

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Emergency

Situation Report (as of 15 August 2014, 0800 hrs)

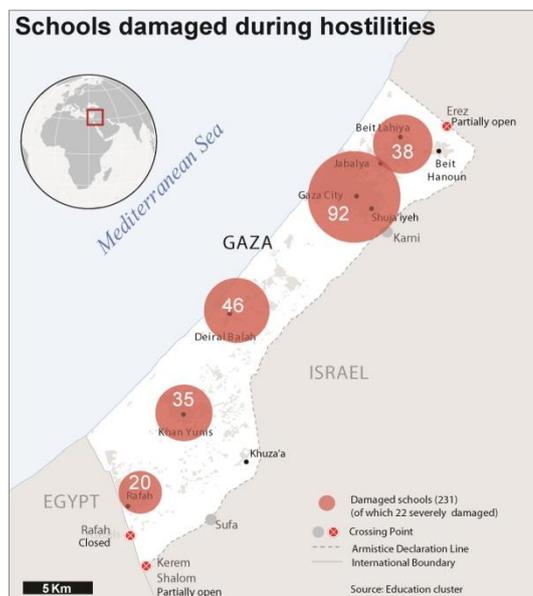


This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. This report covers the period from 14 August (08:00 hrs) to 15 August (08:00 hrs).

Note: There will be no situation reports on 16 or 17 August. The next report will be issued on 18 August.

Highlights

- The five-day temporary ceasefire which entered into effect at midnight 13 August is holding, with no major incidents reported.
- The situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is fluid and has risen again, with 218,367 now seeking refuge in 87 UNRWA schools designated as emergency shelters.
- Alternative housing will be needed for the approximately 100,000 people whose homes have been destroyed or severely damaged.
- An exceptional one-off food distribution, targeting families who do not regularly receive food assistance, is continuing with 150,000 out of a targeted 730,000 people now reached.



1,975

Palestinians killed, including 1,417 civilians, of whom 459 are children and 239 are women.¹

67

Israelis killed, including 64 soldiers, three civilians including one foreign national.

365,000

People hosted at UNRWA, government shelters and with host families.

1000's

Of explosive remnants of war (ERW) dispersed throughout civilian areas.

150,000

People reached so far in exceptional UNRWA/WFP/MoSA food distribution.

Situation Overview

The ceasefire, extended until midnight, 18 August, is holding with no violations reported. However, in the absence of a permanent agreement, the situation in Gaza remains insecure, and the number of displaced fluctuates as families discover that their homes are uninhabitable or lack even the basic amounts of water, electricity, and food available in emergency shelters. It is estimated that 8,832 housing units have been totally destroyed, requiring reconstruction, and 7,960 have been severely damaged and are uninhabitable until major repairs can take place. Another 5,635 housing units have suffered major damage but are still inhabitable in part, while 33,625 have suffered minor damage.

Others are returning because they wish to secure their places in shelters should hostilities resume or because of general insecurity. Wednesday's incident in which six people were killed by unexploded ordnance (UXO) underlines the threat which the thousands of explosive remnants of war (ERW) dispersed throughout civilian areas pose to children, farmers, humanitarian workers and IDPs returning home.

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

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Coordination Saves Lives

Hostilities and casualties

Since the last update, the Protection Cluster has recorded a further two fatalities; a 90-year-old woman and a 60-year-old man, who died from injuries sustained earlier. This brings the cumulative death toll among Palestinians since 7 July to at least 1,975, according to preliminary data collected by the Protection Cluster from various sources, including 328 persons who could not be yet identified or their status established. Of the initially verified cases, 1,417 are believed to be civilians, including 459 children and 239 women, and 230 members of armed groups. The UXO fatalities recorded on Wednesday have not yet been included in the cumulative figures. According to the World Health Organization, as of 17:00 on 12 August, 10,193 Palestinians, including 3,084 children, 1,970 women and 368 elderly, have been injured.

Since 8 July, three civilians in Israel have been killed, including one foreign national, and dozens directly injured by rockets or shrapnel. The total number of Israeli military fatalities stands at 64.

