

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Escalation in hostilities

Gaza and southern Israel

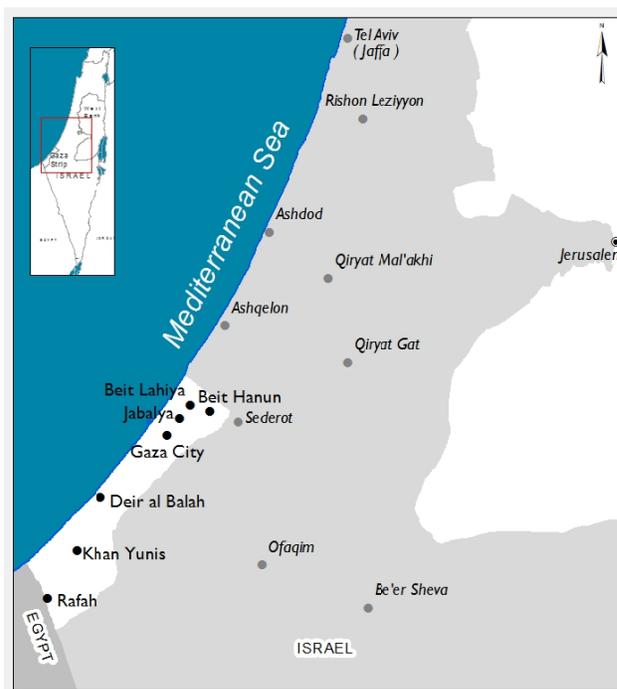
Situation Report (as of 21 November 2012, 1500 hrs)



This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 20 November (1500 hrs.) to 21 November (1500 hrs).

Highlights

- 90 Palestinian civilians, including 26 children and 12 women, have been killed, as of 12.00 hrs today, since the beginning of hostilities on 14 November,
- Four Israeli civilians have been killed and 219 are reported injured, the vast majority civilians.
- The targeting by the Israeli military of residential properties in Gaza continues, resulting in rising civilian casualties.
- Over 10,000 people displaced from Gaza city and northern Gaza have sought refuge in emergency shelters
- Indiscriminate rocket firing from Gaza at Israeli residential areas continues resulting in civilian casualties and displacement.



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| <p>1,600,000</p> <p>Affected people in the Gaza Strip (approximately)</p> | <p>1,000,000</p> <p>Affected people in southern and central Israel (approximately)</p> | <p>140</p> <p>Palestinians killed</p> <p>1,202</p> <p>Palestinian injuries (since 14 November)</p> | <p>5</p> <p>Israeli killed</p> <p>219</p> <p>Israeli injuries (since 14 November)</p> | <p>213</p> <p>Houses destroyed or severely damaged in Gaza</p> <p>1,500</p> <p>Houses lightly damaged in Gaza</p> | <p>10,000</p> <p>People hosted in emergency shelters in Gaza (schools)</p> |
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Situation Overview

Despite hopes for a cease fire yesterday evening, the current Israeli offensive in Gaza entered its eighth day with Israeli airstrikes and shelling from land and sea continuing. Approximately 25 people were reported killed on Tuesday 20 November, most of whom were reportedly civilians. In total, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) announced that it had targeted approximately 100 sites throughout the Gaza Strip overnight including militants, weapons manufacturing and storage sites, underground rocket launchers, tunnels and buildings including the Ministry of Internal Security and a media centre in Gaza City, which the IDF claimed were being used as military command and operations centres. The Wadi Gaza coastal bridge which connects the northern and southern parts of the Gaza Strip, as well as a smaller bridge next to Nusseirat, were destroyed. Air strikes targeted sites in the populated areas of Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip, Khan Yunis City, Rafah City and open areas in the Access Restricted Areas (ARA) near the fence separating Gaza and Israel.

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



The intensification of IDF bombardment of sites located in residential areas and the dropping of leaflets by the Israeli Air Force (IAF) on localities in Gaza City and northern Gaza, instructing people to leave their homes and move to the centre of Gaza city on designated roads, resulted in increased displacement during the reporting period. Families have relocated to overcrowded apartments in areas they believe are less likely to be targeted and over 10,000 people are taking refuge in UNRWA schools.

