

## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION: KEY FIGURES

<p><b>2.3 Million</b> Population of the Gaza Strip</p> <p><small>Source: PCBS, 2024</small></p>	<p><b>34,622</b> Reported fatalities</p> <p><small>Source: MoH Gaza, as of 3 May</small></p>	<p><b>77,867</b> Reported injuries</p> <p><small>Source: MoH Gaza, as of 3 May</small></p>
<p><b>254</b> Aid workers killed</p> <p><b>492</b> Health workers killed <small>(including at least 15 also counted as aid workers)</small></p>	<p><b>1.1 Million</b> People experiencing catastrophic food insecurity (IPC 5)</p> <p><small>Source: IPC projection for 16 March - 15 July 2024</small></p>	<p><b>1.7 Million</b> People displaced in Gaza</p>

### Access restrictions

Humanitarian operations in Gaza continue to face severe humanitarian access restrictions, including the ongoing closure of key crossings, denials of planned missions, and delays in movements imposed by Israeli authorities. The combination of severe access constraints and ongoing insecurity has resulted in a non-permissive and volatile operational environment for humanitarian actors. Humanitarian organisations must be enabled by all parties to the conflict to safely address the unprecedented levels of need in Gaza.

### Insecurity for humanitarian workers and civilians

Intense hostilities in Gaza, including aerial bombardment in densely populated urban areas and military ground operations, pose a significant threat to civilians, including humanitarian personnel, undermining humanitarian access and operations. A Humanitarian Notification System (HNS) informs parties to the conflict about the location of humanitarian premises—such as offices, warehouses and guesthouses—and movements of humanitarian entities, aiming to prevent harm or damage. The HNS does not alter the international humanitarian law (IHL) obligations of parties to the conflict, but aids in informing them about humanitarian presence, thereby supporting their compliance with these obligations. Additionally, the use of HNS by humanitarian partners is entirely voluntary.

On 1 April, seven aid workers employed by World Central Kitchen (WCK) were killed in targeted airstrikes by the Israeli army. Israeli missiles struck a WCK convoy that was coordinating its movements with the Israeli authorities at the time of the strike, after transporting humanitarian food supplies to a warehouse in Deir al Balah. At least 254 aid workers have been killed in Gaza between 7 October 2023 and 30 April 2024, including 185 UN staff members and 27 staff and volunteers from the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). Persistent hostilities, air strikes, and the general breakdown of law and order in Gaza continue to pose significant security threats to humanitarian personnel and assets. These conditions prompted multiple humanitarian organizations to temporarily pause, suspend, or delay operations.

### Access denials or delays

During April, Israeli authorities continued to deny the access of humanitarian organizations to areas where the UN had assessed that coordination with Israeli forces was required, including for life-saving activities. Israeli authorities denied 10 per cent of requested missions in Gaza. Denials were issued for a range of life-saving humanitarian activities and operations, including food assistance, emergency medical and health support, medical evacuations, and critical water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance. This has exacerbated the humanitarian needs of affected people. Emergency medical and health missions were particularly affected by access denials and delays.

On 16 April, a humanitarian organization faced significant delays imposed by the Israeli army totaling more than six hours and 30 minutes during a coordinated mission to Al Awda and Kamal Adwan hospitals in northern Gaza. The mission aimed to deliver essential medical supplies and fuel to the hospitals to support about 10,000 people for two weeks, as well as refer injured patients from northern Gaza to southern Gaza. However, due to prolonged delays imposed by the Israeli army, both the truck transporting medical supplies and the fuel tanker were forced to turn back. Only the objective of patient referral was achieved. Four days later, the organizations attempted the mission again, only to face seven hours of delays, once more disrupting the delivery of essential medical supplies and fuel.

In late March, Israeli authorities barred the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) from operating convoys north of the Israeli forces checkpoint. UNRWA had previously been one of the three agencies providing food assistance in northern Gaza, where more than 300,000 people are currently projected to face Famine (IPC 5) levels of food insecurity.

