Humanitarian Situation Update #174 | Gaza Strip

03 Jun 2024



Youssef (13) carrying bread for his family in Al Mawasi. Photo by UNICEF

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 "Humanitarian Situation Update" is a rebranding of the "Flash Update". The next Humanitarian Situation Update will be published on 5 June, and the next Humanitarian Response Update will be published on 12 June.

Key Highlights

- Treatment of more than 3,000 children suffering from acute malnutrition is at risk of interruption if nutrition supplies are not distributed, UNICEF warns.
- No bakeries are currently functional in Rafah and public health concerns are beyond crisis levels in Khan Younis and Deir al Balah, according to the World Food Programme.
- The Emergency Committee for North Gaza municipalities declared Jabalya town, Jabalya Refugee Camp, Beit Lahya and Beit Hanoun as "disaster zones."
- Humanitarian space continues to further shrink, report UNRWA and the Protection Cluster.

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, particularly in Rafah. Intensified hostilities following the issuance of evacuation orders and the Israeli military operation in Rafah have so far forced the displacement of about one million people, amid a decline in the entry of humanitarian aid.

- Between the afternoons of 31 May and 3 June, according to MoH in Gaza, 195 Palestinians were killed and 720 were injured, including 40 killed and 150 injured in the past 24 hours. Between 7 October 2023 and 3 June 2024, at least 36,479 Palestinians were killed and 82,777 were injured in Gaza, according to MoH in Gaza.

- The following are among the deadly incidents reported between 30 May and 3 June:
  - On 30 May, at about 13:25, at least three Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when an UNRWA school was hit in Jabaliya Refugee Camp, in North Gaza.
  - On 31 May, at about 1:05, eight Palestinians, including two children and three women, were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit in Bloc 9 in Al Bureij Refugee Camp, in Deir al Balah.
  - On 31 May, at about 6:25, three Palestinian men were reportedly killed and others injured when a civilian car was hit in Al Helou Street in An Nuseirat Refugee Camp, in Deir al Balah.
  - On 31 May, at about 20:00, three Palestinians including two women, one of whom was identified as a journalist, were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit in Al Jalaa Street in the central part of Gaza city.
  - On 1 June, at about 15:00, two Palestinians were reportedly killed and four others injured when Ali Bin Abi Talib School sheltering internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Az Zaitoun neighbourhood of Gaza city was hit.
  - On 2 June, at about 1:30, three Palestinians, including a man, a woman, and an infant, were reportedly killed when a house was hit in Ad Daraj neighbourhood of Gaza city.

- Between the afternoons of 31 May and 3 June, no Israeli soldiers were reported killed in Gaza. As of 3 June, 293 soldiers have been killed and 1,878 soldiers have been injured in Gaza or along the border in Israel since the beginning of the ground operation, according to the Israeli military. In addition, according to the Israeli media citing official Israeli sources, over 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, including 33 children, have been killed in Israel, the vast majority on 7 October. As of 3 June, it is estimated that 125 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including fatalities whose bodies are withheld. On 3 June, the Israeli military stated that it has found, in Israel, the body of an Israeli killed in the attacks of 7 October 2023. According to media reports, he was thus far believed to be held hostage in Gaza.

- On 1 June, the Israeli military ordered residents of two blocs in Beit Hanoun, in North Gaza governorate, to evacuate to the area west of Gaza city. With an area of two square kilometres, the two blocs were home to 7,284 Palestinians before 7 October and encompass two UNRWA schools, one UNRWA distribution centre, and one health facility. To date, 285 square kilometres, or about 78 per cent of the Gaza Strip, have been placed under evacuation orders by the Israeli military; this encompasses all areas north of Wadi Gaza, whose residents were instructed to evacuate in late October, as well as specific areas south of Wadi Gaza designated for evacuation by the Israeli military since 1 December.

- On 2 June, the head of the Emergency Committee for North Gaza municipalities declared Jabalya town, Jabalya Refugee Camp, Beit Lahya and Beit Hanoun as “disaster zones,” following the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the area on 31 May. They appealed to the international community and UN aid agencies to provide immediate relief and shelter assistance as well as support the municipalities in repairing damaged water wells and other critical infrastructure. According to the same source, the most recent three-week ground operation in northern Gaza resulted in the destruction of 50,000 housing units, UNRWA shelters, and more than 15 water wells and other public infrastructure. The central market in Jabalya Refugee Camp, the fifth floor of Al Awda Hospital, and the main electricity generator at Kamal Adwan Hospital were also destroyed, reported the Palestinian Civil Defense (PCD) in a statement on 31 May. PCD teams have recovered tens of bodies, mostly women and children, from Jabalya Refugee Camp, including 30 people from the same family of whom 22 were women and children, and rescue operations are still ongoing. Highlighting the challenges facing PCD teams due to the lack of equipment, the director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, Dr. Husam Abu Safiyeh, noted in a media interview that over 120 bodies had been recovered by medical teams from under rubble, and that work was underway to repair damages and restore services at the hospital despite limited capacities.

- The intensification of hostilities and evacuation orders in Rafah have forced Protection Cluster partners, like other humanitarian actors, to evacuate their premises, with many providers, themselves displaced, unable to re-establish services due to the lack of tents, exorbitant rent costs, fuel shortage and rising transportation costs. This has resulted in a limited number of frontline staff in Al Mawasi area in Khan Younis, reports the Protection Cluster, and negatively affected the availability and accessibility of protection services, including for the provision of psycho-social support, awareness raising activities, and the re-establishment of referrals for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases. It has also heightened the cost of accessing services, disproportionately affecting women and girls. The SOS Children’s village, the only currently functional shelter for children without parental care, had to relocate the children and their caregivers from Rafah to central Gaza but has a limited number of tents and no capacity to receive more children. According to UNRWA, the “humanitarian space continues to further shrink,” with all 36 UNRWA shelters in Rafah now empty and the agency having had to stop health and other critical services in the governorate.

