to ease access restrictions in the context of the ceasefire understandings, Palestinians have been able to reach farming and fishing areas that were previously inaccessible.

Gaza fishermen report being able to sail up to six nautical miles into the Mediterranean, as was the case prior to the 'Cast Lead' military offensive in December 2008, after which the Israeli Navy began restricting access to three miles. In a number of

<sup>1</sup> All amounts are in US dollars.



incidents since the ceasefire, however, the Israeli Navy opened warning fire at fishing boats that reached or exceeded the new limit, detained some 30 fishermen and requisitioned a number of boats.

While there has been a significant easing of restrictions on the access of Palestinians to land adjacent to the fence between Gaza and Israel, the new rules have remained unclear. In some areas, Palestinian farmers have been allowed to reach agricultural land located as close as 100 meters from the fence, with their equipment and vehicles. Prior to the recent events, farmers had been prevented from accessing land within 500 meters from the fence, while access to areas up to 1,000-1,500 metres has been limited since 2008. Yet, there are also serious concerns regarding a number of incidents in which Palestinian demonstrators have attempted to reach the fence and Israeli forces have opened fire towards them. Two civilians have been killed and at least 53 others were reported injured in such incidents since 21 November. In some of the incidents, Hamas police forces have reportedly tried to prevent demonstrators from reaching the fence.

There has been no significant easing of pre-existing restrictions on the movement of people and goods through the crossings. The volume of imports at the single crossing for commodities (Kerem Shalom) have been gradually increasing to the levels recorded prior to the escalation in violence; the import of basic construction materials remains restricted. Similarly, there is no indication that the long-standing ban on the transfer of commercial goods to the West Bank and Israel has been lifted. However, some 15 trucks of agricultural produce have been permitted to exit Gaza via Kerem Shalom for international markets since 2 December. Movement of people from Gaza to Israel and the West Bank via the Erez crossing has been limited to those with special permits as per the conditions imposed prior to the escalation in hostilities.

Dozens of tunnels under the border with Egypt, primarily used for the transfer of restricted items and fuel into Gaza, sustained significant damage during Israeli airstrikes. However, following repairs performed since the ceasefire, activities resumed and gradually increased, reportedly reaching 80 percent of the level observed prior to the escalation.

Upon the entry into force of the ceasefire, OCHA coordinated and launched an Inter-cluster Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA), which was conducted between 24 and 28 November. UNRWA has also conducted an assessment to identify the priority needs of the refugee population. Initial findings of the IRA and UNRWA's assessments indicate that some 450 houses were totally destroyed or severely damaged during the hostilities and approximately 8,000 other homes sustained minor damage; these figures are significantly higher than initial estimates. Approximately 15,000 people were estimated to be displaced at the time of the IRA, residing with host families. Since then, people have been gradually returning to their homes, with the number of people still displaced currently estimated at approximately 3,000. Addressing the immediate shelter and other needs of those displaced who require international assistance is a key priority in the coming weeks. Additional priority needs identified in the IRA include psychosocial support for children; clearance of and raising awareness of the risks of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW); covering for critical shortages in essential drugs and medical disposables; and rehabilitation of damaged residences, schools, and productive assets that sustained damage. While additional funding needed to fully implement the response plans is yet to be received, most humanitarian organizations operating in Gaza have already begun addressing these priorities.

## Coordination and Needs Assessments

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The IRA and UNRWA assessments were designed to gain an overall picture of the humanitarian situation resulting from the hostilities, guide an immediate humanitarian response and, where appropriate, inform more in-depth assessments. A joint methodology and questionnaire was agreed upon beforehand to ensure a uniform approach.

The IRA involved up to 40 humanitarian workers from UN agencies and NGOs representing all the humanitarian clusters and sectors active in the oPt. The teams visited the 21 most affected municipalities in Gaza, where, together with the local authorities, they identified the most urgent needs.

Additional in-depth assessments, some which are aimed at capturing the differentiated gender impact of the hostilities, are currently underway by a number of clusters and organizations, in coordination with the local authorities. Special attention is paid to vulnerable groups with special needs, including the elderly, children and minorities (inc. Bedouins).

The IRA and UNRWA assessments have, for the most part, confirmed initial indications that the recent escalation in hostilities has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities for many families and communities. It has also created additional needs, in relation to shelter and psycho-social needs and the risks related to explosive remnants of war (ERW).

A summary of the priority humanitarian needs identified in the assessments, along with the additional funding requests by humanitarian organizations to respond to these needs, is presented in the "Humanitarian Needs and Response" section below.

## Funding

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The specific timing of the recent escalation in hostilities posed 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. Based on the findings of the recent assessments and taking into account existing stocks under the inter-agency contingency plan for Gaza, OCHA coordinated a rapid review of the 2012 and 2013 CAPs:

- a rapid review of the 2012 CAP identified specific projects that are relevant to the identified needs and response and are currently unfunded or only partially funded. Together with one additional project in the area of health the total funding requirements amount to \$12-13 million.
- a review of the 2013 CAP identified relevant Gaza projects that will need a cost revision due to the projected increase in caseload or other parameters. The revised cost of these projects is estimated between \$60-70 million. Early funding for proposed 2013 project will be crucial to allow partners to step-up the immediate response.