In addition to denials, humanitarian movements crossing from southern to northern Gaza have faced substantial delays: 41 missions experienced extensive delays of over two hours. The average delay time was 268 minutes (about 4 hours and 30 minutes). Humanitarian convoys are frequently required to wait for extended periods at checkpoints, creating operational bottlenecks and posing security risks due to the prevalence of security incidents and hazards in the surrounding areas. Persistent late openings or complete closures of Israeli military checkpoints impeded humanitarian operations throughout April. Further, humanitarian movements were restricted by the Israeli authorities due to strict checkpoint operating hours and timeframes, often forcing organizations to abort their missions.

### Definitions for coordinated missions

**Facilitated:** The mission is approved by the Israeli Coordination and Liaison Administration (CLA) and proceeded without any impediments caused or imposed by the Israeli army.

**Cancelled:** The mission is cancelled by the humanitarian organization due to internal reasons.

**Impeded:** The mission is impeded by the Israeli army and is not able to achieve its objectives fully or partly.

**Denied:** The mission is denied by CLA.

In April, 21 missions were cancelled, 20 missions were denied and 34 missions were impeded. Throughout April, Erez crossing and Ashdod port had not been made fully available to all humanitarian organisations to bring in supplies into the north of Gaza. In addition, at least one checkpoint operated by Unidentified armed Palestinians was reported by humanitarian actors within Gaza.

### Severe road damage and Unexploded Ordnances

Ongoing hostilities have destroyed or otherwise damaged roads and key infrastructure throughout Gaza, posing physical barriers to access and limiting humanitarian movements. Routes that remain available for use by humanitarian organizations are frequently blocked by debris, heavily congested, and contaminated with unexploded ordnance (UXO). An estimated 37.5 million metric tons (MT) of conflict-generated debris are estimated to be present throughout Gaza, with 3.2 million MT attributed to damaged roads. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reports that a considerable amount of this debris contains UXO, noting that at least 10 percent of fired ammunition potentially fails to function. Clearing all explosive threats in Gaza could take up to 14 years, UNMAS estimates. A UN assessment team surveying Khan Younis on 10 April reported that the streets and public areas were heavily contaminated with UXO, including unexploded 1,000-pound bombs at major intersections and within school premises. The debris is also estimated to contain about 800,000 MT of asbestos and other contaminants, posing serious health and safety issues.

The infrastructure damage increases travel time for humanitarian movements, leading to significant delays, mission postponements and cancellations, and additional security risks. Consequently, the capacity of humanitarian organizations to provide vital assistance to affected people is undermined. Urgent efforts to repair and reopen roads for humanitarian convoys are crucial to ensure the delivery of assistance to those most in need.

### Example: Incidents during coordinated missions

On 9 April, a humanitarian organization attempted to implement a coordinated mission to Gaza city with 18,000 litres of fuel. However, like other organizations traveling to northern Gaza, the organization was required to wait at a holding point approximately two and a half kilometers south of the Israeli military Salah Ad Din checkpoint, the militarized boundary between northern and southern Gaza. The organization awaited clearance from Israeli authorities to proceed through the Israeli army checkpoint. While at the holding point, the fuel tanker encountered mechanical issues, preventing it from restarting. When an accompanying UN vehicle was dispatched to the checkpoint to explain the situation to Israeli soldiers, the team observed a Palestinian man with a gunshot wound to the head, still alive but rapidly losing blood. The organization, in coordination with OCHA, urgently requested permission from Israeli authorities to provide first aid and transport the injured man to an ambulance. While waiting for the approval, live ammunition was fired from the direction of the checkpoint, hitting the fuel tanker's windscreen. The approval to assist the injured man was never granted, and the man died after more than two hours without medical treatment.



A UN team inspects an unexploded 1,000-pound bomb lying on a main road in Khan Younis. Photo: OCHA/Themba Linden.

# GAZA STRIP: ACCESS CONSTRAINTS ON HUMANITARIAN AID

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