

Palestinians fleeing from from Al Qarara and Wadi Al Salqa areas in Khan Younis following an Israeli evacuation order on 8 August. Photo: Themba Linden/OCHA

Humanitarian Situation Update #202 | Gaza Strip

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The Humanitarian Situation Update is issued by OCHA Occupied Palestinian Territory three times per week. The Gaza Strip is covered on Mondays and Fridays, and the West Bank is covered on Wednesdays. The next update will be issued on 12 August.

Key Highlights

- Thousands of Palestinians have moved towards western Khan Younis and western Deir al Balah in the past 72 hours, the UN and aid partners report.
- At least 287 aid workers, including 205 UNRWA staff, have been killed since October 2023, according to data received by the UN and its partners.
- Water and sanitation partners are warning of flood risks, including in Al Mawasi, as they ramp up preparedness efforts ahead of the winter season; key supplies need to enter Gaza to ensure there is sufficient flood prevention and response capacity.
- Volume of aid entering Gaza has more than halved since early May, from a daily average of 169 trucks in April to less than 80 trucks in June and July.

Humanitarian Developments

- Israeli bombardment from the air, land, and sea continues to be reported across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure. Ground incursions and heavy fighting also continue to be reported. Rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups toward Israel was also reported. On the morning of 9 August, the Israeli military announced that it launched a military operation in Khan Younis.
- Between the afternoons of 5 and 8 August, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 76 Palestinians were killed and 253 were injured. Between 7 October 2023 and 8 August 2024, at least 39,699 Palestinians were killed and 91,722 were injured, according to MoH in Gaza. Casualty figures covering the period until the afternoon of 9 August are not available as of the time of reporting. The MoH documents the full identification details of casualties and has recently published the breakdown of 32,280 out of 39,480 fatalities as of 1 August for whom full details have been documented by MoH (also available on the Health Cluster's Unified Dashboard here); according to MoH, these include 10,627 children, 5,956 women, 2,770 elderly, and 12,927 men. Among the child fatalities, MoH further reported that 663 children are under one year of age, representing about six per cent of killed children whose full identification details have been documented.
- On 5 August, at least 80 bodies of unidentified Palestinians were transported from Israel into Gaza, according to the Palestinian Civil Defence (PCD) quoted in media. They report that it was unclear whether these were bodies dug up from cemeteries or whether they were detainees who had been killed. The bodies were consequently buried in a mass grave in Khan Younis. Previously on 30 January, Israeli forces had returned between 80 to 100 Palestinian bodies after they claimed they were searching for the bodies of Israeli hostages.
- On 8 August, Al Zahra and Abdelfattah Hamouda schools in eastern Gaza city were reportedly hit, resulting in the killing of 16 Palestinians among internally displaced persons (IDPs) who were reportedly sheltering at both schools, according to PCD quoted in the media. According to the Israeli military, Palestinian armed groups reportedly operated "command and control centers" at

both schools, which were "targeted in an intelligence-based IAF [Israeli Air Force] strike." Earlier on 5 August, the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) reported an unfolding pattern of Israeli forces' strikes on schools in Gaza, killing many IDPs seeking shelter. They report that over the past month, 17 schools have been struck, killing at least 163 Palestinians, including children and women. Such attacks are escalating, according to OHCHR, as at least seven schools were struck only in the eight days prior to the press statement. All seven schools were reportedly serving as shelters for IDPs, while one school was also serving as a field hospital. OHCHR further stressed: "While the collocation by armed groups of military objectives with civilians or the use of the presence of civilians with the objective of shielding a military objective from attack constitute violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) it does not negate Israel's obligation to comply strictly with International Humanitarian Law, including the principles of proportionality, distinction and precaution when carrying out military operations. Israel, as the occupying power, is also obliged to provide the evacuated populations with basic humanitarian needs, including safe shelter."

- The following are among other deadly incidents reported between 5 and 8 August:
  - On 5 August, at about 11:55, eight Palestinians were reportedly killed and others, including children, injured when a car belonging to the Gaza police force was hit while reportedly being used to distribute aid in Al Mattahen area in southeastern Deir al Balah. The Gaza Police Directorate stated that five of its officers were killed in this airstrike.

  - On 5 August, at about 16:00, seven Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when the vicinity of the secondary school in eastern Al Bureij Refugee Camp was hit, in northern Deir al Balah.

  - On 6 August, at about 17:40 hours, four family members, including a journalist and a woman, were reportedly killed and others injured when a tent was hit in the vicinity of Abu Nuweira School in Abu An Nater junction area in Bani Suheila, in eastern Khan Younis. According to the Government Media Office (GMO), the killing of this journalist has increased the number of journalists killed since 7 October to 166 journalists and media workers.

  - On 7 August, at about 14:45, five Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when an IDP camp was reportedly hit, and a fire broke out, in Ash Shahaydeh area in Abasan Al Kabira east of Khan Younis. The bodies of the killed were reportedly charred by the fire.

  - On 8 August, five Palestinians were reportedly killed and ten others injured when a residential building was hit on As Sahaba Street in Gaza city.