The Protection Cluster reports¹ that, in total, as of 14.00 hours on Wednesday, over 140 Palestinians are reported to have been killed, including over 90 civilians, of whom at least 26 are children and 12 are women. Approximately, 1,200 Palestinians have been injured, the vast majority civilians. Initial reports on Wednesday indicate that at least eight people have been killed in airstrikes.

The IDF reported the heaviest shelling from Gaza into Israel since the beginning of the offensive. Over 180 rockets landed in the 24 hours leading up to 15.00 hrs 21 November, of which 100 were recorded in the late afternoon and evening hours of 20 November. This resulted in the death of one Israeli soldier and one civilian and injury to 30 other Israelis, including 15 civilians. Extensive damage was caused to property, including a high rise building in Rishon Le Tzion in central Israel, marking the first time a rocket has struck the Tel Aviv area. According to the Israeli Property Taxation Authority, between 14 and 20 November over 80 families have been displaced as a result of damage and destruction to housing. While southern Israel witnessed a relatively quiet night, rocket firing from Gaza resumed Wednesday morning, resulting in one injury. Since the beginning of the offensive five Israelis, including four civilians have been killed and 219 injured, the vast majority of whom are civilians, according to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Additionally, at approximately 1200 hrs today an explosion on a bus in the centre of Tel Aviv resulted in injury to 21 passengers.

There is growing concern in Gaza about the protection of civilians in light of rising civilian deaths and injuries, especially children, which have resulted from the continuing targeting of sites located in residential areas. Humanitarian needs amongst the civilian population in Gaza are increasing daily. Although many services are continuing to function with limited disruption at the moment, there are concerns that if the violence continues, there will likely be a sharp increase in the need for food assistance, medical supplies, water and shelter assistance - particularly amongst the rising numbers of displaced people.

Latest developments: as at 2100 hrs, a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas was announced in the media.

Crossings

Kerem Shalom was closed today due to several mortar rounds fired by Palestinian armed groups at the crossing, which reportedly endangered the safety of Palestinian and Israeli staff on both sides. This has prevented the entry of 128 scheduled truckloads. Contingency stocks are not able to be replenished because of the continued closure of Kerem Shalom.

Erez: limited movement between Gaza and Israel, including of patients and foreign nationals, continued, despite ongoing impediments in reaching the crossing due to insecurity and restrictions at a Hamas-controlled checkpoint. Today, five trucks with medicine were exceptionally allowed through Erez, which is considered a passenger crossing.

Rafah: the crossing continues to be open and people are allowed through following the normal coordination procedures.

Electricity and Fuel

The Gaza Power Plant (GPP) did not receive any additional fuel supplies during the reporting period. This is because tunnel activity, the primary route for the transfer of fuel to the GPP, has reportedly come to an almost complete halt due to intensified airstrikes on tunnels. Consequently, the GPP continued operating one turbine relying on its fuel reserves, with scheduled blackouts lasting between 8 and 12 hours. So far, no arrangements have been made to allow in 22 million liters of fuel donated to the GPP by Qatar and stored in Egypt. The reduced

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

supply of fuel is also likely to impact upon the functioning of essential services, including hospitals and water and sanitation networks.

Today, an Israeli feeder line supplying north Gaza and Gaza City and an Egyptian line supplying Rafah were damaged, increasing the hours of blackout in the affected areas. Most of the electricity networks elsewhere that sustained damage in the past few days were repaired, except for one major Israeli line that feeds the Khan Yunis area. Except for the damaged feeder lines, electricity supply from Egypt and Israel continues uninterrupted.

Humanitarian needs and response



Protection Cluster members have expressed concern about the rising civilian casualties in the past 24 hours, noting that air strikes and naval artillery shelling intensified markedly overnight. Also of concern are reports that the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has faced delays in accessing wounded and dead.

26

Palestinian children
killed since 14 Nov

Today, the Protection Cluster held an emergency meeting to take stock of the current status of protection efforts and preparedness for further responses once the security situation permits. In a separate meeting, members of the Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) mapped their presence, and developed a response plan to be implemented once the security situation allows. Main priorities identified include the facilitation of the entry of goods such as emergency kits, the identification of safe play areas, and the provision of remedial education, along with psychosocial support in schools. Ongoing responses include the scaling up of a Child Helpline from 16 to 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide on-the-phone counselling and advice to affected families.

