Humanitarian Situation Update #357 | Gaza Strip

12 Feb 2026



Palestinian returnees received by a UN team after entering through the newly reopened Rafah crossing and passing through a military facility (seen in the background) where Israeli forces operate an internal checkpoint. Photo by OCHA/Zein Tayyeb

The Humanitarian Situation Update is issued every Wednesday. The next Humanitarian Situation Update will cover the West Bank.

Key Highlights

- Airstrikes, shelling and gunfire continue across Gaza, causing casualties and exposing civilians, including aid workers and medical teams, to deadly risks.
- Rafah Crossing reopened for limited movement of people for the first time in nearly 11 months, enabling further medical evacuations and returns to Gaza, amid reports of ill-treatment of returnees during transit.
- Shelter conditions remain dire for most displaced people, pushing some to stay in unsafe locations or search rubble for essentials, while children remain exposed to explosive ordnance and older people face heightened health risks and challenges accessing care and assistance.
- Access to water and sanitation facilities has improved since the ceasefire agreement, but water quality remains unsafe, contributing to rising cases of diarrhoea and hepatitis A, particularly among children.
- Winter weather and transit delays have led to significant spoilage of food commodities before and during entry into Gaza, while partners work to safely dispose of damaged goods amid constrained storage and landfill capacity in the Strip.

Context Overview

- Airstrikes, shelling and gunfire continue to be reported across the Gaza Strip, resulting in casualties. The Israeli military remains deployed in over 50 per cent of the Gaza Strip north, west and south of the “Yellow Line,” where access to humanitarian facilities and assets, public infrastructure, and agricultural land is either restricted or prohibited. Access for Palestinians to the sea remains

prohibited. Detonations of residential buildings and bulldozing activities continue to be reported, including near and east of the "Yellow Line."

- Over the past two weeks, strikes were reported on both sides of the "Yellow Line," including in densely populated areas, heightening risks to civilians. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that its teams across Gaza treated seven patients, including two children, injured in incidents attributed to Israeli attacks between 31 January and 2 February. On 5 February, Israeli forces reportedly demolished an UNRWA school that was the last remaining structure within a compound of six schools. Highlighting the extremely precarious situation for many children in Gaza, UNICEF noted that children continue to be affected by airstrikes and the disruption of essential services, with 37 children reported killed since the beginning of the year.

- According to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, between 28 January and 11 February 2026, 109 Palestinians were killed, 252 were injured, and 10 bodies were recovered from under the rubble. This brings the casualty toll among Palestinians since 7 October 2023, as reported by the MoH, to 72,045 fatalities and 171,686 injuries. According to the MoH, the total number includes 259 fatalities who were retroactively added between 23 January and 6 February after their identification details were approved by a ministerial committee. The MoH reported that since the ceasefire agreement, 591 Palestinians have been killed, 1,591 injured, and 720 bodies retrieved from under the rubble. On 4 February, the MoH stated that 54 bodies and 66 boxes containing human remains and body parts were released by the Israeli authorities and transferred to Al Shifa Hospital via the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

- On 4 February, an MSF health worker was hit by a stray bullet inside a health-care facility in Al Mawasi and is in stable condition. On the same day, a Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) paramedic was killed while providing emergency medical services in Khan Younis during an attack in the Al Mawasi area, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Between 7 October 2023 and 9 February 2026, at least 588 aid workers (189 women and 399 men) have been killed in the Gaza Strip, including 396 UN staff and team members, 133 NGO workers, 55 PRCS staff and volunteers, and four ICRC staff.

- According to the Israeli military, between 28 January and 11 February 2026, no Israeli soldiers were killed in the Gaza Strip. The casualty toll among Israeli soldiers since the beginning of the Israeli ground operation in October 2023 stands at 471 fatalities and 3,004 injuries. According to Israeli forces and official Israeli sources cited in the media, more than 1,671 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed, most of them on 7 October 2023 and its immediate aftermath.

- According to the UN 2720 Mechanism, between 26 January and 9 February, more than 19,000 metric tons (MT) of humanitarian aid were collected by the United Nations (UN) and partners from Gaza's crossings, compared with nearly 21,000 MT of aid collected in the preceding two-week period (11-25 January). Most of the aid (66 per cent) continued to be collected from Kerem Shalom Crossing, while the remaining 34 per cent was collected from Zikim Crossing.

- Food Security Sector (FSS) partners report that food safety during transit, storage and meal preparation remains a major concern. Adverse winter weather has led to significant spoilage before commodities enter Gaza as cargo has been exposed to rain at crossings and during transportation. Additional challenges include access constraints and prolonged inspection procedures. Some shipments, including food aid, spend several days or even weeks at crossings, further contributing to increased losses.