Displacement

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in emergency shelters continues to fluctuate, and increased by at least 16,000 during the reporting period. As of yesterday afternoon, there were 218,367 hosted in 87 designated UNRWA schools, (up from 209,459 registered the previous day) and 20,888 in seven government shelters supported by UNRWA (up from 15,400 previously). The number of IDPs residing in government schools not assisted by UNRWA is unknown. Nearly 115,000 IDPs residing with host families have been registered and reached by various shelter partners.

Infrastructure and services

A total of 230 schools (90 UNRWA and 140 government-run) have sustained some degree of damage, including 25 schools entirely destroyed or severely damaged since the current crisis began. UNRWA is devising a strategy regarding the new school year, in coordination with the Ministry of Education. If a permanent ceasefire is reached, it is expected it will take the Agency between two to three weeks to open its schools to some 235,000 children.

For service providers, a permanent or continued ceasefire is required to continue repairing water and wastewater networks and facilities. Many of the repairs in the worst affected areas need to be urgently addressed as families return to their homes. Over 50 per cent of water networks are estimated to be damaged in areas which experienced intense conflict, such as Beit Hanoun. As repairs are made and further destruction is discovered in these areas, the re-supply of spare and replacement parts will be necessary. In other heavily impacted areas such as Khuza'a, the demand for water is so high that tensions are developing around distribution areas when deliveries are attempted. Tanker drivers have been unable to deliver in eastern Khan Yunis and particularly Khuza'a, for these reasons; the WASH Cluster and partners are working closely with local representatives to address this problem.

Food Update

The crisis has worsened an already extremely fragile environment in terms of food security and livelihoods. Around 66 per cent of the population of Gaza was receiving food assistance prior to this crisis and the household food insecurity level or vulnerable to food insecure stood at 72 per cent of households. The entire population of Gaza has been affected by the conflict and almost all need food and other assistance to recover, particularly the IDPs who will be homeless, due to the destruction of their homes. An exceptional one-off food distribution by UNRWA, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), targeting families who do not regularly receive food assistance, is continuing with 150,000 out of a targeted 730,000 people now reached.

The poultry sector has been particularly affected, with half of Gaza's poultry (broilers and layers) killed as a result of direct damage or because of restrictions on tending and feeding them., with the price of eggs rising by 40 per cent, Around 55,000 livestock head are in need of animal feed and water tanks in order to avoid further loss of livestock and additional erosion of productive assets.

Key humanitarian priorities

Humanitarian space: access for humanitarian workers to carry out life-saving activities should be maintained, among other reasons, to complete search and rescue operations in several areas, and repair critical water and electricity infrastructure. Removal of the threat of numerous UXO in built up areas is vital.

Joint needs assessments: the first phase initial rapid needs assessment was launched on Wednesday to inform responses by humanitarian organizations. The second phase will start on Monday if the ceasefire holds.

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

Strengthen response to IDPs: improving priority response to IDPs in non-UNRWA facilities and with host families; ensuring common standards of response to IDPs throughout the Gaza strip, including comprehensive and common registration.

Erez: Open 08:00-14:00 for urgent cases only.

Beit Hanoun (Arba-Arba): Operational.

Kerem Shalom: Open yesterday until 16:30. A total of 283 truck loads, mostly food (166) entered. It is normally closed on Friday but opened today because of high demand. The Government of Israel reports that on 13 August, 198 tons of gas, 244,000 litres of benzene and 353,000 litres of fuel for transportation were imported into Gaza through Israeli crossings

Rafah: No goods entered on 14 August.

