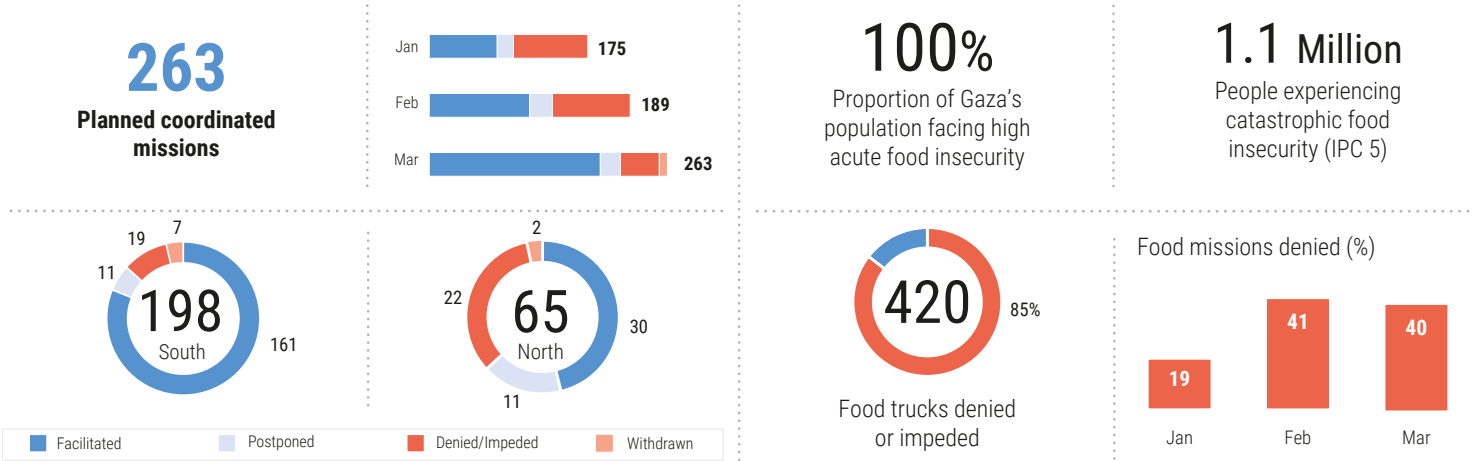


HUMANITARIAN SITUATION: KEY FIGURES



OVERVIEW An Unprecedented Humanitarian Crisis

The population in the Gaza Strip continues to face an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, characterized by intense hostilities and escalating humanitarian access constraints that have severely impeded the delivery of life saving humanitarian assistance and services. While humanitarian organizations continue efforts to scale up response operations, intense aerial bombardment in densely populated urban areas, large-scale military ground operations, unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination, prevailing insecurity, the closure of key border crossings, movement restrictions, infrastructure damage and persistent access restrictions and denials by Israeli authorities have generated a volatile, insecure, and non-permissive operational environment. These obstacles are hindering the ability of humanitarian actors to address the essential needs of Gaza's population.

Famine is imminent in Gaza as 1.1 million people—half of Gaza's population—are facing conditions of catastrophic food insecurity due to the intense conflict and severe limitations on humanitarian access. Urgent action is required from Israeli authorities and all parties to the conflict to facilitate safe, unimpeded access for humanitarian organizations to respond to the urgent needs of Gaza's population.

Persistent Access Restrictions and Denials Undermine Humanitarian Response

In March, an array of access restrictions and denials imposed by Israeli authorities continue to obstruct and limit humanitarian operations throughout Gaza. Israeli authorities have authorized the use of only one primary border crossings preventing humanitarian assistance or commercial goods from entering directly into northern Gaza, where levels of catastrophic food insecurity and humanitarian needs are most acute. In addition, lengthy inspection processes, fuel shortages resulting from Israeli restrictions, and restrictions on the movement of trucks, convoys, and vetted drivers create significant delays, while congestion at the Kerem Shalom crossing present a major operational bottleneck.

Moreover, the Israeli authorities' designation of the Al Rasheed Coastal Road as the primary route for humanitarian movement between Gaza's southern and northern areas has caused significant delays. The majority of humanitarian convoys travelling northward must navigate high security risk areas and a single Israeli checkpoint on the Salah Ad Din Road, leading to increased road congestion, substantial delays and exacerbated logistical constraints. Access to medical facilities was particularly constrained. In the last week of March, all four planned medical missions to Al Shifa hospital were either denied or impeded.