On 20 November, messages aimed at raising awareness of the risk of explosive remnants of war (ERW) were passed to UNRWA and UNICEF for broadcasting on local TV and FM stations. Today, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) conducted a rapid ERW risk awareness session targeting 200 people at an UNRWA shelter in Gaza City, which is currently housing 1,600 displaced people.



Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

It is estimated that at least 213 houses have been either destroyed or sustained major damage during Israeli attacks, since the start of the offensive. Additionally, more than 1,500 houses (including approximately 500 in the last 24 hours) have sustained minor damage, primarily broken doors and windows.² Many of those displaced as a result of the damage sustained to their homes have relocated with relatives and friends. The Shelter Sector and UNRWA are currently coordinating the distribution of NFIs to 2,200 affected individuals, following a request by the Ministry of Social Affairs in Gaza.

16

Schools are serving as
emergency shelters

Following the dropping of leaflets by the IAF yesterday on a number of localities in northern Gaza and in Gaza City ordering residents to vacate their homes, thousands sought refuge in emergency shelters opened in schools. So far, more than 10,000 people are being accommodated in 14 UNRWA schools (eight in Gaza City, three in Jabalia and one in Al Bureij Camp) and two Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) schools in Jabalia. UNRWA has begun distributing blankets, mattresses and hygiene kits to those sheltered in its schools.

During the registration process, UNRWA staff collects information about each family member, including specific needs, such as children being separated from their parents or having specific health needs. Each family receives a copy of the form, which serves as a make-shift registration card and ensures they can access distributions provided

² As many houses consist of multiple units the number of affected families is significantly higher.

at the shelter. GPS coordinates of UNRWA installations are regularly being communicated to the Israeli authorities to further ensure the safety of those sheltering in these locations.



Food Assistance

UNRWA and WFP distributed food (canned fish, date bars, and fresh bread) among displaced people who were accommodated in schools. WFP also continued providing emergency rations, consisting of bread and canned food, to 350 families (about 2,100 people) displaced following the destruction of, or damage sustained to their homes, for an initial period of 10 days. Additionally WFP continued its regular programme in Khan Younis with CHF covering 10,000 beneficiaries with a two months ration.

1,085,000
receive food aid
(regular caseload)

UNRWA has 15 days of wheat flour and 25-30 days of commodity stocks in their Gaza warehouses to reach their normal caseload of 800,000 beneficiaries. WFP has sufficient food in three warehouses to reach its current caseload of 285,000 people for 34 days (3,500 MT). The duration of these stocks will be reduced, if the caseload increases.

Commercial stocks of wheat are sufficient to last eight days, with 4,900 MT available to bakeries. However, given the dependency on fuel and electricity to mill these stocks, the availability of wheat can be affected. Fruit is available in the market for stable prices. Vegetables are available; however, the supply of tomatoes and potatoes has decreased due to the access impediments affecting farmers triggering a 50 percent rise in prices.



Health

Hospitals operated by the Ministry of Health (MoH) are functioning despite severely depleted medical supplies. There are 299 drug items currently out of stock in Gaza's Central Drug Store, including 192 (40%) from the essential drugs list. Today, UNRWA received one truckload with nine pallets of medical supplies through the Erez crossing, which were transferred to the MoH.

192
Essential medicines
out of stock in Gaza's
Central Drug Store

Most primary health care clinics, including 19 UNRWA clinics, are also functioning, although residents are venturing onto the streets only for the most urgent needs; four clinics have been closed due to the damage they sustained. Two UNRWA clinics remained closed due to their close proximity to the border. UNRWA also donated 1,800 liters of fuel to cover the expected monthly need for the Central Blood Bank Society, a humanitarian charitable society that seeks to provide safe and free-of-charge blood to the injured.

WHO has appealed to the international community for support in providing essential medical supplies in a coordinated manner, according to the specific needs of the MoH. Additionally, UNRWA has appealed for \$400,000 to replenish its own medical stocks.