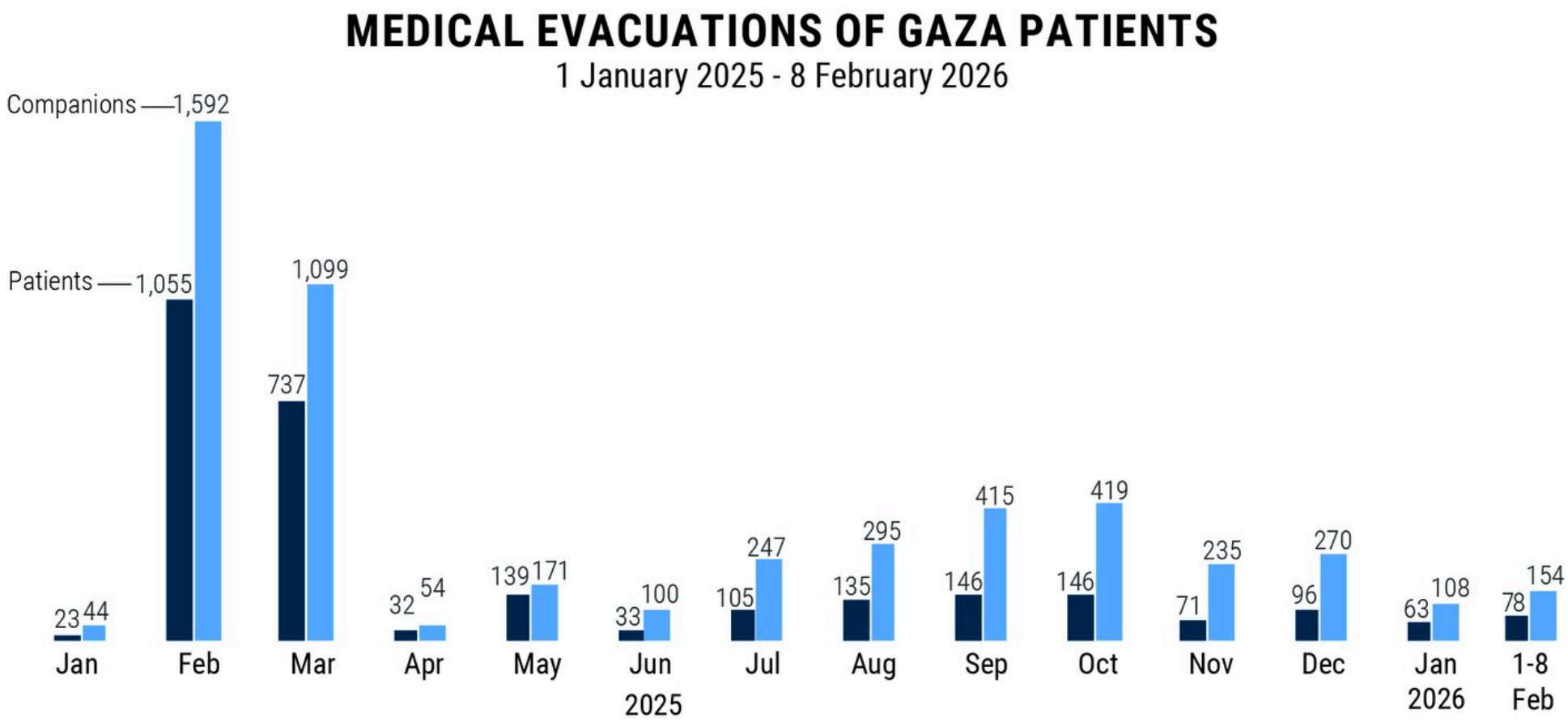
- About 1,500 MT of spoiled commodities already inside Gaza have been segregated in dedicated warehouses to prevent cross-contamination. At community kitchens, limited electricity supply and lack of refrigeration equipment increase the risk of spoilage of perishable foods. To mitigate health and protection risks related to damages, FSS partners are exploring options for the safe disposal of damaged food outside populated areas in consultation with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and solid waste management partners. Identifying additional disposal sites remains challenging, as three of the 10 temporary dumping sites currently receiving waste are at capacity, with three other sites expected to reach full capacity in the coming months. The two main landfills in areas east of the "Yellow Line" remain inaccessible.

- Humanitarian movements inside Gaza continue to require coordination with Israeli authorities to and from crossings and in or near other areas where Israeli forces remain deployed. Between 26 January and 9 February, 120 humanitarian missions were coordinated with the Israeli authorities, of which 61 were facilitated, 24 were impeded, 20 were denied and 15 were cancelled by the requesting organizations due to operational, logistical or security reasons. The 61 facilitated missions included 23 missions to collect humanitarian cargo from the Kerem Shalom and Zikim crossings, 10 missions related to the movement of humanitarian personnel, and 12 monitoring missions. They also included eight medical evacuation missions conducted via Kerem Shalom and Rafah crossings, as well as two life-saving missions, among other activities.

