

GAZA WATER SUPPLY IS JUST 17% OF PRE-SIEGE LEVELS, DESPITE NEW FUEL ANNOUNCEMENT

Press Releases

- Published: **17 Nov 2023**
- Short URL: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/mc/76teq8/>

Total bottled water delivered into Gaza so far is equivalent to just 1.6 litres per person

The amount of water available to people trapped in Gaza will still be just 17 per cent of pre-siege levels, despite the Israeli government announcing that two trucks of fuel will now be allowed in each day, Oxfam warned. Current fuel levels have made water treatment, pumping and distribution virtually impossible. All water, fuel and food to Gaza was cut off by the siege implemented by the Israeli government on 9 October.

Over 344 million litres of total water were available in Gaza via groundwater wells and pipelines before the siege. Currently, only 58 million litres - less than a fifth - is available. Without fuel, this would drop to less than 25 million litres - seven per cent. The total water is for both municipal and domestic use. The bare minimum international standard in an emergency is 15 litres per person, per day. People are already having to survive on rationing between 1-3 litres a day for all water use and are resorting to drinking sea and untreated water.

Analysis shows that the total bottled water delivered since aid trucks were allowed into Gaza via the Rafah crossing on 21 October to 12 November is equivalent to just 1.6 litres per

person. No aid has entered via the Rafah crossing since 14 November, despite a small amount of fuel allowed in on Wednesday for exclusive UN truck use.

Oxfam is a member of the UN water and sanitation cluster with other international aid agencies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Analysis from the cluster outlines the devastating impact of no fuel on Gaza's water supply and availability. If fuel runs out, the only water supply into Gaza is via two Israeli pipelines that would provide just seven per cent of the pre-war quantities of water, in a best-case scenario. There has also been significant damage reported to water and sanitation infrastructure across Gaza: out of 592 facilities, 263 - nearly half - are reported to be potentially damaged by airstrikes.

Gastroenteritis and dehydration are spreading and the risk of water borne disease is rife. Oxfam partner Juzoor is working in the north of Gaza and in Gaza City supporting people living in temporary shelters. They said the lack of water is a major problem, with contaminated water causing a lot of health issues, particularly among children. An Oxfam member of staff in Gaza said: "The water is disgusting, most people are having to drink brackish water from wells. There is no electricity, so we have to fill buckets and carry up to the roof tank. Our whole family are sick with diarrhoea."

Over 70 per cent of the population – 1.6 million people – are displaced, 795,000 of whom are crowded into 154 UN shelters. Over 30,000 children in the shelters are already reported to be sick with dehydration and malnutrition and thousands of cases of acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea and chicken pox have been reported among people taking refuge. The humanitarian situation is increasingly dire:

- Prior to the siege, 1.3 million litres of industrial and vehicle fuel and 366 tonnes of cooking gas would enter Gaza every day.
- Just 1,121 trucks of aid have entered the Gaza Strip in the 40 days since 9 October. This is estimated to have met the needs of just 3,000 to 5,000 people a day.
- Many supermarkets across Gaza are no longer able to stock bottled water, bread or even canned food which many people have been falling back on to survive.
- The last functioning mill in Gaza was reportedly destroyed on 15 November which means that locally produced flour will no longer be available.
- Oxfam partners supporting families sheltering in community centres confirmed that in some shelters, more than 3,000 people are sharing just 10 toilets between them

Sally Abil Khalil, Oxfam's Middle East Regional Director said: "It is grotesque that people in Gaza are being forced to endure such inhumane conditions. How much longer is Israel going to be allowed to operate with impunity? Drinking water, food, fuel, medicine – these are the very basic elements of human subsistence – denying them breaks International Humanitarian Law.

"There has been no functioning water and sanitation system for 40 days, sewage is overflowing into the streets and people are drinking dirty water to survive. Bottled water and canned food is now running out, the last items some people were fortunate enough to fall back on to feed their families.

"It is clear that if Israel is allowed to continue its military campaign without meeting its legal responsibilities toward protecting and provisioning innocent civilians, the whole of Gaza is effectively being handed a death sentence. The world leaders who are supporting Israel and blocking global calls for a ceasefire are aiding and abetting them at every turn."

Oxfam is calling for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages without conditions and full access for the delivery of humanitarian aid via both Israel and Egypt.

Ends

Spokespersons are available for interviews. To arrange, contact:

David Nieto in France | david.nieto@oxfam.org | +972 54 669 3992

Roslyn Boatman in Greece | roslyn.boatman@oxfam.org | +216 29076 086

Notes to editor

The water and sanitation cluster assessment can be found [here](#). The bottled water calculation uses the population and quantity of bottled water delivered from 21st October – 12th November figures on pages 1 and 2

On 15 November, the Israeli government allowed 23,000 litres of fuel into Gaza, for exclusive UN truck use

PRESS CONTACT

For comments, interviews, or information please contact **Lisa Rutherford (Senior Press Officer)**:

Mobile: **+447917791836**

Email: **lrutherford@oxfam.org.uk**

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