



An OCHA staff member dispatching polio vaccines in Deir al Balah area of the Gaza Strip. Photo by OCHA/Themba Linden, 2 September 2024

# Gaza Humanitarian Response Update | 19 August - 1 September 2024

04 Sep 2024

Period: 19 August - 1 September 2024

The information below is provided on a bi-weekly basis by Clusters and select Technical Working Groups operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). For an overview of priority needs and activities by cluster, please see the [Flash Appeal](#).

## Health

### Response

- During the reporting period, 52 Health Cluster partners were active in Gaza, with 27 reporting on their response activities. As of 1 September, there were 15 Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) supporting the local healthcare workforce, including three in northern Gaza.
- The first round of the polio vaccination campaign commenced in central Gaza on 1 September, aiming to immunize 156,583 children under the age of 10 in the area. A total of 510 teams have been deployed across central Gaza to facilitate the vaccination effort. During the first day, a total of 86,683 children were vaccinated. The campaign will be undertaken in phases, focusing on one zone at a time - starting in central Gaza, before shifting to the south, and finally to the northern governorates. The campaign will last three consecutive days in each zone and will be extended by a fourth day if needed. Round two of the campaign will aim to administer the second dose of the vaccine in four weeks' time. The overall objective is to reach over 640,000 children under 10 across the Gaza Strip in each of the two rounds. In total, 40 Health partners are participating in this joint endeavor; 17 of them operate health service points where vaccinations are being administered, while another 23 are involved in outreach efforts to inform communities about the campaign.
- The restoration of health services continues at the European Gaza Hospital in Khan Younis, with the emergency and outpatient departments and two operating theatres having now resumed functionality. An EMT will also be deployed to the facility in the upcoming weeks.
- At the Al Shifa Hospital in northern Gaza, the new emergency department and the hemodialysis unit are currently operational.
- A hemodialysis unit comprising 18 dialysis machines has been established at the new Az Zawaida Field Hospital in Deir al Balah, which was hastily opened by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), jointly with the Ministry of Health (MoH), in late August, to provide urgent care to patients who fled from the Al Aqsa Hospital.

### Challenges

- Health partners continue to face challenges in accessing health facilities in northern Gaza, which are now at risk of becoming non-functional due to severe fuel and supply shortages.
- Persistent obstacles hampering the entry of humanitarian trucks through the Kerem Shalom Crossing are causing shortages of medical supplies throughout the Gaza Strip.

- The lack of a systematic mechanism for the medical evacuation of critically ill and injured patients out of Gaza means that the waiting list of patients keeps growing while the clinical conditions of many of them continue to deteriorate.



## Nutrition



### Response

- Nutrition Cluster partners continue to conduct Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) screenings in shelters and healthcare facilities across the Gaza Strip. Since mid-January, a total of 280,591 children aged 6-59 months have been screened for malnutrition, including 168,000 in the last three months. Despite the significant scale up in the number of screenings conducted, the target to screen every child in Gaza at least once every three months is still far from being achieved. Of all screened children, 18,239 have been diagnosed with acute malnutrition, of whom 14,243 with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and 3,811 with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), including 145 suffering from SAM with medical complications. Cases identified have been receiving treatment in four Stabilization Centres and 102 Outpatient Programme sites supported by WHO, UNICEF and their partners.
- Partners strive to expand the screening of pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBW). Some 36,587 PBW have been screened since January, of whom 30,113 in the last three months; a total of 2,110 PBW have been enrolled for treatment.
- During the reporting period, frequent evacuation orders have limited partners' capacity to implement humanitarian programmes. Between 17 and 31 August, only 20,788 children under the age of five and 9,757 PBW received a 30 day-allocation of Lipid-based Nutrient Supplements (LNS-MQ), compared to 26,825 children (22 per cent decrease) and 12,728 PBW (23 per cent decrease) in the first two weeks of August. In total, out of all 346,000 children aged 6-59 months targeted in Gaza, 70,000 (about 20 per cent) received some type of supplementary feeding – either Lipid-based Nutrient Supplements or High Energy Biscuits (HEB) – during the month of August.
- Despite the challenges of bringing Ready to Use Infant Formula (RUIF) into Gaza in a temperature-controlled environment, 1,721 non-breastfed children received breast milk substitute (BMS) compared to 569 children in July and only 120 in June.



