

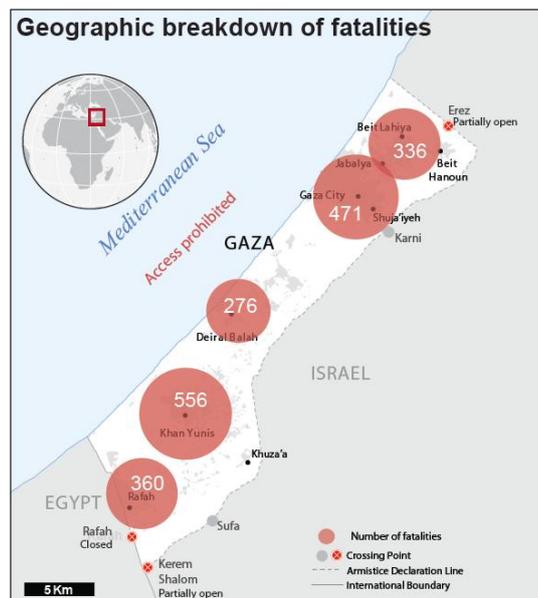


This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. This report covers the period from 27 August (08:00 hrs) to 28 August (08:00 hrs).

Note: The next report will be issued on 4 September and will cover the period from 08:00 28 August to 08:00 4 September.

Highlights

- The open-ended ceasefire which entered into force on Tuesday evening is holding, with no violations reported.
- The Palestinian fatality toll is 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, and only 10 per cent of the population receive water once a day.



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

10%

Of the Gaza population receive water once a day for six to eight hours.

18

Hours of scheduled electricity outages are implemented across Gaza.

Situation Overview

The open-ended ceasefire brokered by the Egyptian government on Tuesday evening is holding. Recent days have witnessed a dramatic decline in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), but figures may rise again as Palestinians find their homes uninhabitable or decide that the security and services in shelters and host families is preferable to what is available in their communities.

As the ceasefire allows for more in-depth sectoral assessments to be conducted, it is clear that the scale of damage is unprecedented, with approximately 13 per cent of the housing stock affected. Five per cent of the housing stock is uninhabitable - an estimated 18,000 housing units have been either destroyed or severely damaged, leaving more than 108,000 people homeless. This is in addition to the pre-crisis housing deficit of 71,000 housing units, due to people living in overcrowded or inadequate conditions. 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.

¹Data 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

Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) are a major protection concern and poses risk to those returning to their homes and for repair and reconstruction. ERW are strewn throughout the Gaza Strip, contaminating homes, gardens, roads and streets, fields, agricultural lands, abandoned shelters and schools. Numerous kinds of ERW have been identified, including non-exploded tank shells, missiles, aircraft bombs, rockets, bullets, shrapnel, fuses, gas canisters and flechettes. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) cannot, at this stage, determine the full extent of ERW contamination, but extensive damage to buildings and estimates based on a failure rate of 10 per cent, indicate that contamination levels will be higher than in previous conflicts. UNMAS anticipates a minimum of 1,890 explosive items to be secured or destroyed. There is need to add to this ERW estimate, the abandoned ammunition, improvised devices or Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) from the armed groups.

Hostilities and casualties

There are no reports of additional casualties or the recovery of bodies since the last situation update. The cumulative death toll among Palestinians since 7 July is 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. 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 and up to 1,500 orphaned children will need sustained support from the child protection and welfare sectors.

The cumulative Israeli fatality toll is 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, were directly injured by rockets or shrapnel.

Displacement

Before the conflict, UNRWA, based on the experience of previous escalations of hostilities, had anticipated sheltering some 35,000 to 50,000 displaced people in its installations for a limited period. The actual number reached six times the maximum number in its contingency plan, and was unprecedented in the Agency's 64-year history in Gaza. In total, the number of displaced, including those staying with host families, reached over 500,000 people at the height of the conflict, representing 28 per cent of the population of Gaza. The numbers decreased during the extended period of temporary ceasefires between 11 and 19 August, but again soared to 475,000 in recent days due to resumed hostilities, due to general fear and a lack of access to basic services.

With the declaration of the open-ended ceasefire there was a dramatic decline in the number of IDPs, with the numbers in UNRWA designated shelters decreased from 289,000 to 53,000 between 26 and 27 August. As of this afternoon, the number of IDPs staying in UNRWA shelters was 52,235 with 60 shelters remaining open. Updated estimates of the number of IDPs in government schools and with host families are not available. However, it is estimated that some 108,000 people will remain displaced long-term due to the destruction of, or severe damage to, their homes. According to preliminary findings from the Initial Rapid Assessment, carried out by humanitarian actors through OCHA coordination. Other factors which may delay the return of IDPs are the pervasive presence of ERW, lack of belief in a permanent ceasefire, lack of availability of basic services, and the destruction of livelihoods as a result of hostilities.

There was also significant displacement in southern Israel during the 50-day emergency, particularly among communities which are in range of mortar fire from Gaza, which the Iron Dome system was unable to intercept. According to some sources, as many as 70 per cent of the 40,000 residents of communities near Gaza had left their homes, with many waiting to see if the ceasefire holds before deciding to return to their communities.

Water and electricity

Gaza's public services, already over stretched, were placed under extreme strain during the conflict. Water and electricity networks were damaged and Gaza's only power plant shut down after an Israeli airstrike on 29 July. Necessary repairs and maintenance could not take place due to hostilities and, in several instances, the direct targeting of personnel: at least 14 electricity, water and waste water technicians employed by local utilities were killed by Israeli attacks and at least ten others were injured.

Following the open-ended ceasefire, Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation (GEDCO) teams resumed intensive repairs to damaged electricity lines. However, limited progress has been 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.

The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) estimates that 75 per cent of the water network is now functional after emergency repairs. However, only 10 per cent of the population of the Gaza Strip receive water once a day, for six to eight

hours; 15 per cent, in Rafah, receive water once every two days; 50 per cent receives water once every four days; and 25 per cent, in Gaza city and Jabalia, receive water once every five days; (in all cases the duration is for six to eight hours).

It is also estimated that eighty per cent of waste water services, 70 per cent of waste water treatment plants, and sixty per cent of desalination plants are now functional,

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 for Egyptian citizens; conflict injuries; critical medical cases (non-conflict related); foreign residency card holders; those with third country visas; and dual nationals.

General Coordination

The data collection for the Inter-agency Rapid Needs Assessment (IRA), led by the EOC has been completed. Clusters and sectors are currently engaged in analysis of the data generated from the two level needs assessments, which covered both the governorate and municipal levels. A report summarizing the main findings of the IRA will be released next week.

Funding

On 26 August, 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 \$179 million out of a total request of US \$367 million (49 per cent); the vast majority of this represents funding for UNRWA, 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 protection, food assistance, psychosocial support, WASH, 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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