



This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners.

Highlights

- Although the winter storm, characterized by heavy rains, strong winds, low temperatures and snowfall has passed, communities throughout the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) continue to experience its impact.
- The storm and its aftermath is exacerbating the already poor humanitarian situation of large segments of the Palestinian population, particularly in the Gaza Strip, which was already dealing with an acute fuel and energy crisis. Fuel entered Gaza on 15 December, allowing the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) to resume limited operations for the first time since 1 November, but power outages of 12 hours per day are taking place.
- Heavy flooding across the Gaza Strip resulted in the displacement of approximately 6,000 people to temporary shelters and relatives' homes at the height of the storm. Most of the displaced families have left schools and community centres; however, approximately, 1,000 were still taking shelter in three schools as of 15 December. The situation in most flooded areas has improved except for Gaza city.
- In Gaza, plant production has been severely affected, particularly greenhouses and open fields. It is feared that the entire cash crop season has been lost. Significant damages also affected the livestock sector with an estimated 20,250 chickens reported to have perished from the storm.
- Palestinian herding communities located across Area C of the West Bank sustained significant damage to already precarious shelters, alongside extensive losses of livestock. However, the impact cannot be fully assessed due to a continuing lack of access to many areas. Most schools in the West Bank remain closed.

1,000 people Still sheltering in schools in the Gaza Strip	Thousands of homes Damaged and families affected across the West Bank	12 hour power cuts Despite the Gaza Power Plant resuming operation	20,000 chickens Died in the Gaza Strip as a result of the weather	56,000 m² of animal sheds Destroyed or damaged in the West Bank
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Situation Overview

A winter storm, among the strongest recorded in recent decades, struck the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and Israel on 11 December. It was characterized by strong winds, heavy rains, low temperatures and, in some areas, heavy snowfall. It is estimated that between 8 and 13 December, the Gaza Strip received about 75 per cent of its normal winter rainfall.

The storm exacerbated the already poor humanitarian situation for large segments of the population, particularly those living in the Gaza Strip and in herding communities in Area C of the West Bank. Although abating on 15 December, the adverse impact continues with more flooding possible as the snow melts.

In the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian situation has deteriorated in recent months due to an acute fuel and energy crisis, and the long standing restrictions on the movement of people and goods. The shutdown of the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) on 1 November triggered increased power outages, from 12 to 16 hours a day, and the situation worsened due to damage sustained by electricity feeder lines from Egypt and Israel on 12 December, which were subsequently repaired.

The power situation has now improved following an agreement between the Palestinian Authority and Qatar to purchase industrial fuel to cover limited operations of the GPP for one month. Around 1.2 million litres of fuel, including 475,000 litres of donated industrial fuel and around 250 tons of cooking entered on Sunday 15 December, allowing the GPP to resume limited operations for the first time in 46 days. However, the Gaza electricity company estimates that rolling power outages will still occur at 12 hours per day, particularly given that current power demand remains at peak levels,

In addition to causing flooding, the storm badly impacted Gaza's already overstretched water and sewage infrastructure with several water storm lagoons and pumping stations across Gaza city overflowing, causing additional extensive flooding. The situation in most flooded areas has improved except for Gaza city, in part due to mobile pumps, which were transferred from Israel on 13 November.

Approximately 10,000 people were displaced to temporary shelters and relatives' homes at the height of the storm. Around, 1,000 were still seeking shelter in three schools as of 15 December. Most schools are now operating normally as of 16 December,

In Gaza, plant production has been most affected, particularly greenhouses, open fields and fruit orchards. It is feared that the entire cash crop season has been lost. Significant damages were also suffered by the livestock sector with an estimated 20,250 chickens reported perished from the storm. Food insecurity remains high in Gaza (57 per cent) and thus the impact on food prices and access to food for vulnerable people will need to be closely monitored in the coming days.

On 13 December, the Erez Crossing with Israel was flooded and suffered structural damage, and only partially opened on 17 December. Medical evacuations to hospitals in the West Bank and Israel are being temporarily carried out through Kerem Shalom Crossing, normally used for goods. The Israeli authorities have also announced an extension of the operating hours of the crossing to 12 hours per day. Rafah Crossing with Egypt remains closed for the fourth successive day. According to local authorities in Gaza, thousands of Palestinians are stranded on both sides waiting to cross.

In the West Bank, the impact remains less evident due to a continuing lack of access to many areas. Thousands of homes and shelters in the West Bank are estimated to have sustained some damage. The governorates most affected by the snow are Nablus, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron. Other areas in the northern West Bank (Salfit, in particular) have been affected by heavy rainfall, which has caused flooding and damage to homes. Major roads remain closed and poor conditions are affecting food distributions to Bedouins and herders in Area C. UNRWA continues to monitor and respond to needs arising in all 19 refugee camps, many of which remain without adequate power. Most schools in the West Bank remain closed.

