Restore Rebuild Reimagine

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for every child

UNICEF State of Palestine, December 2025

UNICEF support for child- and youth-focused recovery in the Gaza Strip



In February 2025, children are receiving polio vaccines in the north of Gaza as part of the vaccination campaign.

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Families write the child's name, his or her date of birth, and the phone number of a family member on the bracelet to help reunite them if they are separated.

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The ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the passing of Security Council Resolution 2803 offer a vital chance for children in the State of Palestine. For their survival and safety, under threat for far too long, and for their futures, until now too fragile to contemplate. It offers a path towards recovery and healing; a chance to reclaim their futures, realize their rights and fulfil their potential.

The needs in the Gaza Strip remain critical. UNICEF is rapidly scaling up its operations following the ceasefire, mobilizing urgently to save children's lives from preventable threats like malnutrition, disease, and the coming winter. Yet, even as the humanitarian response is ongoing, there is a need to restore service delivery for children and their families, rebuild critical infrastructure, and support the Palestinian Authority to lead recovery efforts and chart a path toward lasting peace, dignity and opportunity for all Palestinians.

Social services across the Gaza Strip have been decimated. Schools have suffered extensive destruction and damage, with the few remaining structures being used as shelters for the internally displaced. At least 71 per cent of primary health facilities are non-functional, and approximately 94 per cent of critical water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure has also been affected.[1] With poverty virtually universal in Gaza, the ability of the government and its partners to provide social protection services is significantly curtailed. The social services workforce – teachers, health workers, social workers and others on whom services depend – are themselves in need of assistance, having been exposed to displacement, hunger, disease and severe psychosocial distress.[2] Many of the community-based networks that children and families rely on have also been severely disrupted.

Given the scale of the devastation, recovery and reconstruction will require a substantial, years-long effort. Yet it must begin immediately, even as the humanitarian response is ongoing. This document sets out UNICEF's key priorities for child- and youth-focused recovery in the Gaza Strip, beginning with early recovery activities already underway in education, WASH, social protection, health, nutrition and child protection, and transitioning as conditions allow to a transformative approach that supports and empowers the Palestinian Authority, civil society organizations, communities, and young people to drive recovery.

1 Government of Palestine, 'Gaza Recovery and Reconstruction Implementation Program', Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ramallah, November 2025.

2 World Bank Group, European Union, and United Nations, 'Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment', World Bank, Washington, DC, February 2025. These figures are currently being updated, and a more comprehensive assessment of damages, losses, and needs is underway. UNICEF is contributing to the updated RDNA in all sectors and leads the assessments in education, WASH, and social protection, in close collaboration with sector partners and PA line ministries.

The recovery continuum: Restore, rebuild, reimagine

UNICEF's vision is a child- and youth-centred recovery that restores essential services, rebuilds resilient systems, and reimagines a future in which every child in the State of Palestine can learn, be safe, participate and thrive in a peaceful, inclusive society.

UNICEF is strongly placed to support Palestinian-led recovery efforts by virtue of its dual humanitarian and development mandate and multisector expertise, demonstrated operational capacity, and role as a trusted partner of the government, civil society and international partners. UNICEF is recognized and accepted by the population as a principled actor with a longstanding presence in communities, and has a strong track record of transparency and accountability.



A child queues for water in Gaza.

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UNICEF's recovery strategy will unfold along a continuum of three overlapping and interconnected phases:

Restore vital services for children and women, including immediate access to safe and inclusive learning, WASH, primary health care and nutrition services, social protection and child protection.

Rebuild critical infrastructure including schools, water networks and sanitation infrastructure, and primary health-care facilities, as well as associated workforces such as teachers, health workers and social workers.

Reimagine more equitable, inclusive and resilient services and systems for children and their families through strengthened national capacities and governance; climate-smart, accessible and resilient infrastructure; and empowered communities, children and young people.

While presented here as a linear pathway, in reality these phases are interconnected and will likely be implemented in parallel in different parts of the Gaza Strip, depending on operational conditions on the ground including access, security, partner presence and capacity, availability and clearance of commodities, and the overall evolution of the political and governance environment.

UNICEF's work will be informed by comprehensive ground assessments of the damage, losses and needs in critical sectors for children. These assessments are already underway through the Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA), conducted jointly by the World Bank, European Union (EU) and United Nations, with UNICEF leading the assessments in WASH, education and social protection and contributing across key sectors. Complementing these efforts, UNICEF is undertaking comprehensive ground assessments in WASH, education, social protection and health, in collaboration with line ministries and with the support of the EU and other partners.

Implementation modalities will involve a blend of direct service delivery, systems strengthening of line ministries, investment in community-based organizations – especially youth- and women-led groups – and partnerships with the local private sector.