  - On 8 August, at least 15 Palestinians, including three girls, one baby girl and at least two women, were reportedly killed and several others, including children, were injured when a residential square was hit, in the vicinity of Al Butran roundabout in Al Bureij Refugee Camp, in Deir al Balah.

- Between the afternoons of 5 and 9 August, no Israeli soldiers were reported killed in Gaza, according to the Israeli military. Between 7 October 2023 and 9 August 2024, according to the Israeli military and official Israeli sources cited in the media, over 1,529 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed, the majority on 7 October and its immediate aftermath and including 329 soldiers killed in Gaza or along the border in Israel since the beginning of the ground operation. In addition, 2,199 Israeli soldiers were reported injured since the beginning of the ground operation. As of 9 August, it is estimated that 115 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including hostages who have been declared dead.

- On 7 and 8 August, the Israeli military issued three new evacuation orders affecting 42.6 square kilometres in northern and southern Gaza, most of which were previously placed under evacuation notices. The first order, issued on 7 August, ordered people, including IDPs, present in the areas of Beit Hanoun, Al Manshiya and Ash Sheikh Zayed in North Gaza to immediately evacuate to known shelters in Gaza city. On the same day, the Israeli military ordered residents of the same area to immediately evacuate to Deir al Balah and Az Zawayda, announcing that Salah ad Din Road is a safe and fast route for their movement. On 8 August, the Israeli military ordered residents of central and eastern Khan Younis to immediately move to the so-called "humanitarian area," which was unilaterally declared by Israeli forces as a "safe zone" and has changed in size over the course of hostilities and now spans about 47 square kilometres, or some 13 per cent of the Gaza Strip. Initial mapping indicates that the areas recently placed under evacuation encompass about 230 IDP sites, 91 WASH facilities, 67 educational facilities, and five functional health facilities including the Indonesian Hospital. Thousands of Palestinians have moved towards western Khan Younis and western Deir al Balah in the past 72 hours, the UN and aid partners report.

- Humanitarian aid workers operating in the Gaza Strip continue to face enormous risks as they continue to deliver life-saving aid in an unsafe and insecure environment, and many have been killed with their families. On 7 August, one of the staff members of the World Central Kitchen and a father of four was killed by an Israeli airstrike near Deir al Balah, the organization reported. According to data received by the UN and its partners, at least 287 aid workers, including 205 UNRWA staff, have been killed since October 2023. Echoing the call the by the UN Secretary-General for "full accountability for each and every one of these deaths," UNRWA Commissioner-General, Philippe Lazzarini, stated that the number of UNRWA staff killed is "by far the largest loss of personnel killed in a single conflict or natural disaster since the creation of the United Nations," adding that "these are not numbers…[they] are teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, support staff, technicians who spent their life supporting the community. Many were killed with their families, others were in the line of duty." Similarly emphasizing the enormous risks facing humanitarian staff operating in the Gaza Strip, the regional chief of the World Food Programme (WFP), Corinne Fleischer, stated on 8 August: "Operations are super-complicated. We work in a war zone. Roads are destroyed. We are waiting hours at checkpoints for green lights to move….[and] the risks are high. Very high. We have bullets close to our convoys. We're there repairing roads. We're there moving with our trucks. We're there reaching people. And it's very dangerous."

- Health workers in Gaza have been operating under extremely adverse conditions that challenge their ability to respond effectively, which in turn places the lives of critically ill and injured patients at greater risk. According to the Health Cluster, the still functional

health facilities are operating beyond capacity while facing numerous mass casualty incidents as well as a continuous surge in communicable diseases due to overcrowding, poor living conditions, and a lack of access to clean water, hygiene kits and sanitation facilities. There are also critical shortages of hospital beds and medications, constrained access to spare parts and fuel to operate generators, and attacks on health care facilities. Marking 300 days of war, the Health Cluster led by the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that it has documented 492 attacks on health care in the Gaza Strip and that currently 56 per cent of hospitals (20 out of 36) and 58 per cent of primary health care centres (73 out of 126) are non-functional. Furthermore, according to the Gaza MoH, as of 1 August, more than 885 health workers in Gaza have been killed and at least 310 have been arrested since October 2023. This death toll comprises about 3.5 per cent of the health workforce in Gaza prior to the war, which according to the MoH 2022 annual report stood at about 25,000 health workers.

- Describing the immense strain on Gaza's health system and the challenges facing health workers as a nightmare, Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) stated that many "medical workers have continued to work without being paid, eating properly, seeing their families, having a home to go to, or having enough water to drink or wash in." In a testimony provided to MAP UK, an intensive care unit doctor at Al Aqsa Hospital said: "The huge volume of patients coming in and the severity of the injuries are unbelievable and beyond our ability to treat. Simple cases pass away in your arms because there is no space or no basic medical supplies."

- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) Cluster partners are ramping up preparedness actions for the winter season, with a particular focus on flood risks, amid severe shortages of essential WASH supplies and widespread damage to WASH infrastructure, including the stormwater drainage system. Already before the war, approximately 180 locations across Gaza were identified as being at high-risk of flooding and the stormwater drainage network was deemed inadequate. The situation is estimated to have significantly deteriorated due to extensive damage to wastewater networks, storm drainage and canals, combined with blockages caused by debris and rubbish. In heavily affected areas such as Khan Younis, where over 80 per cent of infrastructure has been assessed as compromised, there is already significant clogging and flooding, and raw sewage is accumulating in streets and at IDP sites, particularly in areas where there is a high concentration of people such as Al Mawasi. During the rainy season, this deterioration poses a dual threat of increased flooding and water source contamination, which could lead to serious public health risks, the WASH Cluster warned. As part of preparedness efforts in coordination with key WASH partners, the Cluster said it is currently compiling a prioritized list of necessary supplies that need to urgently enter Gaza to ensure there is sufficient operational capacity for flood prevention and response, including to mitigate the impact of potential floods on hundreds of thousands of people, particularly IDPs living in low-lying areas in tents and makeshift shelters. These supplies include personal protective equipment (PPE), mobile pumps, jetting and vacuum trucks and hoses.

- Entry of aid supplies into Gaza remains challenging due to access constraints and high levels of insecurity. On 6 August, citing security concerns, the Israeli authorities closed the Kerem Shalom Crossing, halting five planned humanitarian missions, including a rotation of humanitarian personnel, and preventing the collection of critical supplies. In addition, the Erez West (Zikim) entry point has been closed for maintenance since 2 August, with humanitarian supplies now being redirected to the Erez Crossing. Over the past three months, aid cargo that entered Gaza via Kerem Shalom Crossing and was picked up by aid agencies dropped by more than 80 per cent, from a daily average of 127 trucks per day in April to about 23 trucks per day in July. Moreover, while the majority of aid cargo entering Gaza between January and April crossed via Kerem Shalom Crossing, this percentage has steadily decreased, with aid that could be picked up by humanitarian agencies from the crossing currently comprising only 29 per cent of aid getting into Gaza. Overall, humanitarian aid entering Gaza has more than halved since the Rafah ground operation began and Rafah Crossing was abruptly closed in early May, dropping from a daily average of 169 trucks in April to 94 trucks per day in May to less than 80 trucks per day in June and July.

- On 5 August, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) reported that it had been unable to transport aid from crossing points to its warehouses in Gaza for three months, with an estimated 488 pallets of aid, for which NRC is the consignee, stranded at Kerem Shalom Crossing. While some relief items were moved to their warehouse by the Logistics Cluster on 3 August, the situation remains dire, the NGO added. Referencing the recent NRC update, Jan Egeland, NRC Secretary-General, highlighted the severity of the crisis: "There is still no real access for aid to the starving population…law and order has broken down…donkeys carry aid for lack of fuel and trucks."

- Between 1 and 8 August, out of 67 planned humanitarian assistance missions coordinated with the Israeli authorities to northern Gaza, only 24 were facilitated, nine were impeded, 29 were denied access, and five were cancelled due to logistical, operational, or security reasons. Moreover, in southern Gaza, out of 99 coordinated humanitarian assistance movements, 48 were facilitated by the Israeli authorities, seven were impeded, 33 were denied, and 11 were cancelled.

Funding

- As of 9 August, Member States have disbursed about US$1.6 billion out of $3.42 billion (47 per cent) requested to meet the most critical needs of 2.3 million* people in Gaza and 800,000 people in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between January and December 2024. On 10 July, DSC/RC/HC Mohannad Hadi stated that, "more funding is urgently needed – as is a safe, enabling environment inside Gaza. Increased funding now will enable the humanitarian community to scale up operations as soon as conditions permit. For funding analysis, please see the Flash Appeal Financial Tracking dashboard. (*2.3 million reflects the projected population of the Gaza Strip upon issuance of the Flash Appeal in April 2024. As of July 2024, the UN estimates that about 2.1 million people remain in the Gaza Strip, and this updated number is now used for programmatic purposes.)

- During July 2024, the occupied Palestinian territory Humanitarian Fund (oPt HF) managed a total of 98 ongoing projects, totalling $81.4 million. These projects aimed to address urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (89 per cent) and the West Bank (11 per cent). The projects were strategically focused on Education, Food Security, Health, Protection, Emergency Shelter & Non-Food Items (NFI), Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), Coordination and Support Services, Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance and Nutrition. Of these projects, 55 projects are being implemented by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), 31 by national NGOs

and 12 by UN agencies. Notably, 32 out of the 67 projects implemented by INGOs or the UN are being implemented in collaboration with national NGOs. Since 7 October, the oPt HF has mobilized over $112 million from Member States and private donors to support urgent humanitarian and life-saving programmes across the OPT. Of total funding, 89 per cent has been allocated to projects in Gaza. A summary of the oPt HF activities and challenges in July 2024 is available through this link and the 2023 Annual Report of the oPt HF can be accessed here. Private donations are collected directly through the oPt HF.