

HIGHLIGHTS

- No further hostilities have been reported in Gaza since the ceasefire on 21 May: 8,500 internally displaced people still remain with host families.
- Although repairs are ongoing, damage to basic infrastructure and utilities is still affecting the provision of electricity, piped water and essential services.
- Clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces have continued across the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, resulting in two Palestinian fatalities since 21 May.
- Today, the Humanitarian Coordinator launched an emergency response plan, requesting US\$ 95 million to address the needs of 1.1 million Palestinians over the coming three months.
- In his briefing to the Security Council today, the UN Special Coordinator, Tor Wennesland, reiterated that “only through negotiations that end the occupation and create a viable two-State solution, on the basis of UN resolutions, international law and mutual agreements, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, can we hope to bring a definitive end to these senseless and costly cycles of violence.”

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Gaza Strip

No armed incident has been reported since the ceasefire entered into effect on 21 May, bringing to an end the hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza that began on 10 May. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), up to 27 May, 256 Palestinians, including 66 children and 40 women were killed, of whom 128 were believed to be civilians. Around 245, including 63 children, were seemingly killed by Israeli Defense Forces.

Almost 2,000 Palestinians were injured during the hostilities, including over 600 children and 400 women, some of whom sustained severe injury and may suffer from a long-term disability requiring rehabilitation.

At the height of the escalation, 113,000 displaced people sought shelter and protection at UNRWA schools and hosting communities. This has decreased to around 8,500 people, primarily those whose houses were destroyed or so damaged as to be uninhabitable. According to local authorities, over 2,000 housing units were totally destroyed or severely damaged.



*Destruction in Gaza following Israeli strike May 2021
©Photo by Mohammad Lubbad*

An estimated 15,000 housing units sustained some degree of damage, as did multiple water and sanitation facilities and infrastructure, 58 education facilities, nine hospitals and 19 primary healthcare centres. The damage to infrastructure has exacerbated Gaza's chronic infrastructure and power deficits, resulting in a decrease of clean water and sewage treatment, and daily power cuts of 18-20 hours, affecting hundreds of thousands. Municipal work teams and utility providers continue to re-open roads, remove rubble, and repair water, sewage, and electricity networks. However, the lack of spare parts and other essential equipment, the extent and severity of the damage and the fear of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) are slowing recovery.

AFFECTED SERVICES & HOUSING



Of particular concern are the nearly 600,000 school-age children whose education was suspended during the hostilities, having already been repeatedly interrupted due to COVID-19 public safety restrictions. Gaza's health system, already overwhelmed by chronic drug shortages, inadequate equipment and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, is now struggling to meet the needs of those injured during the hostilities.

The Israeli-controlled Erez Crossing remains closed for most Palestinians in Gaza, with the exception of urgent medical referrals. The Kerem Shalom Crossing for goods remains open for specific basic commodities, including fodder and medical supplies. The Egyptian-controlled Rafah and Salah al Din crossings are functioning as normal. On 25 May, Israeli authorities allowed fishing off the Gaza coast to resume, but only to six nautical miles, affecting over 50,000 people involved in the fishing sector.

West Bank, including East Jerusalem

The hostilities in Gaza were accompanied by significant unrest in East Jerusalem and the wider West Bank. Since 21 May, two Palestinians were killed, include a 25-year-old man from Al Amari Refugee Camp in Ramallah, reportedly shot during a raid by members of an undercover Israeli unit on 25 May, and a 17-year-old boy shot and killed by Israeli forces on 24 May after he allegedly stabbed and injured two Israelis at a light rail station in East Jerusalem. This brings the total number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, to 29.