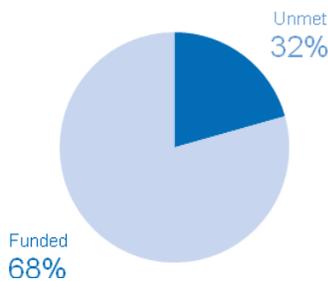
In addition to requested requirements under the CAP 2012, UNRWA requires \$17.7 million to respond to the most urgent needs of refugees in Gaza affected by the recent escalation in violence. This figure will cover the most urgent needs in food, refugee shelter repairs, NFIs, health and repairs to UNRWA installations.

OCHA has also 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 HRF has already approved one project addressing needs related to the Gaza escalation, while another five are under review, for a total of around \$1 million.

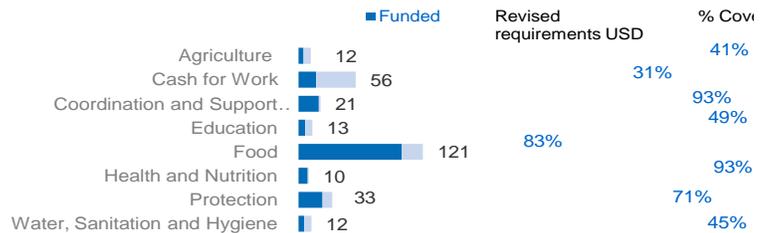
To date, funding for projects in the 2012 CAP focusing on Gaza and joint West Bank and Gaza projects together received a total of \$186.4 million out of \$277.2million requested; 67% of requested funds, representing a shortfall of \$ 90.7 million. The average funding level overall for clusters is 63%, 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.

#### Overview of TOTAL oPt Consolidated Appeal 2012

**US\$ 416 million** requested



#### Funding by sector (in million US\$)



All humanitarian partners, including donors and recipient agencies, are encouraged to inform OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS - <http://fts.unocha.org>) of cash and in-kind contributions by e-mailing: [fts@un.org](mailto:fts@un.org)

## Humanitarian Needs and Response

The information below focuses on the findings of the recent assessments and the related response plans. For details on the humanitarian interventions over the course of the hostilities, as well as those currently ongoing, see previous issues of this Situation Report, as well as the upcoming edition of The Humanitarian Monitor (available at [www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org)).

*Displacement:* the findings of the IRA indicate that there was significant displacement during the period of hostilities with tens of thousands fleeing their homes due to fear or because their homes had been damaged or destroyed. This included the approximately 12,000 people who had sought shelter in 14 UNRWA schools between 19 and 21 November. While the majority of these people returned home immediately after the ceasefire, approximately 15,000 people were estimated to still be residing with host families at the time the IRA was conducted. Since then, people have been gradually returning to their homes, with the number of people still displaced currently estimated at approximately 3,000, the vast majority of whom have not returned because their homes were destroyed or severely damaged. Preliminary information indicates that some families preferred to return to their damaged homes rather than stay in host families or rented accommodation. There are also concerns about the conditions of some of those staying with host families relating to overcrowding and potential family tension.

**\$4.2 m**

for remainder of 2012

**\$18.5 m**

estimated for 2012 and first 6 months of 2013

*Psychosocial support:* psychosocial interventions for children and families have been identified as a priority across all municipalities and areas covered during the IRA. North Gaza and the Middle area have reported the highest incidence of psychosocial symptoms and disorders among both adults and children, ranging from fear and anxiety to Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD). Cases of insomnia, hyperactivity, and nocturnal enuresis (bedwetting) among children appear to be widespread in all areas.

*Explosive Remnants of War (ERW):* concerns about ERW were reported throughout all governorates. The North Gaza governorate was identified as the most urgent priority for removal and clearance operations, as well as risk awareness activities because the risks in this area have so far not been addressed by the Gazan police. There are indications that some of the displaced people, currently staying with host families, are reluctant to return to their homes for fear of ERW.

*Legal assistance:* Support for civilian victims of the hostilities, who are seeking accountability and effective remedy, is an additional protection priority.

Various ongoing programmes run by UNRWA, UNICEF and UNMAS have been identified as suitable for addressing the above needs. Their full implementation would require the coverage of a shortfall of \$ 4.2 million through the end of the 2012. Additionally, projects addressing the above needs and included in the 2013 CAP would require an immediate \$ 14.3 million due to new needs identified for the first half of 2013.

