STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blockade of aid will have far-reaching consequences for women and girls in Gaza warns UNFPA Arab States Regional Office

Cairo, 4 March 2025 – UNFPA Arab states regional office is appalled by the Israeli Government's decision to prevent aid entering into Gaza. This will cause further suffering to women and girls who have already been denied the basic necessities to survive – and their health and dignity – for over 15 months. These restrictions are in blatant disregard of international humanitarian law, which is non-negotiable and unequivocally mandates that Israel must facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid regardless of whether or not the ceasefire holds.

The fragile ceasefire provided a desperately needed respite for women and girls in Gaza, and allowed UN agencies, including UNFPA, the United Nations reproductive and health agency, to finally scale up the delivery of life-saving assistance to affected Palestinians across the Gaza Strip. The reinstatement of the blockade threatens to reverse progress at a critical time when people are struggling to survive.

Since the start of the ceasefire, UNFPA, and our partners, have focused on restoring basic services for women and girls. In the past 10 weeks, we have:

- Provided 170,000 women and girls with reproductive health and protection services, including emergency obstetric care.
- Set up and equipped 16 temporary health facilities to provide critical maternal health care to thousands of pregnant women.
- Ensured the availability of medicines to manage postpartum haemorrhaging for 1,500 women.
- Distributed shelter kits – tarpaulin and blankets – to 50,000 people.
- Provided close to 4,500 new mothers with vital supplies for newborns.
- Distributed around 26,000 kits containing essential hygiene items and menstrual supplies.

Yet, despite these efforts, women and girls' needs are still staggering. The war has left devastation in its wake. Disease and hunger are rife and the health system lies in ruins. Only 19 out of 35 hospitals are partially functioning, depriving women and girls, including an estimated 50,000 pregnant women, from accessing life-saving care.

The temporary easing of restrictions during the ceasefire has demonstrated what is possible when aid is allowed to reach those in need. We cannot accept a return to the suffocating constraints that have defined this conflict. UNFPA urgently calls on all parties to fully respect their obligations under international law, lift the blockade and allow humanitarian aid to flow freely into Gaza.

A lasting peace and continuous aid are the only way to ensure that women and girls receive the food, water, hygiene supplies, and health care they desperately need. They have endured too much already, they are exhausted and traumatized—there must be no going back.

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About UNFPA
UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. UNFPA's mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. UNFPA calls for the realization of reproductive rights for all and supports access to a wide range of sexual and reproductive health services, including voluntary family planning, quality maternal health care and comprehensive sexuality education.

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