Key cross-cutting priorities include:

- Cash assistance, cash for work, and incentive payments for volunteers and frontline workers
- Mental health and well-being support for children, caregivers and frontline workers
- Climate-smart, disability-inclusive, gender-responsive, resilient design standards
- Digital solutions

Children in Gaza study at a UNICEF temporary learning centre.
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Learning and Education

Strategic objective: Transform education into a powerful driver of recovery and resilience, ensuring every Palestinian child and adolescent can heal, learn, and help build the future of Palestine.

Restore

- Provide safe and inclusive environments for students to resume learning through temporary and semi-permanent learning centres and digital learning.
- Address holistic learning and well-being needs through mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for students and teachers.
- Support the inclusion of children with disabilities, including through assistive devices and other enablers.

Rebuild

- Rehabilitate schools and educational centres to ensure inclusive access for all children – including those with disabilities – and upgrade WASH facilities for safe, healthy environments.
- Rebuild and strengthen the education workforce by supporting education personnel with incentives, hiring and training new staff, and addressing well-being needs through MHPSS.
- Address learning losses by prioritizing core competencies and essential knowledge and skills through proven pedagogical interventions such as 'Teaching at the Right Level'.
- Strengthening the capacity of the education workforce to identify and support needs in MHPSS, provide case referrals for MHPSS and child protection, and support the specific needs of children with disabilities.

Reimagine

- Support the design of safe, accessible, inclusive schools that are climate-smart and resilient.
- Support universal access to quality kindergarten services.
- Strengthen learning to earning and employability skills of youth, women and persons with disabilities.
- Expand opportunities for digital learning.

Children in the Gaza Strip are excited to resume their education at a temporary learning centre established by UNICEF with support from the German Federal Foreign Office and the Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation (RLAF).

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Key priorities

WASH

Strategic objective: Re-establish resilient and sustainable access to safe water and sanitation for children and families in Gaza, while strengthening service capacity across the State of Palestine.

Restore

- Repair and rehabilitate water networks, desalination plants and wastewater systems, prioritizing densely populated and high-need areas such as schools, health facilities and displacement sites.
- Support households to build semi-permanent toilets in shelters and temporary accommodation.
- Support the staffing and operational needs of service providers, providing training where needed.
- Reconnect critical WASH infrastructure (sewage pumping stations, desalination plants, reservoirs and key well fields) to the electricity grid.

Rebuild

- Establish decentralized potable and domestic water systems in areas far from existing systems.
- Repair and maintain sewage pumping stations and sewer pipelines, and establish decentralized wastewater treatment solutions in accessible areas.

Reimagine

- Expand climate-smart water and wastewater networks, including measures to ensure resilience to future disruption, such as solarization and decentralization.
- Strengthen the governance of the water sector.
- Strengthen engineering institutions to support 'catch-up' of undergraduate water, wastewater and public health engineers.



A new water well in Deir Al-Balah, Gaza Strip, on 14 August, 2025. Installed by UNICEF with support from the Kuwait Fund, the well will provide hundreds of children and their families with a lifeline of clean water.

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Social Protection

Strategic objective: Reduce child poverty and strengthen household resilience through cash assistance and integrated social support for the most vulnerable children and caregivers.

Restore

- Provide large-scale and digitally channelled multi-purpose cash assistance linked with essential services such as nutrition, health and education through a coordinated cash-plus approach.
- Expand incentive payments to frontline volunteers and workers, cash-for-work activities to restore infrastructure and services, and other income-earning opportunities for youth, women and persons with disabilities to support community recovery activities.
- In collaboration with partners, assess the readiness of the national social protection programme to resume operations.

Rebuild

- Support resumption of the national cash transfer programme, including through re-design of the digital ecosystem and updating of the national social registry and vulnerability profiles of families.
- Begin a transition toward child-sensitive shock-responsive social protection systems, including early steps toward universal child grants across the State of Palestine.

Reimagine

- Support the establishment of a shock-responsive social protection system that includes:
  - » A stronger policy and strategic framework, and better governance.
  - » Full transition to universal child grants, with a focus on children under 3, children with disabilities and other critically vulnerable groups.
  - » Support for livelihood opportunities for young people.
  - » Enhanced delivery systems – such as digital e-wallets and cashless modalities – as well as strengthened national systems for beneficiary data management and electronic payments.
  - » Case management by a network of newly recruited professionals taking a proactive approach in supporting individuals in need.

Life here is uncertain and it was not as hopeful as before," says Ziad. He is one of the many displaced people in the Gaza Strip following the dramatic escalation of hostilities since October 2023.

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Health and nutrition

Strategic objective: Re-establish primary health care, including nutrition support, for all children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and adolescent girls in Gaza, prioritizing the most high-impact interventions while laying the foundation for sustainable, adaptable health and nutrition systems.