Humanitarian needs and response



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. It is likely that every child in the Gaza strip is affected by the crisis and will require some level of psychosocial support.
- Child protection and PSS is urgently required to address issues of child abuse, exploitation and violence inside shelters.
- Thousands of explosive remnants of war (ERW) are left in 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 monitoring and investigating incidents to identify possible violations of international law, as well as consolidating information on civilian fatalities.
- PRCS continues to provide PSS through UNRWA and governmental schools/shelters and has reached more than 2,277 girls and 2,093 boys since 15 July; additionally they were able to reach over 3,076 women and 2,076 men.
- Since 8 July, the PCDCR (Palestinian Center for Democracy and Conflict Resolution) has provided initial PSS to 3,077 children across the Gaza Strip, including through home and hospital visits.
- 340,000 child protection and PSS text messages have been sent to Jawal mobile phone subscribers in Gaza since 20 July.
- The Sawa Child Protection Helpline has provided counselling to a total of 2,094 callers since 13 July.
- Since 8 July, UNRWA Community Mental Health Programme (CMHP) has conducted 12,867 PSS sessions for 108,904 parents and recreational activities for 120,089 children. CMHP also coordinated and supervised the implementation of sessions by other partners covering 18,379 adult IDPs and 93,595 children.
- CTCCM (Community Training Centre and Crisis Management) has been providing PSS support to other IDP sites, including in two government schools, the Orthodox Church in Gaza and al Amal Institute, reaching 161 children and 20 women.
- UNICEF, in partnership with AMAAN, is providing daily PSS and extracurricular activities to 2,000 children in six shelters in Gaza city managed by the MoSA.
- 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 has carried out 31 risk assessments for UNRWA and UNSCO of which 27 UNRWA installations have been cleared, and provided risk education for 26,000 people. Furthermore, 123 humanitarian workers have received risk education training.

Gaps and Constraints

- Local organizations still face fuel and electricity shortages.
- Sawa Child Protection Help Line needs additional trained counsellors.

- The number of social workers and PSS counsellors at hospitals is insufficient to meet current needs.
- Displaced children and their families hosted with community members remain largely unreached by child protection interventions.



Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

Needs

- It is estimated that 16,792 families (consisting of approximately 100,750 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 5,635 families (33,800 individuals), whose homes were damaged but are still inhabitable. Another 33,625 families (an estimated 201,750 individuals), whose homes sustained minor damage need basic NFI assistance such as nylon and plastic sheets.

Response

- 218,367 people are being provided with shelter in 87 designated UNRWA schools across the Gaza Strip and 20,888 individuals are sheltered in seven government shelters supported by UNRWA. Nearly 115,000 IDPs residing with host families have been registered and reached by various shelter partners.
- Shelter partners have provided household NFIs to 52,889 families and hygiene NFIs to 65,566 families since the beginning of the emergency.
- On 14 August, UNRWA delivered 16 truckloads of NFIs to shelters.

Gaps and Constraints

- Cash assistance of more than US\$ 68 million is needed for 16,792 families to cover rental fees and urgent expenses.
- Emergency shelter kits are needed for 6,504 displaced families.
- 21,836 family hygiene kits are needed for IDPs with host families and in UNRWA and government shelters.
- Shelter NFIs such as plastic sheets and tarpaulin are needed for 33,625 families (approximately 200,900 individuals) whose homes sustained minor damage.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Needs

- IDPs in shelters and with host families require drinking water and water for domestic use.
- Provision of fuel (500,000 litres per month) is needed to operate critical WASH facilities until repairs to the electricity grid leads to the resumption of the former power supply level. Emergency standby generators and municipal vehicles utilized for water distribution also need fuel.
- Damaged electricity distribution systems, water and waste water lines need urgent repairs.

Response

- Delivery of fuel through UNRWA is ongoing.
- Municipalities are distributing domestic and drinking water to IDPs and areas with no access to water. The Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) has also distributed 11,000 litres of chlorine to several groundwater wells and sprayed a number of sites with pesticides as a vector control measure.
- Potable water has been delivered to at least 274,824 people through potable water trucking, water vouchers, and bottled water. UNRWA and Oxfam have supplied 221,714 IDPs in schools, UNICEF with partners WFP and PHG have supported 43,000 individuals with water vouchers and water trucking, and PARC has tankered water to 10,110 affected families. ICRC, Anera, CHF, and UNICEF with partner Ma'an have ongoing water trucking programs with numbers of beneficiaries reached to be confirmed.
- At least 129,710 people have been provided with water storage containers for household use.