## Shelter and Non Food Items (NFIs)

The IRA found that that the number of houses destroyed or damaged over the course of hostilities is significantly higher than initial estimates. Overall, approximately 450 houses (including structures with single and multiple housing units) were totally destroyed or severely damaged. This is the primary factor preventing return of the approximately 3,000 people estimated to be still living with relatives or host families. . A further 8,000 houses are estimated to have sustained minor damage. The main priorities stemming from the IRA are:

- ensuring adequate shelter for families who lost their homes, through the provision of assistance to cover rental fees, or the distribution of temporary shelters
- providing NFIs, such as furniture, mattresses, blankets, cooking utensils, and clothing to some of the displaced families
- distributing plastic sheeting, and providing financial assistance to families living in houses that sustained minor damages

The main ongoing project addressing the shelter needs of refugee families is run by UNRWA and it requires \$3.7 m to cover its current funding shortfall. Another two projects proposed by UNRWA and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) addressing the above needs and included in the 2013 CAP would require an initial sum of \$ 6.8 million to immediately address new needs in the first half of 2013.

**\$3.7 m**

for remainder of 2012

**\$10.5 m**

for 2012 and first half of 2013



## Health and Nutrition

The IRA findings indicate that the priority activities required to address health needs are:

- addressing critical shortages in essential drugs and medical disposables
- ensuring adequate treatment and rehabilitation for the injured
- supporting new cases of disability, especially with prosthetic devices

To cover critical shortages in essential drugs and medical disposables the World Health Organization (WHO) has proposed a critical new project to be implemented until the end of 2012 costing \$2 million.

Another four projects proposed by UNRWA, Handicap International, HelpAge, and MAP/UNFPA addressing the above needs are included in the 2013 CAP and in addition to a new WHO proposal (\$10 million) to address the critical drugs shortage in Gaza would require an estimated \$13.1 million to jump-start urgent activities, including replenishing the critical drugs shortage in Gaza.

**\$2 m**

for remainder of 2012

**\$15.1 m**

for 2012 and first half of 2013



## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

The IRA UNRWA assessments confirmed initial reports indicating that the scope of damage sustained by the water and wastewater infrastructure has been limited, and the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) has so far been able to repair most of it. However, the IRA identified a series of other WASH needs, some of which predated the escalation but were exacerbated during it, and now require an immediate response in the following areas:

- distribution of WASH kits to displaced families
- replacement of WASH facilities at the household level damaged during the hostilities, primarily water storage tanks
- support fuel procurement for CMWU and municipalities to operate WASH facilities and run vehicles to collect solid waste
- clearance of sewage ponds and bomb craters filled with storm water assessment
- cleaning and rehabilitation of clogged lagoons of the northern waste water treatment plant.
- removal of domestic waste from urban areas to minimize public health risks.

There are a number of ongoing WASH projects carried out by UNICEF, UNRWA, Oxfam GB, GVC and ACF, which can address the identified needs through the end of 2012; they would require \$1.4 million to cover a funding shortfall. Activities planned for the first half of 2013 and included in the 2013 CAP require an estimated \$2.6 million to jump-start urgent interventions.

**\$1.4m**

for the remainder of 2012

**\$4.1m**

for 2012 and first half of 2013



## Education

The priority activities identified by the IRA and UNRWA assessments relating to education are:

- rehabilitation of five schools and kindergartens that sustained heavy damage
- repairs in at least 100 schools and education facilities that sustained moderate or minor damage
- provision of school-based psychosocial support for children
- support the provision of learning materials and school equipment for affected schools

To implement these activities in the remainder of 2012, UNRWA requires \$900,000 to cover existing emergency projects. Another five projects proposed by UNRWA, UNESCO, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes – Italy, and NRC to implement the above activities are included in the 2013 CAP and would require \$8-9 million to allow for the increase of their caseload during

**\$900,000**

for remainder of 2012

**\$9 m**

for 2012 and first half of 2013

the first half of 2013.



A rapid food security assessment by Food Cluster members, which is currently underway, will provide the basis for a review of the current caseload (1,085,000 people) and the type of intervention required. While no additional needs stemming from the recent hostilities have so far been identified, the World Food Program (WFP) is seeking an additional \$10 m to prevent a break in the food distribution pipeline beyond February 2013.

**\$10 million**

Needed to prevent collapse of food distribution pipeline in 2013



## Agriculture

Based on the initial findings of a damage assessment at the governorate level, the local Ministry of Agriculture estimates the scope of damage to agricultural assets at approximately \$20 million. The Agriculture Sector is currently conducting a supplementary Qualitative Impact Assessment. Available findings suggest the following priority activities are required:

- rehabilitation of productive assets that sustained damage, including land (crops, greenhouses, vegetable fields), livestock structures, irrigation structures, and fishing equipment and boats; priority should be given to assets needed for the upcoming season
- soil testing in recently accessible land in the Access Restricted Area (ARA), and support to subsequent land reclamation activities.

There are a range of agricultural projects worth \$1.3 million included in the 2012 CAP which are currently unfunded and could cover the above needs. Pending completion of ongoing assessments and prioritization of interventions, the overall financial requirements to address the loss of assets as well as the reclamation of land in the ARA is estimated at \$ 20 million.

**\$1.3m**

for remainder of 2012

**\$20m**

Estimated funding needed to for activities in 2013 (inc. development assistance)

### 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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