### Challenges

- The limited entry of humanitarian supplies and the loss of access to warehouses are rendering the transport and adequate storage of heavy nutrition supplies challenging, particularly in areas with limited infrastructure and resources, and for supplies that need to be stored in temperature-controlled environments (e.g., RUIF).
- Continuous displacement is disrupting access to nutrition sites and distribution cycles; hindering partners' ability to maintain consistent service delivery. Due to recurrent evacuation orders, coordinating nutrition support for newly displacement populations arriving at new shelters is becoming complex. Monitoring malnutrition cases, especially children, is challenging when they are forced to move locations for safety.



## Food Security



### Response

- As of 2 September, 14 bakeries supported by humanitarian partners were operational in the Gaza Strip - one in Khan Younis, seven in Deir al Balah, four in Gaza city and two in Jabalya. One bakery in Deir al Balah resumed operations on 26 August after being closed for over two weeks due to cooking gas shortages. Another bakery in Khan Younis reopened on 21 August, after almost eight months of closure due to the hostilities.
- As of the end of August, about 450,000 cooked meals prepared in 130 kitchens were provided daily to families across the Strip - a 35 per cent decrease compared with up to 700,000 meals provided at more than 200 kitchens in early July. This is attributed to the multiple evacuation orders issued by Israeli forces, with at least 70 kitchens forced to either suspend cooked meal provision or relocate. Partners' personnel have also been displaced, further contributing to the disruption in food response. Moreover, the limited entry of humanitarian aid in central and southern Gaza continues to result in severe shortages of food supplies and cooking gas.
- In the north, following the disruption in food distribution coverage in July and August due to the evacuation orders issued in Gaza city and North Gaza, partners have slightly increased the number of distribution points. Each family will receive a monthly ration of two food parcels (without wheat flour, as the latter is prioritized for supporting bakeries).
- Partners have resumed cooked meal provision for more than 40,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who recently returned to the Asda area of Khan Younis. Partners had previously lost access to this area due to evacuation orders. The Food Security and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Clusters have conducted joint visits to community kitchens to develop a set of technical guidance to enhance hygiene and sanitation practices in the kitchens and improve the quality of cooked meals.
- The two clusters are also working together to provide fodder and veterinary medications for surviving livestock in Gaza, including animals used for solid waste management, water transportation and other domestic uses.

- In support of the ongoing polio vaccination campaign, some food distribution points are presently being used as vaccination sites to maximize coverage.
- In late August, partners secured the entry of over 80 metric tons of gluten-free flour in northern Gaza through the Erez Crossing, while efforts continue to bring gluten-free food assistance to the central and southern parts of the Strip. As most of the food rations provided contain gluten, a significant gap persists across the Strip in supporting hundreds of people with celiac disease, Phenylketonuria and other medical conditions that require special diets.



### Challenges

- More than one million people did not receive any food rations in August in southern and central Gaza. If the flow of humanitarian aid and access conditions do not immediately improve, the food security response will be further jeopardized.
- Partners lack sufficient food stocks to meet requirements for the second consecutive month and will only be able to provide one food parcel to families in central and southern Gaza during the September distribution cycle. Insecurity, damaged roads, the breakdown of law and order, and access limitations have resulted in critical shortages of aid commodities to sustain operations, increasing the risk of spoilage and infestation of stranded food supplies due to high temperatures.
- A multi-sectoral integrated response is essential to address food insecurity, particularly during the upcoming winter season. The winterization needs of other clusters, including Shelter, WASH, Health, and Logistics, must be urgently addressed to improve the food security response. If physical road access, healthcare provision, as well as energy, water, sanitation, hygiene, and shelter conditions are further compromised, there is a high risk that the food insecurity and malnutrition situation will worsen beyond the already alarming rates observed across the Strip.
- It is anticipated that the energy crisis will further worsen in upcoming months as winter and the rainy season approach. Protracted shortages of cooking energy continue to force displaced families to burn wood from waste, which hinders proper food preparation and nutrition intake, exacerbates health and protection risks, and causes environmental hazards.
- The lack of entry of commercial supplies into northern Gaza for more than three months has resulted in a severe absence of protein sources such as meat and poultry, with only a few types of vegetables available at unaffordable prices.
- The shortage of animal feed and essential veterinary materials in the Strip affects animal health and welfare. This hinders local production of fresh nutritious food like meat and dairy products, which are key to a healthy and nutritious diet, especially for children.
- The lack of entry of seeds, fertilizers and other livestock and crop production inputs is a key obstacle hampering the restoration of local food production in Gaza. There is an urgent need to strengthen advocacy for, and implementation of, a dual-track approach to food assistance and emergency livelihood interventions. Agricultural activities, including small-scale gardening that is critical to enhance dietary diversity, remain largely suspended. The implications of missing the upcoming agricultural season will devastate people's livelihoods.



## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)



### Response

- Between 19 August and 1 September, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility/Palestinian Water Authority (CMWU/PWA) reported that the average water supply for safe drinking and domestic purposes was approximately 114,901 cubic metres per day across the Gaza Strip, or just over a quarter of water supply provided prior to October 2023. This includes 69,000 cubic metres of water produced by water wells (municipal, UNRWA, private).
- During the reporting period, WASH Cluster partners received about 18,500 litres of fuel per day, which represents only 26 per cent of the minimum daily threshold of 70,000 litres required to meet critical needs and ensure the public health objectives of the WASH sector.
- In northern Gaza, the CMWU received 12,000 litres of sodium hypochlorite solution (chlorine bleach), which are essential for water disinfection. The solution has been distributed to water production facilities across the region: 6,000 litres to Gaza city, 4,000 litres to Jabalya, and 2,000 litres to Beit Lahia.
- Additionally, the Municipality of Khan Younis, in collaboration with the CMWU, has conducted emergency repairs to the main water transmission line running from Israel to Khan Younis, which was damaged during recent military operations. This has restored water access to several areas, including Al Mawasi, where hundreds of thousands of IDPs are living under challenging conditions.
- In Deir al Balah, four out of the eight previously inaccessible water wells have been rehabilitated using materials and supplies salvaged from another four water wells destroyed in the area.



### Challenges

- WASH partners have been facing nearly impossible working conditions due to repeated evacuation orders issued by Israeli forces. These orders have led to the loss of access to warehouses and offices, staff evacuations, the relocation of programmatic activities, and weakened community connections and engagement.
- Transportation of essential items to northern Gaza are being repeatedly rejected by the Israeli authorities. These materials are essential to mitigate flooding in already flooded stormwater basins in the north.



- Fuel accessibility issues are also severely impacting operations. Fuel stations required for solid waste management are inaccessible, as are previously deconflicted temporary solid waste dumping sites. Additionally, there is a significant shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for solid waste collection workers.
- The flow of water from the main transmission line running from Israel remains at 80 per cent of capacity, with several critical water facilities lost in the past few weeks. Repair operations are urgently required to return to full capacity as soon as possible.



## Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)



### Response

- Between 19 August and 1 September, despite Israeli-issued evacuation orders and minimal resources, Shelter Cluster partners provided 293 family tents and 256 sealing off kits to people displaced within Khan Younis or from parts of Deir al Balah to other locations. The small numbers of people assisted in comparison to the thousands in need is due to the lack of stocks and logistical constraints, with few partners having any items to support households with emergency shelter and essential items.
- In northern Gaza, partners provided 100 tents and a small number of sealing-off kits to support some of the people affected by evacuation orders and those attempting to return to their damaged homes.



### Challenges

- The severe lack of shelter materials and NFIs, which is particularly acute in central and southern Gaza, continues to hamper the Cluster's ability to implement a meaningful response, mainly due to access and logistical impediments and the breakdown of law and order. The inability to use the Kerem Shalom Crossing to bring humanitarian items into Gaza is a key obstacle.
- Restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities on the transport of shelter materials between northern and southern Gaza means that partners cannot cover needs as they develop.
- Recurrent displacement and access impediments continue to hinder the ability of Cluster partners to carry out assessments and acquire a comprehensive understanding of needs.