The lack of adequate planning and inability to obtain building permits has contributed to the precarious nature of housing and animal shelters in many herder communities in Area C of the West Bank, compounding the impact of the extreme weather; several herding communities had their structures demolished one day before the storm struck, prompting the UN Humanitarian Coordinator to call again for a halt to demolitions due to their humanitarian impact. This population has been also affected by significant livestock losses due to the storm and it is anticipated that further losses will occur due to the spreading of diseases.

Humanitarian needs and response



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs

Gaza Strip

- The situation in most flooded areas has improved except for Gaza city.
- The mobile pumps, which were transferred from Israel on 13 November, are employed in the Ash Sheikh Radwan and Az Zaitoun area of Gaza city and the sewage and storm water pumping stations in these areas are now operational.
- The Al Manara area in Gaza city, which lies in a depression, remains flooded and inaccessible by car. The removal of storm water will be handled by a combination of mobile pumps and mobile tankers and discharged at sea.

Response

- The ICRC provided 10,000 litres of fuel on 12 December to assist the CMWU in maintaining essential infrastructure, especially pumping stations. UNRWA provided an additional 54,000 litres on 12 December and 20,000 litres on 15 December.

- On 14 December, the CMWU installed four pumps in Khan Yunis to drain water from the Al-Amal pond. On 15 December, at the request of the Municipality, ACF provided two additional pumps, rented from the private sector, to assist the operation and to mitigate the effects of the flooding. Four pumps provided by the Government of Israel have been working round the clock in Rafah, Khan Yunis and Gaza city since 13 December; all the pumps were moved to Gaza city on 16 December.
- CMWU intends to redeploy one of the mobile pumps operating in the south to Gaza city to concentrate efforts in the most affected areas.
- The Wash Cluster will hold a coordination meeting on 17 December to compile ongoing and outstanding response needs and to agree on a common assessment response.



Preparing a pump to drain floodwater, in Al Manara area, Gaza, 16 December.

Gaps

- In Gaza, according to the CMWU, the four mobile pumps which were received from Israel on 13 December are facilitating the drainage of water from flooded areas. However, these pumps are rented and must be returned. There is therefore a need to procure at least five pumps as additional permanent capacity to the eight pumps that the CMWU currently operates.
- In the West Bank, the most affected areas are mainly marginalized communities in Area C and B. So far, agencies have been unable to access these areas. Assessments are expected on 17 December, given the improvement in road conditions. The main needs assessed by phone are shelter (human and animal) needs and NFIs, including heating materials (wood).



Shelter and NFIs

Needs

- Heavy flooding across the Gaza Strip resulted in the displacement of approximately 6,000 people to temporary shelters and relatives' homes at the height of the storm. In total, 21,000 people's homes were damaged, but some 15,000 did not leave their homes. Most of the displaced families have left schools and community centres; however, approximately, 1,000 were still taking shelter in five schools as of 15 December.
- Thousands of homes and shelters in the West Bank sustained damage. In the Hebron Governorate, at least 300 people have been displaced in herding and Bedouin communities.

Response

- In Gaza, up to 14 December, emergency shelter has been provided to 1,129 displaced families (5,246 individuals), who were evacuated to 10 government schools, three UNRWA schools, and three community centres, while the remaining families sought refuge with relatives.
- In Gaza, PRCS, in coordination with the ICRC, Islamic Relief-Pal, Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services, MoSA and UNRWA have distributed plastic and tarpaulin sheets, blankets, mattresses, mats, gas stoves, kitchen sets and cleaning and hygiene kits, to those displaced or affected by the flooding.
- Shelter repairs are being carried out by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and other local partners across the oPt, with NFI assistance by the ICRC and others.

Gaps

- Due to the lack of access to many areas in the West Bank, the precise scope of the damage to homes and temporary displacement of people remains unclear.



Food Security

Food Assistance

Needs

- WFP teams in the West Bank and Gaza are monitoring the situation in close collaboration with local authorities. Overall needs for assistance will become clearer in the coming days as field assessments are conducted. WFP's assistance will target all people in need, including WFP's regular beneficiaries, as well as new beneficiaries, as identified by local authorities, partners on the ground and WFP itself. WFP's planned response includes: additional emergency food assistance for an initial period of one week through ready-to-eat food or people without access to markets; food vouchers to provide approximately one week of food, pending further needs assessments; the topping up of existing vouchers if needed, or replacing damaged in-kind food.

