



Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): Flash Update #1

Escalation in the Gaza Strip and Israel

as of 18:00, 6 August 2022

KEY POINTS

- On 5 August, Israeli airstrikes were conducted in multiple locations in Gaza, including Gaza city, Beit Hanoun and Khan Younis. Subsequently, several rockets were fired from multiple locations across Gaza towards Israel. Exchanges of fire continued throughout 6 August.
- According to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, as of 6 August at 15:30, at least 15 Palestinians had been killed, including a 5-year-old girl, and about 125 injured. The UN has so far verified 14 of these casualties.
- The Gaza Power Plant (GPP) shut down at noon on 6 August due to lack of fuel, causing rolling power cuts exceeding 20 hours per day. This places at severe risk the continuation of basic essential services.
- The Israeli authorities have kept their border crossings with Gaza closed since 2 August, citing security concerns. As a result, people have not been allowed in and out, medical cases have been unable to exit and essential commodities, including food and fuel, have not entered.
- Due to the limited availability of fuel, aggravated by the closure of Gaza's crossings since 2 August, the general electricity supply in Gaza is already limited and expected to stop in the next days. This will seriously impact economic and social rights, including the supply of clean water, hygiene and healthcare. The right to health is already severely compromised due to longstanding shortages and the heavily restricted movement in and out of Gaza, including for patients who have been unable to travel for care outside of Gaza.
- The UN Humanitarian Coordinator issued a [statement](#) calling on all sides for an immediate de-escalation and halt to the violence, to avoid destructive ramifications, particularly for civilians.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 2 August, Israeli forces arrested a senior operative of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Jenin, West Bank. Subsequently, the PIJ warned in a statement that it would “respond to any aggression.” Later that day, the Israeli authorities imposed a complete closure of crossings with Gaza, preventing movement of people and essential commodities in and out, citing security concerns.

On 5 August at 16:00, Israeli forces conducted a targeted airstrike against a senior PIJ official, Taysir Al – Ja’bari, who was reportedly killed in the attack. Several Israeli airstrikes followed during the evening in multiple locations, including in Gaza City, Beit Hanoun and Khan Younis, as part of an operation codenamed “Breaking Dawn”.

At about 21:00 on 5 August, several short- and long-term rockets were fired from multiple locations in Gaza towards Israel. Exchanges of fire continued throughout the day.

Airstrikes in the Gaza Strip resulted in death, injuries and the destruction of a number of residential buildings and rocket fire launched from Gaza resulted in the damage to one home in Israel, injured one

person, two military and caused limited damage to property. According to the MoH in Gaza, as of 6 August at 15:30, 15 Palestinians had been killed, including a 5-year-old girl, and about 125 have been injured. According to Israeli media, two Israeli soldiers and one person have reportedly been wounded in southern Israel.

The humanitarian community is preparing for an eventual activation of the Inter-Agency Contingency Plan for the scale-up of the humanitarian response should the situation further deteriorate, and significant displacement occur. UNRWA has not yet opened any Designated Emergency Shelters (DES) for the displaced. Non-food items (NFIs) and ready-to-eat food items are transferred across Gaza to be ready for distribution inside the DES in case of further displacement.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS & RESPONSE

Protection

The UN has verified 14 fatalities so far. The Gaza MoH has reported an additional fatality, not yet verified by the UN. Of them, at least two have been determined as civilians, including a 5-year-old girl. The injured reported by the Gaza MoH include at least 23 children and 13 women.

Protection Cluster partners are monitoring and documenting possible violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as the number of fatalities.

The Mine Action Area of Responsibility (AoR) has started implementing their Emergency Risk Education plan. The messages are to focus on preparedness and protection during the emergency, including safety tips while evacuating and seeking safety, and to be delivered through different mediums, including radio and social media.

The Child Protection AoR is assessing the impact of the escalating conflict on vulnerable groups, especially children, and foresees the need for expanded, structured and specialized child protection, mental health, and psychosocial support services. Remote counseling for children and their families including psychological first aid is being reactivated, including a hotline.

Shelter

Forty families are known to be displaced since 5 August in host communities, including 30 families that we in the tower building in Gaza city that sustained damage due to an airstrike. The Ministry of Public Works and Housing confirmed that some 650 housing units have been partially damaged, of which 29 are uninhabitable, 11 are totally destroyed, while the others sustained minor damage. Efforts are ongoing with Ministry of Social Development to assist those affected.

The Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) indicated that a number of electricity lines are being fixed after sustaining some damage.

Health

Medical and diagnostic devices are in some cases not functional due to the long-standing restrictions in bringing some supplies into the Gaza strip. Additionally, there are concerns regarding shortages of fuel for ambulances and for generators in hospitals.

Trauma care supplies are in place, but there is a chronic shortage of essential drugs in Gaza. According to the MoH, there is a shortage of 40 per cent in medications, 32 per cent in medical supplies, and 60 per cent in laboratory consumables.

UNRWA's health centres were open normally on 6 August and received patients with no disruption.

The number of ambulances by the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has increased from 11 to 23. PRCS has also increased the number of beds in Al Quds hospital and are ready to support Ash Shifaa hospital by receiving overflow cases in operating theatres in PRCS hospitals.

WHO has pre-positioned supplies in main hospitals and has previously provided training in mass casualty management.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

No damage to water or sanitation infrastructure has been reported. Nevertheless, the announced power supply reduction plan in the Gaza Strip, due to lack of fuel, is anticipated to significantly interrupt the delivery of WASH services, including the reduction of water supply from the water wells and desalination plants, in addition to the reduction of the quality of the output of the wastewater treatment.

The replenishment of chemicals for the treatment of water in the desalination plant could be undermined because of lack of access and the entry of supplies to the Gaza Strip. Thus, WASH services providers will not be able to operate the WASH facilities with the required capacities if access constraints continue. Additionally, chemical stocks for the desalination plant need immediate replenishment.

Due to security concerns, the three main wastewater treatment facilities are being operated remotely. If the electricity supply stops, the wastewater treatment plants will shut down, resulting in 100,000 cubic metres of raw wastewater being discharged to the sea every day.

Food security

UNRWA's food distribution centres were open normally on 6 August and received beneficiaries with no disruption. UNRWA's current wheat stocks will only sustain a limited segment of the population for one week and a half.

Animal fodder and production is at risk due to the closure of the Israeli goods crossing. The overall capacity of fodder stockpiles in Gaza is no more than seven days. Most fodder traders have not been able to import fodders during the last week. The continued closure of the crossing will lead to a significant damage in this sector and severe lack of white meat in Gaza.

Education

As schools are closed on summer vacation until 28 August, no direct impact on schooling has been observed. At least five higher education institutions in the Gaza Strip have suspended operations until further notice. Reports indicate that at least one higher education institution was damaged in a bombardment that hit nearby.