## Site Management Working Group (SMWG)



### Response

- During the reporting period, SMWG partners monitored 36 sites in the Khan Younis, Deir al Balah, Gaza, and North Gaza governorates, where more than 60,396 people are estimated to be residing.
- On 22 and 29 August, the outcomes of site monitoring assessments were shared with other Clusters to help them direct the response where gaps have been identified.
- For the first time, SMWG partners gathered data that will help geographically map the responses, existing gaps and devote more resources to underserved areas.



### Challenges

- Toolkits, including solar lighting, and construction materials like cement and bricks, which are necessary to implement site improvement and maintenance, are either absent from the market or available at exorbitant prices, limiting partners' ability to implement site-level works.
- Constant population movement across Gaza due to evacuation orders and the rapid pace of developments on the ground make it challenging for partners to implement an effective site management response.



## Protection



### Response

- The multiple evacuation orders issued in Khan Younis and Deir al Balah since mid-August have deeply impacted the Protection Cluster's operations, with many partners forced to suspend their activities until further notice. Some service providers had to close service delivery points due to acute security or access constraints, while others were unable to relocate to alternative places.

- In particular, two Child Protection partners relocated out of Deir al Balah, while another two suspended activities as their offices were in areas designated for evacuation. This also disrupted their supply chain and case management.
- Six Gender-Based Violence (GBV) service providers had to suspend operations in Khan Younis and Deir al Balah, including medical care for GBV survivors. One safe space providing support to women and girls at risk of GBV was forced to shut down. The GBV Sub-Cluster is working on updating the map of available services to reflect changes on the ground.
- In-person Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) sessions were temporarily suspended following the evacuation orders in Deir al Balah and Khan Younis but have now largely resumed. Digital EORE campaigns using SMS, radio and social media have continued without disruptions. During the reporting period, one Explosive Hazard Assessment (EHA) was also completed.



### Challenges

- Insecurity, the disruption of aid flows, the breakdown of law and order, and the denial of entry of critical items continue to hinder the Protection response. Denied items include sanitary pads, dignity, and Menstrual Hygiene Management Kits (MHM) for women and girls, recreational materials for children, as well as assistive devices for persons with disabilities. Minimum standard Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) equipment and EORE materials are still unable to be imported into Gaza, therefore limiting the capacity of the Mine Action response.
- Shortage of tents affects the ability to expand group-based psycho-social support and provide safe spaces or temporary accommodation for unaccompanied children. The limited availability of supplies on the local market, including MHM and dignity kits has disproportionate impact on women and girls at risk of GBV and increases their vulnerability to diseases and violence.
- Widespread blackouts, poor connectivity, and limited access to communications services, coupled with fuel shortages and damage to key infrastructure continue to curtail mobility.
- Repeated evacuation orders, ensuing displacements, and limited access to areas affected by hostilities, including in northern Gaza, place vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and the elderly, at heightened risk of family separation and GBV. They also continue to constrain community outreach, referral pathways, and protection activities, including proper case management for GBV and child protection.
- Cash shortages continue to hinder the use of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) by some recipients, negatively impacting living conditions, increasing the risk of exposure to violence or exploitation for women and girls, and hampering the ability of partners to pay local service providers and staff salaries.



## Education



### Response

- During the reporting period, Education Cluster partners have made remarkable efforts to reach more than 40,000 students and teachers across Khan Younis, Deir al Balah, Gaza, and North Gaza (57 per cent females and 43 per cent males), providing them with recreational and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), as well as informal learning opportunities.
- During the reporting period, 43 new Temporary Learning Spaces (TLSs) were established in Khan Younis and Deir al Balah to expand informal learning opportunities to an additional 10,000 students. Cumulatively, Cluster partners have established 91 TLSs. This is in addition to the 84 community-led initiatives mapped across the Gaza Strip to date, that continue to provide children with opportunities to access some form of learning. (Details: Education Cluster 5W dashboard).



### Challenges

- The conflict continues to have a devastating impact on education. As of 27 August, 9,839 students and 411 educational staff had been killed, while more than 15,394 students and 2,411 teachers had been injured since 7 October.
- Repeated evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military are severely hampering the Cluster response. During the reporting period, at least 21 partner-led TLSs located in areas designated for evacuation were forced to shut down; as a result, 2,975 students have lost access to learning opportunities.
- Restrictions on educational supply entry are also limiting learning activities' effectiveness. In the TLSs, teachers lack teaching aids and children do not have learning kits, which hinders their engagement in learning. Additionally, there is a lack of recreational and MHPSS supplies, reducing children's participation in planned activities.