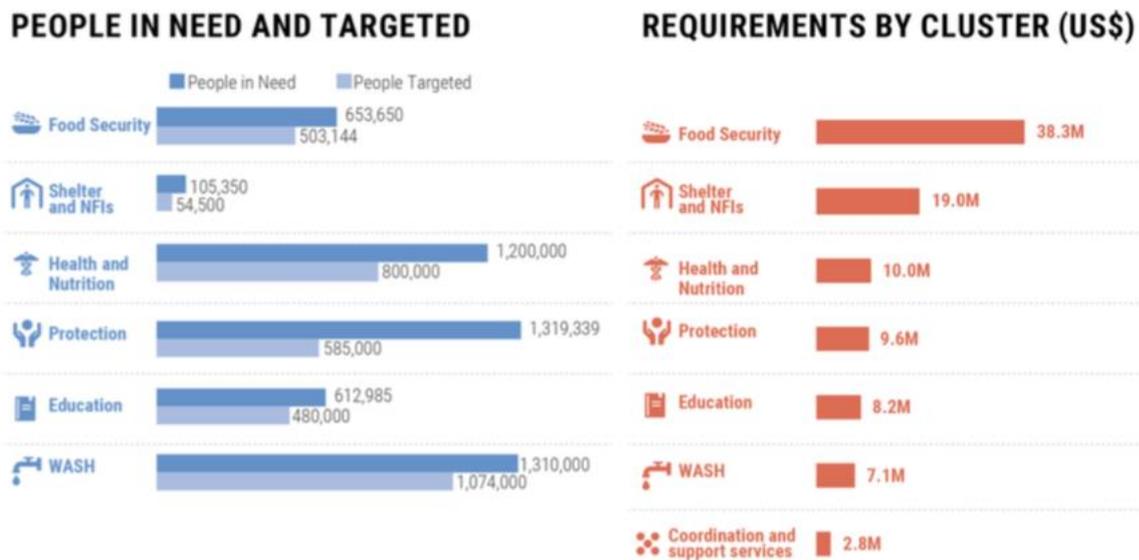
Longstanding tensions in East Jerusalem continue, with the ongoing forced eviction of Palestinians still pending in Sheikh Jarrah and other neighbourhoods. On 26 May, the Jerusalem District Court postponed a pre-scheduled hearing on the planned forced eviction of six Palestinian households, comprising 33 people, including 19 children, from Batn al Hawa quarter in Silwan. Palestinian, Israeli and foreign activists gathered in front of the court to protest in solidarity with the families in Silwan, after which Israeli forces blocked off the surrounding areas with metal fences, physically assaulted several people and injured and arrested one Palestinian boy.

There has been a significant increase in search-and-arrest operations and night raids by Israeli forces across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Nablus, Jenin, Hebron, and Bethlehem. Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians and their property are also increasing, especially in the H2 area of Hebron, where 22 attacks were recorded during the first three weeks of May, compared with 12 for the entire month of April.

Funding

Today, 27 May, the Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt, Lynn Hastings, launched the inter-agency Flash appeal, requesting \$95 million to support emergency humanitarian and early recovery responses over the next three months. Earlier this week, the Humanitarian Coordinator announced the release of \$18 million from the oPt Humanitarian Fund, and the Emergency Relief Coordinator in New York released another \$4.5 to restore people's access to basic services, such as healthcare and water.

The response plan envisages a swift transition to an early recovery phase, including the rehabilitation and reconstruction of infrastructure services and networks, and then to a medium- and long-term reconstruction and recovery framework. The plan complements the \$417 million appealed for in the 2021 oPt Humanitarian Response Plan, covering pre-existing humanitarian needs.



COVID-19

The escalation occurred as the oPt was still dealing with an upsurge in COVID-19 cases, particularly in Gaza, where the number of active cases increasing by almost 60 per cent in April. Follow-up on COVID-19 prevention measures, as well as testing and vaccination, was severely disrupted during the conflict. The central testing laboratory in Gaza City sustained damage during an Israeli airstrike on 17 May, suspending all COVID-19 PCR testing for three days, while the only vaccination centre in northern Gaza also sustained severe damage and is still not functioning.

As of 26 May, the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in Gaza has reached 107,845. Some 2,358 active cases were reported, which were isolated either at home or at hospitals designated for COVID-19 treatment by the local authorities.