A 40-bed field hospital in Gaza City operated by Jordan since 2009 suffered a direct hit from a missile on 19 November. The missile penetrated two floors of the hospital and damaged the in-patient department nursing station in the center of the hospital. Patients had been evacuated only 10 minutes before, following attacks in the surrounding area. The hospital partially resumed activities today, reopening its second ward.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Currently, over 20,000 people in Nusseirat (Middle area) have no water supply following damage to a main carrier line at a bridge over Wadi Gaza. Damaged pipelines are being repaired by engineers of the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) as the security situation allows.

20,000
People without water
due to damages to a
pipeline

CMWU has raised concern over the rapidly diminishing level of fuel stocks at more than 100 WASH facilities across the Gaza Strip. Many of these facilities are expected to exhaust their reserves

within the next two weeks or earlier depending on any further disruption to mains electricity supplies. In Khan Yunis, for example, power cuts of 12-14 hours (due to a damaged line) have forced water wells and sewage pumping stations to operate on backup generators for most of the day, with fuel reserves expected to last one week. Spare parts, including PVC pipes and collars, are also urgently needed for network repairs.

UNICEF is planning to provide emergency fuel stocks for WASH facilities, through an HRF funded project facilitated by UNRWA.

Agriculture

Most agricultural activities continue to be suspended due to the airstrikes and shelling. Five farmers were reported to have been killed in two incidents on 20 and 21 November while working their land, two in Al Qarara and three in Deir al Balah. Eight agricultural wells, a 300 m³ water reservoir, and a nursery were reportedly destroyed in attacks yesterday (20 Nov).

40,000
chickens died due to
lack of fodder since 14
Nov

The shortage of animal fodder due to the disruption in the transfer of goods through the crossings and tunnels is of increasing concern. Around 40,000 chickens in 20 different poultry farms in the central areas have died in the past few days due to lack of feed. Locally produced chicken constitutes an important source of nutrients and protein in the Gazan diet, accounting for over three quarters of their overall meat consumption. Additionally, the displacement of farmers from the Beit Lahiya area – which hosts the majority of Gaza’s strawberry fields – is expected to have a sizable economic impact due to the relative high value of strawberries grown for export.



Education

Schools across Gaza remain closed for the eighth consecutive day. More than 462,000 students enrolled in basic and secondary school have missed at least 5 schooling days, with mid-term exams at many schools interrupted or postponed. Since the beginning of the Israeli operation in Gaza, a total of 43 educational facilities, including 41 schools, in which 25,000 students were enrolled, and two kindergartens, have sustained different types of damage. The schools include 34 run by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, six UNRWA schools and one private school.

43
Schools sustained
damages since 14 Nov

General Coordination

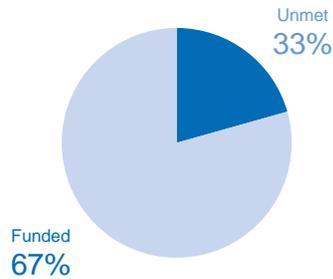
OCHA is continuing to coordinate clusters in Gaza. Efforts are currently focused on responding to needs of displaced people, including those in emergency shelters, as well as in the coordination of inter-agency needs assessments. To the extent possible, regular distributions and service provision are also being coordinated.

Funding

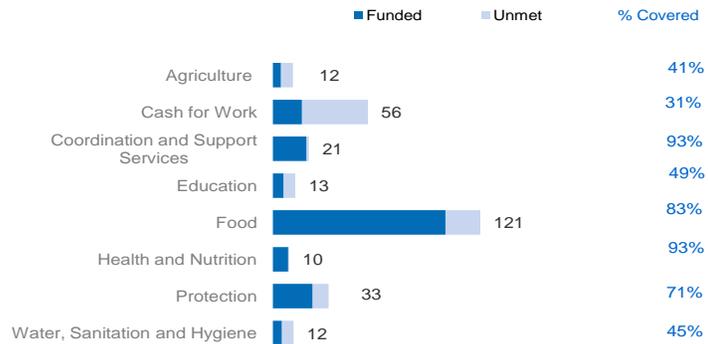
To date, funding for projects focusing on Gaza and joint West Bank and Gaza projects together received a total of \$186.4 million out of \$277.2million requested, or 67% of requested funds, representing a shortfall of \$ 90.7 million. The average funding level overall of clusters is 63% with only four 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 oPt Consolidated Appeal 2012

US\$ 416 million requested



Funding by sector (in million US\$)

**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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