



A United Nations team attempting to deliver fuel to Nasser hospital through destroyed roads. The Israeli military operation in Nasser hospital is ongoing. Photo by OCHA/Themba Linden, 16 February 2024

# Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #121

19 Feb 2024

## Key points

- Intense Israeli bombardment from air, land and sea continues to be reported across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of civilian infrastructure. Widespread ground operations and heavy fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups also continue to be reported, especially in Khan Younis and Deir al Balah. Between 17 and 19 February, tens of rockets were also reportedly fired by armed Palestinians toward Israel.
- Between the afternoon of 16 February and noon on 19 February, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 234 Palestinians were killed and 350 Palestinians were injured, including 107 killed and 145 injured in the last 24 hours. Between 7 October 2023 and noon on 19 February 2024, at least 29,092 Palestinians were killed in Gaza and 69,028 Palestinians were injured, according to MoH in Gaza.
- As of February 2024, according to the [Israel Prison Service](#) (IPS), there are nearly 9,000 Palestinians in Israeli custody, including 3,484 administrative detainees (39 per cent) held without trial. These figures do not include detainees from the Gaza Strip held by the Israeli military.
- Between the afternoons of 16 and 19 February, one Israeli soldier was reported killed in Gaza. As of 19 February, 233 soldiers have been killed and 1,373 soldiers injured in Gaza since the beginning of the ground operation, according to the Israeli military. In addition, over 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed in Israel, according to the Israeli authorities, the vast majority on 7 October. As of 19 February, the Israeli authorities estimate that about 134 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza and reportedly include fatalities whose bodies are being withheld.
- As of 19 February, the Israeli military operation in the Nasser Hospital complex in Khan Younis continues. On 18 February, the UN and the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) visited the hospital and evacuated 14 patients. Prior to that, WHO Director-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, [reported](#) that a WHO team was not permitted to enter the hospital to assess the conditions of the patients and critical medical needs, despite reaching the hospital compound to deliver fuel. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, Israeli forces have arrested 70 medical personnel, including an intensive care doctor and the Director of Surgery, and eight patients died due to the depletion of oxygen. Negotiations are ongoing to allow for the evacuation of the remaining patients. The Israeli military [stated](#) that it had discovered weapons and a vehicle taken from an Israeli kibbutz on 7 October inside the compound, had arrested hundreds of suspects, and was providing medical supplies and resources to the hospital.
- The situation in Al Amal Hospital in Khan Younis continues to be critical, following a 28-day siege by the Israeli military. On 19 February, PRCS [reported](#) a decrease in fuel reserves to generate electricity for high-risk patients and a near exhaustion of food supplies. On 18 February, PRCS [reported](#) that the third floor of the hospital sustained damage by artillery shelling and the destruction of the central maintenance room. On 17 February, PRCS [published](#) images showing signs of what they assess to be torture of two doctors who had been detained from Al Amal hospital by Israeli forces on 9 February. Twelve PRCS staff members continue to be [detained](#) by Israeli forces, according to PRCS. Notwithstanding the lack of blood units and medical personnel, the medical team successfully [performed](#) an urgent cesarian section for a pregnant woman at Al Amal hospital on 16 February.
- Public health concerns are reportedly mounting across Gaza, disproportionately affecting women. This is due to continued bombardment, the lack of essential food and water supplies, the collapsing health system, and limited access to those in need of

urgent assistance. On 16 February, the UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)) highlighted that 500,000 cases of communicable disease, including meningitis and acute diarrhoea, have been reported across Gaza, emphasizing the particular vulnerabilities facing women: “Everyone in Gaza is hungry, including 50,000 pregnant women, with malnutrition making them more susceptible to disease and less able to recover.” Underscoring the immense risks facing pregnant women in Gaza, UNFPA [warned](#): “If the bombs don't kill pregnant women, if disease, hunger and dehydration don't catch up with them, simply giving birth could.”

- As of 17 February, up to 1.7 million people have been displaced across the Gaza Strip, many multiple times, according to [UNRWA](#). Following intense Israeli bombardment and fighting in Khan Younis and Deir al Balah in recent days, a significant number of Palestinians has moved to Rafah, where the influx of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has overwhelmed the capacity of health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services to meet the needs of the population. Between 150 and 155 UNRWA installations continue to shelter IDPs in extremely overcrowded conditions. According to the Education Cluster, some 92 per cent of all school buildings in Gaza are being used as shelters for IDPs and/or have sustained varying levels of damage during the conflict. UNRWA estimates that at least 396 IDPs sheltering in its shelters have been killed and at least 1,383 injured since 7 October and 158 UNRWA staff members killed during this period.