On 25 May, 120,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine arrived through the COVAX mechanism, with 45,000 earmarked for Gaza. In the West Bank, the national vaccination campaign is ongoing, prioritizing teachers. The main COVID-19 hospital in Hebron Governorate is no longer operating due to the low number of cases, and will start operating as a general hospital, while maintaining a dedicated ward for COVID-19 patients.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE & ONGOING NEEDS

Protection

Priority needs

- Cluster partners have recorded a devastating mental health impact on children and families, due to the hostilities, with several individuals at risk of developing mental health disorders. An alarming number of children who display physical and psychological signs of severe distress, is being reported. A mass scale-up of all Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services for children, adults and service providers is required, such as: psychological first aid; structured psychosocial support; suicide prevention; case management; the national helpline; recreational and specialized support for children; and clinical mental health services, including a blend of remote and face-to-face methods.
- There is an urgent need for life saving mine action interventions, including Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) removal risk assessments at sites in Gaza, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and clearance, as well as risk education.
- Specialized responses are needed for internally displaced persons (IDPs) with disabilities and those injured, such as assistance devices, rehabilitation services and Non-Food Items (NFIs).
- Assistance is needed for women and girls who remain internally displaced and exposed to increasing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) risks. Most GBV office-based and in-person services, such as legal aid, GBV case management and PSS have been suspended, and both GBV shelters in Gaza have been closed with GBV survivors sent home, leaving them exposed to a double protection threat.
- In the West Bank, there is a growing need for legal aid, as the frequency of suspected human rights violations related to arrests and detentions, settler violence, excessive use of force and access restrictions increases.

Responses already implemented

- EOD risk assessments and clearance has begun, while delivery of ERW risk messaging to vulnerable population, particularly IDPs, have been provided through online platforms and social media. So far, cluster partners have carried out 16 risk assessments, which required the removal of one Unexploded Explosive Ordnance (UXO) and the closure of one school. EOD Police in Gaza have removed 295 items of ERW/UXO in the past 48 hours, despite their facilities being destroyed. Eight additional deep buried bombs have been identified. UNMAS has launched an explosive ordnance risk education campaign, with safety messages being sent to some 500,000 people in Gaza, radio messages with a reach of 1.2 million, while thousands were reached through social media. In addition, UNMAS has targeted the designated emergency shelters (DES) with safety messages for IDPs returning home.
- Remote GBV services have been scaled up, including MHPSS, both remotely and through existing GBV service delivery points. Messages on protection, GBV, Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and MHPSS services via social media and partner networks have been disseminated.
- Cluster partners have provided legal assistance and case-specific counselling to IDPs in relation to housing, land and property (HLP) rights as well as representation of people injured and in need of exit authorization. This includes sending civil notifications to the Israeli Ministry of Defense (within the first 60 days) to secure victims the right to access legal remedies within two years of the incidents in question, as per Israeli law.
- Technical support has been provided for humanitarian partners on disability inclusion, specialized responses for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) directly affected, and support for inclusive messaging and awareness raising materials. Physical rehabilitation sessions have been provided to injured people and IDPs, together with distribution of assistive and other specialized devices.

- In the West Bank, the monitoring and documentation of suspected violations continues, in addition to the provision of legal aid for arrested children and Human Rights Defenders (HRD), as well as child protection services and MHPSS for school children.
- Partners have released several advocacy products based on the monitoring and documentation of human rights and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) violations, both in Gaza and West Bank.

Key constraints/ gaps

- Movement and access restrictions remain a major challenge. Ongoing ERW safety risks and hazards, and movement restrictions at the Israeli-controlled Erez crossing are affecting injured people referred for urgent medical treatment outside of Gaza.
- Infrastructure damage and service and power outages remain a major challenge. Recurrent electricity cuts and internet disconnection across Gaza is impacting outreach and remote service modalities. All governmental institutions remain closed, including the safe shelter facility, the Al Rabei juvenile centre, and the women's detention facility.
- Mine action remains a major challenge. UNMAS is operating at a limited capacity and is rapidly surging to deliver risk assessments, clearance liaison, and preparations for Deep Buried Bomb (DBD) excavation, as well as support for future rubble removal and reconstruction projects. The EOD Police, who carry out the majority of EOD tasks in Gaza, have had their offices destroyed and are carrying on with limited personnel and inadequate equipment.

Funding

- CERF application for USD 800,000 for ERW clearance (UNMAS) and USD 1 million for the provision of mental health and psycho-social support to refugees (UNRWA) is ending approval.