- WASH Cluster and partners are working closely with local representatives to address high tensions around distribution.
- CMWU continues to provide for all possible repairs and refurbishment of repairable facilities such as water and wastewater networks, water wells and desalination units.
- Gaza municipalities continued the removal of solid waste in Gaza city, in addition to carrying out critical operations and maintenance work to seven water lines, seven groundwater wells and several sewage lines.
- UNRWA sanitation staff removed 366 tons of solid waste from all refugee camps on 12 August and continued to carry out critical repairs of UNRWA installations.

Gaps

- Movement and access restrictions remain restricting factors.
- The constant movement of IDPs between their homes and designated shelters during ceasefires poses challenges in prioritizing responses undertaken by water and sanitation service providers.
- Decreasing capacity of the local market to meet the need for polythene tanks.
- Lack of energy to operate facilities and limitations on access hinder the critical operations of WASH facilities, including operations of water service providers as well as maintenance and repairs, with potential devastating consequences for the entire population of the Gaza Strip.



Health and Nutrition

Needs

- Hospitals continue to require steady access to adequate amounts of fuel, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, including spare parts for medical equipment.
- Essential medicines and medical disposables are needed.
- The time-consuming process related to the evacuation of priority patients out of Gaza, including issuing travel and medical documents and passports for foreign referrals, especially for patients whose homes and possessions were destroyed, needs to be addressed.
- Preventive health measures are needed for IDPs in shelters to prevent the outbreak of communicable diseases.
- Hospitals continue to require regular access to adequate amounts of fuel, medicines and medical supplies, as well as spare parts for medical equipment to maintain functionality.
- Continuity of care and rehabilitation of patients, especially of amputees, at the community level needs active follow-up.

Response

- The extended ceasefire has enabled the MoH to increase the referral of casualty patients to outside hospitals, especially to Turkey and East Jerusalem hospitals, which has reduced bed occupancy in surgical wards in Gaza from more than 100 per cent to 80 per cent, helping to improve quality care.
- A total of 93 specialist physicians and nurses have entered Gaza on short missions since 7 July from the (MoH) in the West Bank (45), Palestinian and Arab physicians' groups (25) and international humanitarian agencies (23).
- UNRWA and MoH are sharing data with WHO and working to expand and improve monitoring for main communicable diseases among IDPs in shelters.
- Oxfam, the Palestinian Water, UNRWA and WHO are in the process of drafting guidelines for water vendors in order to maintain the quality of water delivered to shelters and communities.
- The MoH in Gaza has received more than US\$ 3 million in donations of drugs and disposables for distribution which is currently being processed. The WHO is assisting the MoH in speeding up the process.
- UNRWA began distributing maternity packages to new mothers who have given birth during the hostilities and who are registered as IDPs. A total of 344 babies have started their lives as IDPs in UNRWA schools.


Food Security
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.
- An estimated 100,000 people whose homes were destroyed or damaged beyond repair will need food and other assistance for a longer term.
- Additional bread production capacity is required due to lack of electricity in households.
- Immediate emergency funds to cover massively increasing food needs of IDPs are required.
- Approximately 55,000 livestock heads are in need of animal feed and water tanks in order to avoid further loss of livestock and additional erosion of productive assets.
- 1,000 broiler farmers and 220 layer farmers lost their production capacity and are in need of immediate assistance.
- Humanitarian access to allow for provision of food and other emergency assistance to the civilian population should be maintained.

Response

- The regular food assistance to more than one million UNRWA and WFP core beneficiaries is ongoing. The ceasefire is allowing for safer and more efficient delivery of food parcels.
- In addition, 150,000 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.
- 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.
- Food Security Sector (FSS) partners are delivering complementary food distributions to IDPs at UNRWA and government shelters.

Gaps and Constraints

- Delays at crossings complicate food delivery.
- Electricity shortages limit 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.