Israeli authorities continue impose constraints limiting humanitarian actors' use of the central Salah Al Deen Road, which could potentially offer a more efficient and potentially more secure option, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of aid distributions. Humanitarian agencies continue to seek authorizations to alternative crossings in the north and routes, such as the Fence Road on Gaza's western border where only five convoys were facilitated out of the 16 coordinated missions planned (three of these were postponed by the organization due to operational constraints).

Prevailing movement restrictions and shortage of approved trucks and drivers continue to result in considerable delays, particularly limiting the quantity and frequency of humanitarian food convoys and distributions. In addition, in late March, Israeli authorities announced

Humanitarian Notification System (HNS)

The Humanitarian Notification System is designed to inform all parties to the conflict about the location of humanitarian compounds and the movements of humanitarian entities with a view towards avoiding collateral harm or damages and enhancing the safety and security of humanitarian sites, operations, and personnel.

In Gaza, depending on the level of assessed risk, there are – at present – two different types of humanitarian movement procedures:

Notification: movements to areas considered less sensitive.

Coordination: movements to areas with increased risks.

Humanitarian notification does not change the IHL obligations of the parties to the conflict, but rather supports their ability to meet those obligations by better informing them of humanitarian presence. Furthermore, the provision of location information by humanitarian partners using the HNS is strictly voluntary.

that one of the three partners delivering food in Gaza would no longer be allowed in northern Gaza, where more than 300,000 people face catastrophic food security conditions. Amid imminent famine and severe levels of acute food insecurity, food distributions in Gaza continue to encounter persistent challenges in mission coordination and encounter high proportion of mission denials, postponements, or impediments.

In March, in areas requiring coordination with IDF, that only 26 per cent of requested humanitarian food missions were facilitated by Israeli authorities. The remaining convoys were denied by Israeli authorities (40 per cent), postponed (20 per cent), impeded (11 per cent), or withdrawn (3 per cent) due to prevailing restrictions, security concerns, or operational constraints.

Intense Hostilities and Widespread Insecurity Severely Impede Humanitarian Operations, Endanger Civilians and Aid Workers

Intense hostilities in Gaza and widespread insecurity continue to undermine humanitarian access by threatening the safety of humanitarian personnel delivering assistance and restricting the ability of civilians to access essential services. Insecurity throughout Gaza has been further exacerbated by attacks directly affecting humanitarian and medical facilities.

More than 190 aid workers have been killed in Gaza between 7 October 2023 and 31 March 2024, including at least seven aid workers during the month of March. This total includes the highest number of UN personnel killed in a conflict in the history of the organization. In addition, Israeli military operations and airstrikes have repeatedly affected medical facilities throughout Gaza and humanitarian facilities – including an aerial strike on a humanitarian food distribution center on 13 March in Rafah – resulting in casualties of medical staff, humanitarian personnel, and civilians, despite ongoing humanitarian notification and coordination mechanisms with Israeli authorities.

Months of intense armed conflict have also resulted in a general breakdown of law and order within Gaza, generating additional security and protection risks for civilians and humanitarian organizations. In March, heightened violence affecting humanitarian convoys caused disruptions in aid distributions, as crowds in dire need of essential supplies sought resources for their survival. While previous disruptions were mainly centered around the Wadi Gaza Israeli checkpoint in northern Gaza, new issues arose in southern Gaza during March, including increased incidents of theft, disorganized gathering points, and violence affecting humanitarian personnel and assets.

While humanitarian actors are attempting to introduce temporary and alternative aid entry routes into Gaza, including airdrops and maritime



transport routes, these cannot replace the utilization of land crossings and routes within Gaza, which are essential for implementing humanitarian operations at scale.

Physical Access Constraints and Infrastructure Damage Obstruct Humanitarian Operations

Heavy damage and destruction of roads caused by ongoing hostilities in Gaza continues to present physical access barriers and restrict humanitarian movements within Gaza. The remaining operational routes are often impassable and heavily congested due to significant infrastructural damage, heavy debris, and UXO contamination. As a result, the ability of humanitarian organizations to effectively deliver life-saving assistance to those in need remains compromised. Efforts to repair damaged roads and secure safe passage for humanitarian convoys are essential to addressing these challenges and ensuring that aid reaches those who need it most.

KEY EVENTS