Response

Gaza Strip

- WFP provided emergency food assistance consisting of 5,274 bread parcels and 7,940 cans of tuna to a total of 1,550 displaced families, around 10,000 people, who have been evacuated to temporary shelters. Regular general food distributions in Gaza restarted on 15 December, after a temporary halt due to the storm.
- The WFP voucher programme in Gaza is fully operational.
- UNRWA regular distributions to more than 800,000 beneficiaries are still ongoing. No exceptional food distributions will be undertaken by UNRWA in Gaza as the priority is NFIs.

West Bank

- Between 11-15 December, WFP provided emergency food assistance to 181 families, a total of 1,000 people, consisting of wheat flour, pulses, sugar, vegetable oil and salt.
- Between 11-15 December, WFP provided additional vouchers with a value of \$17 USD per family per week to a total of 40 families, about 255 people. Beneficiaries can redeem 15 different types of food products from local shops.
- Regular general food distributions in the West Bank were disrupted between 12 and 15 December due to the storm. On 16 December, regular general food distributions resumed in the governorates of Tulkarm, Tubas, Jenin and Nablus. Distributions in the remaining governorates are expected to resume in the coming days.
- WFP's planned distribution cycle to Bedouins and herders in Area C will start on 22 December, instead of 17 December, due to poor road conditions.
- UNRWA continues to monitor and respond to needs arising in all 19 refugee camps, many of which remain without adequate power.

Gaps

- In Gaza WFP will conduct field visits to shelters in the coming days to evaluate the food security situation and the need for food assistance.
- There is no information currently on food assistance gaps in the West Bank. Major roads were closed and poor conditions are affecting food distributions to Bedouins and herders in Area C. WFP is responding to all the requests coming from the Governor Offices, local authorities and OCHA. Food Security Sector members will have a better understanding of possible gaps in the coming days.

Agriculture

Needs

Gaza Strip

- As FAO and partners reach more communities, the estimation of damage is increasing. So far, plant production is the most affected; 1 935 dunum of greenhouses, 7 250 open fields and 70 dunums of fruit orchards in Gaza sustained partial or complete damage according to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in Gaza. It is anticipated that the entire cash crop season has been lost.
- Significant damages were also suffered by the livestock sector with an estimated 20,250 chickens reported killed because of the storm.
- The Ministry of Agriculture has announced that the storm caused damage amounting to USD 7.7 million, including USD 5.6 in agriculture damages and USD 1.7 in livestock-related damages (including USD 80,000 to fisheries).

West Bank

- According to the MoA, 55,760m² of animal sheds were totally, or partially, damaged mainly in the southern West Bank.
- The Union of Agriculture Work Committees (UAWC) has issued an urgent appeal based on fieldwork, estimating that the damage in the agriculture sector in the West Bank is approximately USD 8 million.

Response

NTR

Gaps

- Due to difficulty in access, no emergency response to date has been provided to farmers and herders. Assistance is expected to reach affected areas during the coming week. Food Security members active in agriculture are looking at two emergency responses;
 - the provision of emergency support to herders in the coming days, to reduce the fatality rate among animals and newborns both in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
 - rehabilitation of greenhouses in Gaza.
- In Gaza, an analysis of the economic impact of the storm needs to be urgently provided.
- In the West Bank, emergency intervention is particularly needed to herders who experienced severe damages to their animal shelters. The risk of increased animal fatality and the spread of disease are more likely as time passes. The risk of small lamb fatality is particularly high as the lambing season approaches.
- A meeting will take place with MoA and NGO partners on Tuesday 17 September to review identified needs, discuss response strategy and prioritization as well as the funding situation to cover needs of the livestock subsector



Protection

Needs

- Most needs relate to the provision of various types of NFIs.

- In child protection, the two needs identified so far is the provision of NFIs to distressed families, including warm clothes for children in temporary shelters, and responding to the psychosocial distress of children.

Response

- UNFPA, working with the Culture and Free Thought Association/WISAL Coalition to Combat GBV and the PRCS/Jabaliya Women's Health Centre, have distributed pre-deployed hygiene/dignity kits designed for special women's needs to a variety of displaced and marginalized families throughout the Gaza Strip.
- PRCS/Jabaliya Women's Health Centre provided a psychosocial support session for 10 women and 15 children in the shelter in Gaza.
- The Palestinian Centre for Dispute and Conflict Resolution, PCDCR conducted a rapid assessment of children's needs in shelters and damaged areas throughout Gaza and identified needs for NFIs; food and water; medicine; and psychosocial support.
- Child protection partners are supporting the response by distributing NFIs to the most affected communities in Gaza and the West Bank. The PRCS has provided NFIs to 3,600 families in Gaza and the West Bank.
- Partners are also providing psychosocial support. In the West Bank, the YMCA Emergency Psychosocial Support Teams have been responding to calls for assistance since 12 December. However, the number of families and children reached to date is not known due to continuing power shortages.