Rafah Crossing, Medical Evacuations and Access to Health Care

- On 2 February, Palestinian patients were evacuated through Rafah Crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt for the first time since March 2025 and, for the first time since October 2023, a limited number of Palestinian returnees were allowed entry into Gaza. Between 2 and 10 February, the UN and partners supported the medical evacuation of 142 patients, alongside companions, including 91 patients (64 per cent) via Rafah Crossing and 51 patients (36 per cent) via Kerem Shalom Crossing. During the same period, UN teams in Gaza received 223 Palestinian returnees. The UN and partners provide all returnees with transportation to Nasser Hospital, in Khan Younis, where a reception area has been established to provide access to protection officers, psychologists, medical staff, emergency assistance and other resources, ensuring a safe and dignified reception process and timely response for urgent concerns. According to Israeli authorities, the return of people from Egypt to the Gaza Strip will be permitted, in coordination with Egypt, for people who left Gaza during the course of the war only and after a security clearance by Israel. Rafah Crossing was closed on Friday and Saturday.

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), between October 2023 and January 2026, 10,762 patients and over 12,000 companions were medically evacuated outside Gaza, about 70 per cent of them in the first seven months. Following the closure of Rafah Crossing on 7 May 2024, 3,218 patients were evacuated, including 1,702 between 19 January and 17 March 2025 and 377 patients between 13 October and 26 January 2026 (see chart below). At the current pace, Save the Children estimates that evacuating those in need could take over a year. Thousands of patients remain without access to specialized treatment unavailable in Gaza, and more than 18,500 people, including 4,000 children, remain in urgent need of medical evacuation.



Source: The World Health Organization and the Health Cluster's Unified Dashboard

- On 5 February, the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) reported patterns of ill-treatment and humiliation of Palestinians returning to Gaza via Rafah Crossing. Reported practices include coercive interrogations, degrading treatment and confiscation of personal belongings. Some returnees also reported being denied access to medical care and basic facilities and facing intimidation, including pressure to discourage their return. OHCHR expressed concern that such practices may violate international human rights law and undermine safe and dignified returns.

- Gaza's health system continues to face significant pressure due to staff shortages and damaged infrastructure. Many urgently needed professionals, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, and mental health professionals, have been unable to complete their studies or obtain certification because of financial constraints. The UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and local universities are supporting 470 final-year health students to overcome these barriers, complete their training, and fast-track certification. The addition of these health workers is expected to strengthen the provision of essential services, support livelihoods, and contribute to a more resilient Gaza health sector. In parallel, humanitarian partners report ongoing efforts to strengthen local health services, including rehabilitating damaged facilities and expanding critical care capacity, which require additional medical supplies and equipment, some of which face approval constraints.

Displacement, Shelter Conditions and Protection Risks

- Most people in Gaza continue to be displaced with many living in extremely harsh conditions. As of 11 February, at least two thirds of the population (1.4 million of 2.1 million people) are estimated to reside in about 1,000 displacement sites, often in overcrowded settings and in tents that offer limited privacy and protection from the elements, according to the Site Management and Protection clusters. These include more than 800 makeshift sites (informal groupings of tents on open land), in addition to collective centres and scattered sites (small clusters of displaced households dispersed within communities).

- In January, over 85,000 households received shelter assistance, including about 5,500 households reached through inter-cluster distributions targeting people most affected by flooding. However, according to the Shelter Cluster, the response remains heavily reliant on tents despite their short lifespan and limited protection, as current access conditions continue to prevent the entry of materials needed for more durable solutions. People sheltering in damaged buildings face additional safety risks, with 230 families reported to be living in structures at high risk of collapse, the Shelter Cluster reports, noting that it is working with affected families to assess their needs and survey intentions, including assistance on shelter options for households that choose to move.

- According to the Protection Cluster, precarious living conditions are pushing some people to adopt high-risk coping strategies, including sheltering in areas potentially contaminated with explosive ordnance (EO) or searching through rubble for firewood and other essential materials. Since the October 2025 ceasefire agreement, Mine Action (MA) partners have documented 33 EO incidents, resulting in nine fatalities and 65 injuries, including children. Since October 2023, more than 700 EO items have been identified as posing threats to civilians and recovery efforts. MA partners continue to support debris removal and humanitarian operations through explosive hazard assessments, inter-agency missions and EO risk education. Since the latest ceasefire agreement, they have conducted a monthly average of 320 assessments and reached more than 600,000 people (including children) through explosive ordnance risk education sessions.

