

 Appeal

Children in Gaza need life-saving support

No safe place for children as humanitarian crisis deepens.



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The conflict in the Gaza Strip is taking a catastrophic toll on children. [More than 14,000 children have reportedly been killed](#), according to the latest estimate by the Palestinian Ministry of Health; thousands more have been injured. There are no safe spaces. All of Gaza's children have been exposed to the traumatic experiences of war, the consequences of which will last a lifetime.

Around 1.9 million people – about 9 in 10 of Gaza's population – are estimated to have been internally displaced. Half of them children. They do not have enough access to water, food, fuel and medicine. Their homes have been destroyed; their families torn apart. Many children have been displaced multiple times, and have lost homes, parents and loved ones. They need to be protected, along with the remaining services that they rely on, including medical facilities and shelter.

Gaza's children have endured unimaginable horrors – they deserve an immediate ceasefire and a chance for a peaceful future.

What is UNICEF calling for?

UNICEF continues to press world leaders on every occasion for humanitarian access to the whole of Gaza. To respond to the situation for children in Israel and the State of Palestine, UNICEF is calling for:

1. An immediate and long-lasting humanitarian ceasefire.
2. Safe and unrestricted humanitarian access to and within the Gaza Strip to reach affected populations wherever they are, including in the north. All access crossings must be opened including for sufficient fuel and materials needed to run and rehabilitate essential infrastructure and commercial supplies. Safe movement for humanitarian workers and supplies across the Gaza Strip must be guaranteed and

reliable telecommunications networks made available to coordinate response efforts.

3. The immediate, safe and unconditional release of all abducted children, and an end to any grave violations against all children, including killing and maiming of children.
4. Respect and protection for civilian infrastructure such as shelters and schools, and health, electric, water, sanitation and telecommunications facilities, to prevent loss of civilian and children's lives, outbreaks of diseases, and to provide care to the sick and wounded. All parties to the conflict must respect international humanitarian law.
5. Urgent medical cases in Gaza to be able to safely access critical health services or be allowed to leave, and for injured or sick children evacuated to be accompanied by family members.
6. Continued protection of children and their families if they are unable or unwilling to move following an evacuation order – people should be allowed to move freely to safer areas, but they should never be forced to do so.

Find out more about UNICEF's response:

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What's happening in Gaza?

Children in the State of Palestine have grown up under the shadow of recurrent violence and crushing poverty. Today, children in the Gaza Strip face the deadly effects of disease and malnutrition as ongoing conflict cuts them off from safe water, food and medicine.

Children and families are under attack

Children and their families have come under attack in the places they should be safest – their homes, shelters, hospitals and places of worship. Thousands of children have been injured and killed. Children have been reporting to hospitals with severe burns and injuries that have required amputation.

Through it all, children remain cut off from psychosocial care. Even before this latest escalation, more than 500,000 children in Gaza were identified as needing mental health and psychosocial support. Today, every child has been exposed to deeply distressing events and trauma, marked by widespread destruction and displacement. Meanwhile, parents and caregivers are themselves under intense mental strain.



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The threat of disease is soaring

Water production capacity has plummeted to just a fraction of its normal output with many water, sanitation and hygiene facilities damaged or destroyed. People have lost reliable access to safe water, toilets and washing facilities and displaced children and their families are unable to maintain the hygiene levels needed to prevent disease and chronic diarrhoea – a leading killer of young children in all emergencies. With the breakdown in sanitation and sewage treatment, the polio virus joins the list of threats, especially for the thousands of unvaccinated children.

The summer heat is also a concern. Tens of thousands of people have been crammed into a highly congested area along the beach in the burning summer heat, raising the risk of heat stress, dehydration, and the spread of disease.



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Access to nutritious food has plummeted

For many families, [the threat of dying from hunger is real](#). In late June 2024, an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report found that 96 per cent of the population were facing acute food insecurity, including almost half a million people in catastrophic conditions. A high risk of famine persists across the whole Gaza Strip as long as conflict continues and humanitarian access is restricted.

The violence has shut down lifesaving prevention and treatment services for malnutrition that were previously reaching hundreds of thousands of children. When combined and left untreated, malnutrition and disease create a deadly cycle: children with poor health and nutrition are more vulnerable to serious infections. UNICEF is particularly worried about the nutrition of pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, as well as children under two, given their specific needs and vulnerability.

How is UNICEF supporting children in Gaza?



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UNICEF continues to focus on the critical needs of children for protection and humanitarian assistance – but access remains difficult and dangerous. UNICEF staff, along with our United Nations and civil society partners, remain in Gaza but must be allowed to provide life-saving aid at scale, especially where access is most constrained. UNICEF and partners have dispatched emergency supplies including water, life-saving medicines and equipment, but much more is needed to meet the immense needs of civilians.

UNICEF is on the ground in Gaza working with partners in

these areas:

Displacement



Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)



Health



Nutrition



Child protection



Education



Social protection



For more on UNICEF's humanitarian response, access the [latest State of Palestine situation reports](#).

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What challenges does UNICEF face delivering support?



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People walk past destroyed buildings in the centre of Gaza City.

UNICEF remains on the ground, working with partners to provide supplies and support for children and families. But aid is not reaching every child in urgent need. Day after day, UNICEF and partners [face three major challenges to reach those who need it most](#): Safety, logistics and restrictions on commercial goods.

Learn more about aid delivery in Gaza



Is UNICEF operational in Israel?

In high-income countries such as Israel, Governments generally have adequate capacity to respond to emergencies. Upon request from the Government, UNICEF can extend support, such as mental health and psychosocial support for children.

In over 30 countries where UNICEF does not perform programmatic activities, [National Committees for UNICEF](#) serve as our dedicated voice, helping to raise funds for UNICEF's work worldwide, to promote children's rights, and to lift visibility for children threatened by poverty, disasters, armed conflict, abuse and exploitation. The Israeli Fund for UNICEF was established in 2009 to raise awareness of children's rights in Israel and fundraise for UNICEF's life-saving work across the world.

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Frequently asked questions on our humanitarian mandate to aid children suffering through unprecedented catastrophe

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