Health

Priority needs

- Trauma and emergency care.
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.
- Access to essential health services.
- Stronger partner coordination and information management.

Responses already implemented

- Essential drugs, disposables and equipment procured and supplied.
- Assessments of trauma and emergency departments carried out.
- A National Health Cluster Meeting has been held.
- COVID-19 vaccines have been brought into the oPt, consisting of 10,000 doses of Sinopharm and 46,800 doses of Pfizer.
- Partners have continued to provide first aid and emergency services to those injured during clashes across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Key constraints/ gaps

- While there are limited supplies on the local Gaza market, the closed border with Israel is further hindering access to essential medical supplies, equipment and personnel.
- Continuous and long-lasting power cuts are affecting the operations of some hospitals, which now depend mainly on standby generators and have to procure fuel, increasing operational costs.
- Health workers need MHPSS, as they have had to continue providing services despite suffering traumas themselves.
- The disruption of COVID-19 response may lead to an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission across the oPt.

- In light of the ceasefire, partners are working to strengthen COVID-19 response efforts.
- The sporadic confrontations across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem are expected to continue and therefore there will be a continued need for emergency medical services.

Funding

- During the first week of the crisis, cluster partners mobilized prepositioned items and re-programmed funds to procure items within Gaza, worth around US\$ 900,000. In the last week, supplies worth about \$700,000 have been provided by partners.
- In East Jerusalem, partners have mobilized items worth around \$1 million, since the start of the civil unrest across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, to support the East Jerusalem Hospital Network and Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS).

Shelter

Priority needs

- Support access to adequate temporary shelter solutions to displaced persons through the provision of cash programmed assistance, alongside support to host families.
- Undertake urgent repair of uninhabitable homes to reduce the displacement caseload, relieve pressure on the growing need for homes and reduce risks for host and hosted families.
- Undertake selective repair for partially damaged homes and adaptation interventions for the most vulnerable groups, including female head-of-household, elderly, and PWDs.
- Provision of essential NFIs.

Responses already implemented

- Coordination with the relevant local authorities to improve current estimates of the number of housing units destroyed or damaged and IDPs.
- NFIs kits distributed to 1,292 families and NFIs and hygiene kits distributed to an additional 419 families.
- Ongoing distribution of cash assistance worth NIS 300 (\$92) to 10,000 families.
- Ongoing distribution of cash assistance worth NIS 880 (\$270) to 2,000 families.

Key constraints/ gaps

- Adequate access to construction material is still a challenge, especially due to import restrictions for goods from Israel.
- The pre-existing longstanding housing shortage of some 120,000 units in Gaza, makes rent unaffordable for displaced families.
- Those now living with families or friends are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19, due to overcrowding and the use of shared facilities.

Funding

- CERF application for USD 1.5 million (UNRWA) to support homeless refugees is pending approval.

Education

Priority needs

- Ensuring that children in Gaza can resume learning as soon as possible, either remotely or in person.
- Supporting the mental health and psychosocial well-being of students, parents and educators in Gaza, through MHPSS support.

- Ensuring that children can access safe and inclusive learning opportunities through the emergency repair of education facilities and the provision of non-formal education services.
- 59 UNRWA schools used as temporary shelter for up to 77,000 displaced people need rehabilitation before they can re-open.

Responses already implemented

- Education Cluster assessment teams have been deployed to visit all affected schools earlier this week. As of 27 May, the team has assessed 80 schools. A report is under development.

Key constraints

- The hostilities damaged 58 education facilities, in addition to at least other 50 with very minor damage. The pre-existing shortage of adequate infrastructure in Gaza, with around 65 per cent of schools operating on a double-shift system, in combination with such a damage, can induce a further reduction in hours in core subjects and foundation learning.
- Children's ability to access education, both at school and at home, is also undermined by Gaza's chronic electricity deficit, worsened due to the escalation.
- Some of the 59 UNRWA schools used as temporary shelters for up to 77,000 displaced people will also need rehabilitation before they can re-open, and two of them are still hosting IDPs.