- Prolonged displacement and deteriorating living conditions are increasing psychological stress and protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV) and community tensions, with increased vulnerability reported among widows, female-headed households, large families with children, and persons with disabilities. Protection partners continue to provide community-based protection, psychosocial support, case management, cash and voucher assistance, and disability-inclusive services. Since the ceasefire agreement, partners have reached an average of 37,000 people per month with direct general protection services, in addition to those reached with specialized services addressing GBV, child protection, mine action, and legal support.

- In January, 46 unaccompanied or separated children were reunited with caregivers, while 74 were placed in alternative care pending family tracing. Partners currently operate 217 child-friendly spaces that also provide psychosocial support and referral services. The feasibility of mobile child protection teams is under review to reach underserved locations, particularly after 11 high-risk communities in Rafah and Khan Younis governorates were recently identified as distant from existing services.

- A recent HelpAge International assessment highlights the particular challenges faced by older people in displacement, many of whom live with chronic illness, disability and reduced mobility. More than three quarters are living in overcrowded tents, and many report difficulties accessing food, medicines and health care, increasing the risk of rapid health deterioration. Repeated displacement, limited privacy and reliance on assistance further undermine their wellbeing. The Protection Cluster continues to strengthen protection mainstreaming by promoting age-, gender- and disability-inclusive assistance across sectors.

Access to Water

- Partners continue to expand efforts to enhance water availability by operating more water points, including wells and small-scale desalination plants (56 vs. 38 in September), activating four desalination plants, and rehabilitating 40 water wells. Emergency maintenance by local municipal actors has further supported service continuity, with five wells restored by the Coastal Municipal Water Utility in January, and 12 main wells repaired by the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) in northern Gaza, including six in Jabalya. Debris removal to reopen roads continues despite shortages in heavy equipment.

- Many people continue to rely on water trucking and emergency distributions. According to the WASH cluster, as of 11 February 2026, partners are delivering 19,969 cubic metres of drinking water per day across the Strip, through 126 distribution points in North Gaza, 728 in Gaza city, 453 in Deir al-Balah, and 839 in Khan Younis. Of 723 water-related appeals received by partners between early November and early February; 45 per cent were addressed, while the remainder are under review as partners mobilize resources based on capacity. Partner observations indicate that water shortages are particularly severe in high-density areas, such as Al Mawasi in Khan Younis.

- The three Mekorot lines currently supply about 42 per cent of the water they used to provide prior to October 2023 and the flow is unreliable, the WASH Cluster reports. In mid-January, the Mekorot pipeline serving Gaza city, which reportedly supplied 70 per cent of the city's needs, was damaged, significantly reducing people's access to drinking water until repairs were completed in early February following coordination with Israeli authorities. Disrupted access to water is exacerbated by irregular fuel deliveries, as reported by the Union of Gaza Strip Municipalities, and shortages of spare parts and consumables needed for repairs.

- According to WHO, analysis of 4,978 drinking and domestic water samples collected in 2025 across the Gaza Strip shows that over 77 per cent do not meet health standards. Microbiological contamination remains widespread, with approximately 16 per cent of samples contaminated with fecal coliforms and over eight per cent with E. coli. For drinking water specifically, over 67 per cent of the 4,978 samples did not meet health standards. Unsafe samples were most prevalent in Gaza city (83 per cent), Deir al-Balah (50.5 per cent), Khan Younis (54 per cent), North Gaza (85 per cent); there were no samples from Rafah. According to the Health Cluster, approximately 5,800 cases of acute jaundice syndrome (hepatitis A) were reported in 2025, with a marked increase observed in November and December 2025. In addition, over 496,000 cases of acute watery diarrhoea were reported, of which about 47 per cent were among children under five. This represents a significant increase compared with over 206,000 cases reported in 2024, half among children.

Funding

- As of 11 February, Member States disbursed approximately US$212 million of the $4 billion (5 per cent) requested to meet the most critical humanitarian needs of nearly 3 million out of 3.6 million people identified as requiring assistance in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, under the 2026 Flash Appeal for the OPT. Nearly 92 per cent of required funds are for the humanitarian response in Gaza, with over eight per cent for the West Bank. In January, the oPt Humanitarian Fund (HF) managed 102 projects, totaling $56.4 million, to address urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (89 per cent) and the West Bank (11 per cent). Of these projects, 49 are being implemented by international NGOs, 43 by national NGOs and 10 by UN agencies. Notably, 48 out of the 59 projects implemented by international NGOs or the UN are being implemented in collaboration with national NGOs. For more information, please see OCHA's Financial Tracking Service webpage and the oPt HF webpage.