## Emergency Telecommunications (ETC)



### Response

- The first batch of 25 “Track24” satellite-based devices, which allow real-time monitoring of UN mission movements inside Gaza, was delivered to the World Food Programme (WFP) office in Jerusalem on 21 August. The ETC Cluster is engaging to obtain approval from the Israeli authorities to transport these devices into Gaza. An additional 73 devices are currently being procured. In total, 98 Track24 devices are needed to support 12 UN agencies operating in Gaza.
- On 20 August, the Cluster collaborated with UNRWA and WFP to establish internet connectivity at a new UN inter-agency residence set up in Gaza city to support the expansion of humanitarian response efforts in northern Gaza. The ETC team is planning to provide internet connectivity at this hub as part of the ETC's common services for humanitarian responders in Gaza.
- On 19 August, the ETC Cluster handed over to UNRWA one of the four solar-powered solution kits imported to Gaza to support the humanitarian operations of UN agencies in Khan Younis. Previously, on 27 July, another kit had been provided to the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to ensure uninterrupted power supply at the Gaza Security Operations Centre (SOC), ensuring 24/7 operations.
- The ETC Cluster continues to advocate for the need to import more telecommunications equipment into Gaza to set up common communications services. For more information on ETC activities, please visit: [Conflict | Emergency Telecommunications Cluster \(ETC\) \(etcluster.org\)](https://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/etcluster.org).



### Challenges

- Due to increased restrictions on the movement of commodities, damaged infrastructure and lack of fuel and spare parts, local Mobile Network Operators and Internet Service Providers in the Gaza Strip are experiencing network outages and are unable to conduct the necessary repairs. Current conditions also continue to render it difficult to maintain the functionality of the remaining network and have resulted in the loss of connectivity in Rafah.
- The availability of telecommunications equipment is severely limited, hampering the delivery of ETC services. A significant amount of equipment has been damaged or destroyed, and the import of new equipment is lengthy and challenging. Only 20 satellite phones, 30 VHF digital radios, four VHF repeaters and four solar power solutions have been coordinated for importation into Gaza with the Israeli authorities since 7 October 2023.
- Increasing insecurity, displacement, and relocation of staff from Rafah to Deir al Balah have rendered it difficult to deploy shared ETC communications services or provide face-to-face technical support for humanitarian responders.
- The lack of funding has limited the ETC Cluster's capacity to address immediate communications needs for humanitarian responders in Gaza. Thus far, less than 32 per cent of funding requested by the Cluster (US\$1.8 million) under the updated OPT Flash Appeal has been received.



## IASC Protection from Sexual and Exploitation Abuse (PSEA) Network



### Response

- The PSEA Network continues to promote the SAWA hotline which handles requests, complaints, and provides MHPSS and referrals. In the first half of August, the hotline answered approximately 5,600 calls, addressing over 3,000 individual cases, 1,400 of which concerned women and over 1,700 concerned men. Among these, over 1,000 individuals received dedicated MHPSS sessions, and the hotline referred more than 3,000 callers to various inter-agency services.
- In July, UNICEF and another partner reached 355,011 IDPs with PSEA awareness campaigns, safeguarding messages, and information on safe reporting channels. They also implemented Community-Led Initiatives (CLIs), finalizing 20 projects, and identifying 20 new ones, primarily in the central and southern parts of the Gaza Strip. However, access to community groups in northern Gaza remains limited due to lack of consistent access.
- The PSEA Network conducted PSEA Training-of-Trainer (ToT) sessions for 31 humanitarian workers (21 females and 10 males) involved in the Gaza response and currently stationed in Egypt.
- A risk mitigation workshop was also held for 14 representatives of key humanitarian agencies.



### Challenges

- Limited access to northern Gaza.
- Ensuring comprehensive coverage and effective communication across all areas in Gaza.

Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) remains a cross-cutting priority for all clusters. Aid distribution must be delivered with dignity and respect. Any wrongdoing can be reported through SAWA toll-free number 164. SAWA will assist and provide services free of charge and with the utmost confidentiality.