Funding

Awaiting funding.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Priority needs

- Providing household hygiene materials for vulnerable families in the affected areas, covering the household hygiene materials needs for 14 days.
- Providing emergency fuel for WASH facilities suffering power supply shortage.
- Repair and provide required maintenance materials and tools for affected WASH infrastructure.
- Rehabilitate WASH facilities for those housing units exposed to major or minor damage during the hostilities, by providing household WASH items.
- Vacuum and discharge wastewater for households and communities suffering wastewater accumulation, due to sewer service interruption in their communities.
- Deliver trucked water for vulnerable households suffering water supply shortage, due to water service interruption in their communities.
- Provide solid waste collection and removal in communities suffering waste accumulation, due to the interruption of solid waste collection services during the hostilities.
- Provide chlorine and operation chemicals for critical WASH facilities.

Responses already implemented

- Cluster partners have allocated resources and initiated their WASH response by implementing eight different types of WASH interventions.
- A total of 5,000 hygiene kits are being distributed to the most vulnerable families across Gaza, focusing on internally displaced households and hosting families.
- A total of 50,000 litres of fuel supplies for emergency electricity generators in WASH facilities have been delivered to the relevant service providers.
- Pre-positioned WASH operation and maintenance materials have been delivered to WASH service providers to maintain their services in the affected areas.

Key constraints

- The power supply shortage in Gaza (around 5-7 hours per day) is severely affecting WASH operational capacities, subsequently reflecting on the access to water and sanitation in the service areas.
- WASH service providers in Gaza have reported decreasing response capacities as their stocks of maintenance materials are running out.
- There is limited data on WASH vulnerability regarding WASH facilities of affected households.

Funding

- Initial reports indicate that WASH Cluster partners have received pledges for \$3.3 million, half of this will come from CERF once the allocation has been approved.


Food Security
Priority needs

- Ensure the continuous opening of the Kerem Shalom crossing and ensure the entrance of animal fodder.
- Opening the sea for fishermen and expansion of the fishing zone.
- Agricultural inputs are necessary to maintain the capacity of the farmers to start the planting season.
- Continue providing food assistance to the existing food insecure people (through e-vouchers).
- Providing food assistance to those who remain displaced or return back home, but have lost their livelihood or continue to remain food insecure.
- Provision of conditional cash assistance to affected families to rebuild the productive capacities of small holders and small food factories (conditional cash for work activity).

Responses already implemented

- FAO advocated to open the border crossing, resulting in the import of some 500 tons of animal fodder entering through Kerem Shalom crossing point. This is only enough to satisfy one day of feeding.
- Cluster partners have provided cash assistance to affected households, as well as food vouchers and hot meals to displaced families.
- In the past week, WFP supported an additional 27,132 people through emergency e-voucher assistance, 27,426 people through in-kind food assistance, and 318 people still displaced at UNRWA shelters. Through emergency and regular assistance, WFP has supported almost 300,000 people in need in Gaza over the past two weeks.

Key constraints

- Farmers and breeders are still reporting fear of accessing their lands and facilities.
- Irregular irrigation of lands is leading to poor quality and quantity of production.
- Milk production has been spoiled, due to market access constraints.
- Thousands of broilers have been lost because of the hostilities.
- Power shortages have hindered farmers from irrigating their crops, and breeders from providing water for their livestock and poultry.
- The fishing market has been severely affected, as the sea was closed for a consecutive 15 days.
- WFP need an approximate \$24 million to maintain regular food support to over 435,000 vulnerable people in Gaza and the West Bank until November 2021.
- WFP urgently requires \$9.30 million to respond to increasing needs and provide emergency and recovery assistance for affected people in Gaza over the coming three months.

Funding

- FAO has secured \$610,000 to provide urgent fodder assistance to affected breeders. Another \$1 million is pending approval for the same purpose.

 **Coordination and Support Services**

Priority needs

Deliveries of life-saving humanitarian needs into Gaza including medicine and medical supplies, vaccines, food commodities, first aid kits and fire extinguishers.

Responses already implemented

The Logistics Cluster coordinated the successful delivery of six trucks carrying humanitarian assistance into Gaza: two trucks with consolidated consignments of UNICEF, WHO, MSF and Care; two trucks with Anera consignment; and two trucks with WFP food aid commodities.

Key constraints

The restrictions on the border crossings remain a major challenge.

Funding:

No funding received so far.