Restore

- Restore routine immunization services and intermediate cold chain and vaccine logistics systems. Conduct catch-up campaigns and sessions to reach children under 3, integrating other services such as nutritional screening, vitamin A supplementation, and WASH promotion.
- Restore community-focused primary health-care (PHC) interventions, including nutrition services, through temporary (prefabricated) PHC facilities, essential health and nutrition commodities, and incentives for frontline workers.
- Restore and support maternal, newborn, and child health interventions at PHC levels as well as neonatal and paediatric intensive care capacity, including provision of psychosocial stimulation for children and parenting and MHPSS support for caregivers.
- Provide refresher training and capacity-building for new and returning staff for nutrition treatment and primary health provision, and MHPSS support for frontline workers.
- Rehabilitate WASH and restore solarization in health-care facilities.

Rebuild

- Support disease outbreak prevention, preparedness and response measures.
- Restore the functionality of health and nutrition monitoring systems, including digital health solutions for tracking maternal and child health needs and performance.
- Restore and strengthen health and nutrition supply chains for reliable delivery of medicines, vaccines, therapeutic foods and WASH supplies.
- Re-establish school health and nutrition platforms with screening, supplementation, WASH and health education.

Reimagine

- Strengthen systems to deliver accessible, comprehensive and community-focused primary health and nutrition services that address immediate recovery needs and support long-term resilience, including through consolidated services.
- Strengthen capacities in areas such as physical rehabilitation and procurement of assistive technologies for children with disabilities, MHPSS for children and adolescents, and health and nutrition supply management and logistics.
- Strengthen MHPSS systems for mental health and psychosocial support to children and adolescents.
- Promote healthy nutrition practices through schools, communities and digital channels; strengthen local food production and markets to support children's diets and long-term nutrition security; and embed multisectoral nutrition in planning, budgeting and sustainable financing.

Child protection

Strategic objective:

Children in Gaza are better protected from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation through strengthened protection and justice systems, resilient families and caregivers, and resourceful communities.

Restore

- Ensure provision of child protection services for children at risk, promoting linkages to the national child protection system.
- Encourage family-based alternative care and social protection systems to prioritize households caring for children who have lost one or both parents. Increase the availability and capacity of alternative care arrangements for children requiring emergency protective care.
- Provide community-based MHPSS for children and caregivers, with clear referral pathways for those who need more specialized services.
- Strengthen civil documentation units that provide on-the-spot birth registration and legal identity services, while integrating child-friendly legal aid and case management for children in conflict with the law.

Rebuild

- Re-establish and build fixed and mobile family centres across the Gaza Strip, especially in areas of relocating communities.
- Gradually absorb community-based MHPSS and child protection services into multiservice centres within communities.
- Enhance the capacity of service providers to respond to a wider range of child protection issues and increase system capacity for quality assurance, data collection and digital case management.

Reimagine

- Strengthen the capacity of the child protection system in Gaza to prevent and respond to violence against children, abuse, neglect, exploitation and family separation.
- Strengthen family-based alternative care systems for children without parental care and invest in other forms of sustainable family and community-based care to mitigate risk of institutionalization.
- Institutionalize integrated MHPSS and child protection services within a sustainable national/local system to ensure accountability and quality assurance.



Children learn how to identify and protect themselves from hidden explosives in a UNICEF-supported class.

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Eleven-year-old Rahaf is one of the hundreds of thousands of children caught in a cycle of hardship and pain. All of Gaza's children have been exposed to the traumatic experiences of war, the consequences of which will last a lifetime.

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Principles and partnerships

Recovery of the Gaza Strip must be Palestinian-owned and led. UNICEF's strategy is fully aligned with the Gaza Recovery and Reconstruction Implementation Program of the Palestinian Authority and the strategies of line ministry partners, and places the Palestinian people – including communities, civil society organizations and the private sector – at the centre of recovery efforts. In particular, children, young people and women – including those with disabilities – will be supported and empowered to lead recovery efforts within their communities.

UNICEF will continue its strong collaboration with key partners including the World Bank, the EU, other United Nations agencies, civil society and private sector partners, and communities themselves.

UNICEF's work is guided by key principles including:

- Palestinian ownership and an all-of-Palestine approach
- Respect for humanitarian principles and human rights law
- Equity and inclusion
- Accountability to affected populations and community engagement
- Child safeguarding and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Gender-responsiveness
- Conflict sensitivity and do no harm
- Environmental sustainability
- Building back better and strengthening resilience

UNICEF's strategy is aligned with the 20-point plan announced by the United States in September 2025, Security Council Resolution 2803, and the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. UNICEF is committed to ensuring that its recovery efforts contribute meaningfully to this vision and support the aspirations of the Palestinian people for dignity, stability and self-determination.

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