- WFP is currently able to reach only 27,000 people with hot meals in Rafah, nowhere near what is required, noted the World Food Program (WFP) Country Director in Palestine, Matthew Hollingworth, in a press briefing on 31 May following a ten-day mission to Gaza. Six bakeries remain functional in Deir al Balah and Khan Younis, while those in Rafah have ceased operations due to the lack of fuel, he added. Deir al Balah and Khan Younis, where almost a million people have fled, are highly congested; people face dire shortages of food, clean water, medical supplies and healthcare services and “public health concerns are beyond crisis levels,” WFP stressed. WFP and its partners are currently providing 400,000 hot meals per day in the area but lack supplies to scale up the delivery of ready-to-eat rations while commercial supplies are generally unaffordable. Hollingworth observed that many families were resorting to leaving their identification cards as collateral to pay for food supplies from the market, “putting their own safety

and future in jeopardy because they need those identification cards to register for aid in the future." In northern Gaza, about 12,000 tons of aid, primarily food, that has arrived via the northern crossings since 1 May has provided some relief, but lack of access to clean water, nutritious foods, health care and sanitation continue to devastate the area.

- In Deir al Balah, Al Aqsa Hospital announced on 30 May that one child had died in the facility due to malnutrition and lack of medical treatment, and another 13-year-old child also reportedly died of malnutrition on 1 June. "If nutrition supplies, especially ready-to-use therapeutic food, used to address malnutrition among children, cannot be distributed, the treatment of more than 3,000 children with acute malnutrition will be interrupted," stated the UNICEF Chief of Communications in Palestine, Jonathan Crickx, underscoring that the "ongoing situation in Rafah is a disaster for children."

- "With hostilities escalating due to the ongoing military operation, the lack of health care will lead to increased unnecessary deaths and suffering," stressed the World Health Organization (WHO) on 1 June. The Health Cluster reports that, as of 3 June, there are 15 partially functional hospitals and five field hospitals, including two that are partially functional and three that are fully functional. In North Gaza, WHO informs, Kamal Adwan Hospital had resumed partial functionality and access to Al Awda Hospital has now been restored. In late May, Al Awda became inaccessible due to the intensification of hostilities while 14 health workers, 11 patients and two mothers accompanying their children remained inside the facility. The Indonesian Hospital in the same governorate is still out of service and the hospital has recently been impacted by shelling, according to MoH in Gaza. In Rafah, all three hospitals remain non-functional, WHO reports, and out of six field hospitals, only two are functional; the International Medical Corps (IMC) field hospital remains fully operational while the UAE Field Hospital is only partially functional, continuing to provide services to 37 patients inside the facility but is inaccessible to new patients.

- Access constraints continue to undermine the safe delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza, exacerbating the needs of hundreds of thousands of people. With hostilities escalating in both northern and southern Gaza, particularly in Rafah, security and humanitarian access conditions have further deteriorated in May. Despite the presence of a system to notify and coordinate humanitarian movements, impediments, delays, and denials of missions continue to frequently restrict the movement of humanitarian personnel and the delivery of assistance. Between 1 and 31 May, out of the 78 coordinated humanitarian assistance missions to northern Gaza, 35 (45 per cent) were facilitated by Israeli authorities, 5 (6 per cent) were denied access, 27 (35 per cent) were impeded, and 11 (14 per cent) were cancelled due to operational or security reasons. In addition, out of 270 coordinated humanitarian assistance missions to areas in southern Gaza, 138 (51 per cent) were facilitated by Israeli authorities, 33 (12 per cent) were denied, 52 (19 per cent) were impeded, and 47 (17 per cent) were cancelled. Many missions classified as "impeded" have experienced extended delays imposed by Israeli authorities at holding points, with some lasting up to nine hours at sensitive locations, significantly increasing the security risks for humanitarian personnel.

Funding

- As of 3 June, Member States have disbursed about US$1 billion out of $3.4 billion (30 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. For funding analysis, please see the Flash Appeal Financial Tracking dashboard.

- The oPt HF has 118 ongoing projects, for a total of $72.5 million, addressing urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (85 per cent) and West Bank (15 per cent). The HF has allocated an additional $22 million to bolster prioritized HF-funded projects in Gaza. Recently, 14 projects for a total of $5 million have been approved under the Third Reserve Allocation titled "Critical Humanitarian Aid for Gaza Amidst Escalating Conflict and Displacement (Phase 3)." Following a steep rise in displacement from Rafah to Khan Younis and Deir al Balah and to capitalize on the operational presence of national partners, these projects will be implemented by national NGOs (12 projects) or through a partnership between international and national NGOs (2 projects). Since 7 October, the oPt HF has mobilized over $100 million from Member States and private donors, designated for programmes throughout Gaza. A summary of the oPt HF activities and challenges in April 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 Humanitarian Fund.

For the most recent Gaza Humanitarian Response Update for the period between 20 and 26 May, please visit: Gaza Humanitarian Response Update | 20–26 May 2024. As of 3 June, the Gaza Humanitarian Response Update will be issued every two weeks. The next update will be issued on 12 June, covering the two-week period between 27 May and 9 June.