Education
Needs

- 230 schools (140 governmental and 90 UNRWA schools) affected by shelling are in need of repair, including 25 severely damaged requiring reconstruction. The Ministry of Education also reported that another two higher education facilities were affected by shelling, bringing the total number of facilities in need of repair to two universities and four colleges.
- UNRWA and government schools will not be ready for the new school year which was scheduled to start on 24 August.
- A lasting ceasefire to undertake unexploded ordnance clearance, damage assessments and repair work to damaged educational facilities, as well as preparation for the new school year, is urgently needed.

Response

- The Education Cluster is coordinating with MoEHE and UNRWA regarding the new school year, and is engaged in ongoing assessments.

- The Education Cluster is also working with service providers to coordinate a special package for returning school students, with a focus on psychosocial support and recreational activities.

Gaps & Constraints

- Inadequate funding for cluster activities.
- A large number of schools are used as IDP shelters or collective centres, with no clear plan in place for longer term shelters for those whose homes have been destroyed or severely damaged.



Logistics

Needs

- Safe and secure transportation inside the Gaza Strip is urgently required to ensure the delivery of much needed relief supplies and to guarantee transporters are able to continue working.
- There is an urgent need to ensure coordination with relevant authorities and organisations operating in the Gaza Strip and coordinate proper humanitarian space to ensure safe passage, delivery and distribution of aid cargo.

Response

- Storekeepers and logistics assistants have been hired locally to support the staging areas secured by the Logistics Cluster in the West Bank and the common warehouses in the Gaza Strip.
- The Logistics Cluster is supporting the Palestinian authorities in facilitating the transport of more than 750 pallets of water and food for distribution to various locations within the Gaza Strip.
- The Logistics Cluster has made two additional staging areas in Ramallah and Nablus available for the humanitarian community.
- On the 13 August, the Logistics Cluster facilitated the transportation of 140 pallets of food and shelter supplies into the Gaza Strip on behalf of CHF International.
- Since activation, the Logistics Cluster has supported 17 humanitarian organisations including Global Communities and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and facilitated the transportation of over 1,200 pallets of humanitarian relief.
- The Logistics Cluster has facilitated the transportation of private donations from numerous local organisations including civil society groups and local communities. More than 500 pallets of items such as clothes, bedding, mattresses and diapers have been transported via 18 trucks for distribution within the Gaza Strip.

Gaps and Constraints

- Safe and secure transportation inside the Gaza Strip remains an ongoing constraint limiting the ability of the delivery of urgently required relief supplies.
- The increasing needs and deteriorating situation is forcing the humanitarian community to augment its pipelines, increasing pressure on Kerem Shalom, the only goods crossing into the Gaza Strip.
- Cargo bottlenecks are causing delays at Beituniya and Tarqumia crossings.

General Coordination

The first phase of the joint rapid needs assessment, led by the EOC started on 13 August, and data analysis is ongoing. Preparations for the second phase at municipality level are ongoing and, if the situation allows the second phase will start on Monday 18 August. Preparations include liaison with relevant government counterparts, the allocation of cluster representatives to various teams, and the conduct of relevant trainings. Various technical authorities have committed their support. The assessment at the municipality and refugee camp level starting on Monday, aims to cover 19 of the 25 municipalities and eight refugee camps on the first day. Data collected will be entered on tablets and linked directly to a database. The information will be subsequently validated and analysed, before it is disseminated. Protection and gender concerns have been integrated throughout the process as have questions on the information needs of affected communities.

Since its activation, the Logistics Cluster has facilitated the transportation of over 1,200 pallets of humanitarian relief supplies via 47 trucks from the West Bank on behalf of 17 humanitarian organisations for distribution within the Gaza Strip.

Funding

Based on available information, funding to the Gaza Crisis Appeal stands at US \$115 million, of this US \$96 million is for UNRWA, US \$16.5 million for WFP and US \$2.1 million (reported) for others which are mainly for Food, 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.

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, eleven project proposals were approved for a total of US\$ 2.6 million. Further funding for the ERF is still being sought.

UN humanitarian agencies, in cooperation with NGO partners are in the process of finalizing an application to the CERF Rapid Response window covering 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.

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