Gaps

- In the West Bank, ACTED is trying to coordinate a response (including the delivery of food and non-food items) to Nabi Samuel, which has been without power and water for two-three days. ACTED-FAO attempted to make an assessment on 15 December but the road to the community is still inaccessible due to snow.



Health

Needs

- Two deaths and 108 injuries, including five critical cases, have been admitted to the emergency rooms of Gaza Strip hospitals. More than 70 per cent of the cases have been reported in Khan Yunis and Rafah. Most of the cases were due to inhalation of CO2 gas from using fire for heat.
- Damage to the roads leading to some hospitals in Gaza, has added an extra burden on patients and ambulances trying to access them.
- The long hours of electricity cuts forced hospitals to use standby electric generators for long periods, thus causing frequent disruption to the power supply. Health workers at the ICUs and Operation Theatres have had to use manual ventilation for patients on mechanical ventilation.
- In the West Bank, a girl died after failing to access the kidney dialysis unit in Bethlehem. An ambulance tried to reach her for two days but was unable to because of the snow.



An ambulance of the Union of Health Work Committees from Halhul, Hebron district, providing medical services during the storm

Response and Gaps

NTR



Education

Needs

- In Gaza, most schools are now operating normally as of 16 December.
- In Gaza, five schools (4 MoEHE and 1 UNRWA) are still operating as shelters, down from 17 previously.
- Four schools in Gaza still affected by flooding with students attending alternative schools.
- Minor damages to other schools in Gaza reported.
- In the West Bank, schools remain closed on 16 and possibly 17 December. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education also remains closed due to the difficult weather conditions.

Response

- School bags, stationary, recreational kits and uniforms are being distributed to most affected children in Gaza.
- In Gaza, the education cluster is liaising with the WASH actors to remove water from flooded schools.
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Gaps

- Assessments of school damage are being conducted in Gaza and further response may be needed
- The situation in the West Bank is still unclear and the response needs will be determined by assessment results the coming days.

Coordination

In the Gaza Strip key UN and governmental organizations have been involved in monitoring the situation and coordinating responses: UNRWA has set up an operations room; the CMWU is following on up on WASH needs and requirements, in coordination with the WASH cluster and the ICRC, including with Israel, and with the support of UNSCO; the MoSA is coordinating the needs assessments and distribution of food and NFIs, with various actors in the food security sector and in coordination with the Shelter/NFI cluster. OCHA has been liaising with all the above bodies to facilitate their efforts.

The overall response coordination in the West Bank has been led by the various Governorate offices, along with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and the Palestinian Civil Defense. Cluster and sector leads have been working closely with their counterparts in key ministries and field coordination has been ongoing between the national and international partners, with the support of OCHA, to optimize existing capacities and avoid overlaps.

OCHA has also established an inter-agency online database, to track needs and response at the community level. Clusters coordinators and governmental counterparts are feeding information into this system.

The Humanitarian Country Team held an extraordinary meeting on 14 December, led by the Humanitarian Coordinator, James Rawley, focusing on the assessment and response to the extreme weather. The Inter-Cluster Coordination Group held an ad hoc meeting to coordinate assessments for Gaza on 15 December.

Funding

Ongoing needs assessments by various humanitarian actors, aimed at identifying the scope of interventions and funding required to address the impacts of the storm, will continue during the coming days.

Ongoing needs assessments by various humanitarian actors, aimed at identifying the scope of interventions and funding required to address the impacts of the storm, will continue during the coming days. The 2013 Consolidated Appeal (CAP) is 63 per cent funded. However, funding has been uneven across Sectors and Clusters. Key sectors for the current response, such as WASH and Agriculture have received low funding, with only 31 and 42 per cent of

requested funds met, respectively. Protection Cluster projects received 63 percent funding; however, of these, none of the nine shelter-related projects received full funding, and four received zero funding.

In response to the storm, OCHA is encouraging partners to apply to the Emergency Response Fund (ERF), which provides rapid funding to NGOs and UN agencies to support humanitarian activities in emergencies. The ERF has already received a proposal from MA'AN Development Centre to mitigate the risk of extreme weather in Area C of West Bank..

Various Islamic countries and charities have pledged assistance to Gaza, most notably a USD 32 million package by Qatar to operate the GPP.