## Hostilities and casualties (Gaza Strip)

The following are among the deadliest incidents reported between 16 and 18 February:

- On 16 February, in the early morning, seven Palestinians were reportedly killed, and others injured, when a residential building in An Naser neighbourhood, in northern Rafah, was hit.
- On 16 February, at about 20:00, at least ten Palestinians were reportedly killed, when a residential building in northern Gaza city was hit.
- On 17 February, at about 10:30, seven Palestinians were reportedly killed, when a residential building in Ash Sheikh Redwan neighbourhood, in Gaza city, was struck.
- On 17 February, at about 15:00, 20 Palestinians were reportedly killed, when a number of residential buildings in An Nuseirat Camp, in Deir al Balah, were hit.
- On 17 February, at about 15:20, ten Palestinians were reportedly killed, when a residential building in Deir al Balah was hit.
- On 17 February, at about 19:00, seven Palestinians, including two children and one woman, were reportedly killed, and other were injured, when a residence that was reportedly sheltering IDPs, in eastern Rafah, was hit.
- On 18 February, at about 5:30, seven Palestinians were reportedly killed, when a residential building in Az Zawayda, in Deir al Balah, was hit. Forty other people have reportedly remained under the rubble.

## West Bank Updates

- On 16 February, two Israeli men were shot and killed in southern Israel, and four others including a child were injured, by a Palestinian man from Shu'fat refugee camp in East Jerusalem. The Palestinian man was then shot and killed by an armed Israeli civilian. Following the incident, Israeli forces closed the checkpoint leading to Shu'fat Refugee camp and raided the camp.
- On 18 February, Israeli forces, including undercover units, shot and killed two Palestinian men in Tulkarm Refugee camp, during an exchange of fire with a Palestinian man whose body was later withheld by Israeli forces. The second fatality was an unarmed Palestinian who was reportedly killed by an Israeli army sniper while standing on the rooftop of his house. The four-hour military operation took place during school hours, impacting 1,356 pupils and 61 education staff inside four UNRWA schools in the camp. Also on 18 February, Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian man at Beit Furik checkpoint in Nablus. According to the Israeli military, the man was asked to stop and was shot when he refused to do so. Israeli forces withheld the body of the man for three hours.
- Since 7 October 2023 and as of 18 February, 393 Palestinians have been killed, including 100 children, and 4,511 Palestinians, including 699 children, have been injured in conflict-related incidents across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. During the same period, 12 Israelis, including four members of Israeli forces, were killed and 80 injured in conflict-related incidents in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Israel.
- Since 7 October 2023 and as of 16 February, OCHA has recorded 558 Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians that resulted in Palestinian casualties (50 incidents), damage to Palestinian-owned property (447 incidents), or both casualties and damage to property (61 incidents).
- Since 7 October 2023, 524 people, including 256 children, have been displaced in Area C and East Jerusalem after their homes were demolished due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are almost impossible to obtain.
- On 13 February, four Palestinian houses were rendered uninhabitable by Israeli bulldozers during a raid on Jenin refugee camp. Some 16 Palestinians were displaced, including three children. Roads inside the camp were also bulldozed, causing significant damage to sewage networks. Since 7 October 2023, 830 Palestinians, including 337 children, have been displaced, following the destruction of 131 homes during operations carried out by Israeli forces across the West Bank. About 95 per cent of the displacement was reported in the refugee camps of Jenin, Nur Shams and Tulkarm.

## Funding

- The [Flash Appeal](#) for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), which requests US\$1.2 billion to meet critical needs of 2.7 million people across the oPt (2.2 million in the Gaza Strip and 500,000 in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem), was extended through the end of March 2024. As of 19 February, member states disbursed nearly \$901 million against the updated Flash Appeal (73 per cent); this includes \$612 million out of \$629 million (97 per cent) requested for October-December 2023 and \$289 million out of \$600 million (48 per cent) requested for January-March 2024. For funding analysis, please see the Flash Appeal Financial Tracking [dashboard](#).
- The occupied Palestinian territory Humanitarian Fund ([oPt HF](#)) and the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) are currently funding more than 94 ongoing projects in the Gaza Strip to meet urgent humanitarian needs, notwithstanding constraints on the entry and delivery of aid into and within the Gaza Strip. These interventions, totalling about \$77 million, address needs in the areas of food security, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health and protection. Since October 7, the oPt HF has received a total of \$88 million in contributions from member states and private donors. Private donations are collected directly through the [Humanitarian Fund](#).

## HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND RESPONSE UPDATES | 13–19 February

### Food Security

#### Needs

- The humanitarian situation in North Gaza and Gaza governorates is extremely critical, exacerbating the challenges faced in delivering essential aid. The food security situation in the Middle Area and southern governorates is particularly acute, with the majority of the population in extreme hunger.
- In Rafah, the situation is becoming increasingly concerning, given the expected ground attack. People in Rafah are reported to be stopping aid trucks to take food and eat it immediately, highlighting the severity of their desperation and hunger.
- There is an urgent need to augment the fleet of delivery trucks to ensure the entire population's nutritional requirements are met and to improve healthcare services, including primary health services, routine immunization coverage, and the provision of medication for non-communicable diseases.
- Vulnerable segments of the population, including children, the elderly, and individuals with underlying health conditions, are particularly susceptible to the risk of malnutrition. Partners are working to ensure that aid reaches these vulnerable groups.
- Establishing secure and uninterrupted humanitarian corridors in Gaza, with the support of the private sector and a focus on critical resources like fuel and cooking gas, is essential to address the immediate needs of the affected population and support the overall humanitarian response.

#### Response

- Between 12 and 18 February, a total of 14 partners engaged in providing food assistance across the Gaza Strip. Around 1.5 million people were reached, with Rafah Governorate receiving about 32 per cent of the total food assistance, followed by Deir al Balah (28 per cent), Khan Younis (26 per cent), and northern Gaza Strip (14 per cent).

#### Challenges and Gaps

- Ongoing airstrikes and heavy fighting in Gaza continue to affect the flow of food supply, posing challenges for safe and efficient operations. Frequent border closures, restrictions, and security concerns hinder the ability to ensure a consistent and dependable food supply.
- The escalation of hostilities has substantially damaged critical infrastructure, including roads, electricity, and water supply systems, exacerbating severe impediments to the efficient distribution of food.

### Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

#### Needs

- Some 1.7 million people are in need of shelter and NFI assistance across the Gaza Strip.
- Urgent needs are tents, sealing-off kits (SOKs) and NFIs, including bedding, kitchen sets, and winter clothing. SOKs can be used to consolidate makeshift shelters or to protect damaged housing to facilitate return where possible.
- Partners estimate that the amount of debris generated by the destruction of residential housing residential housing units will exceed 12,000 metric tons and will take over four years to remove, given Gaza's current capabilities.

#### Response

- Since the start of hostilities, cluster partners reached about 900,000 people with partial shelter and NFI assistance. Partial assistance means that although a household has received some shelter and NFI items, not all their needs have been met.
- During the reporting period, cluster partners distributed 7,900 bedding items, 1,600 SOKs and 340 clothing kits to IDPs sheltering outside of UN shelters in Rafah.

- Some 28,000 tents, 7,600 SOKs, and 35,000 NFI kits are currently in the pipeline.
- At present, there are 26 cluster partners operating in Gaza. The vast majority of assistance is currently provided in-kind; cash will be pursued further when market conditions allow.
- Further details in the [Cluster response strategy](#) and website dashboard.

### Challenges and Gaps

- Slow entry of items into Gaza due to limited aid trucks and complicated bureaucratic and procurement processes.
- Rising prices of shelter materials in neighbouring markets, including high freight rates and shipping costs.
- Need to restore commercial imports and re-establish local markets to relieve pressure on in-kind provision.
- Restrictions on or denial of the entry of key shelter items including timber, hand tools, and cooking stoves.
- Lack of security and access to IDP locations, lack of fuel, and rising social tensions because of the limited quantity of aid available in comparison to outstanding needs.
- Unplanned sites and lack of adequate equipment is leading to water damage to makeshift shelters and tents, and recurrent displacement resulting in the need for re-distribution of assistance.
- Urgent funding is needed to address the key gaps in the supply of shelter and NFIs. As of 19 February, only 28 per cent of the Shelter Cluster funding requirement (\$209.2M) has been funded.

## Protection

### Needs

- Main needs include identification, tracing and reunification, and interim and alternative care arrangements of unaccompanied, previously detained and separated children.
- There is an urgent need to provide Mental Health and Psychological Support (MHPSS), including psychological first aid (PFA); winterization materials, including warm clothing and blanket, for children and new-born babies.
- There is urgent need to provide essential supplies, including menstrual management (MHM) kits and hygiene kits for women and girls.

### Response

- In January, Child Protection Area of Responsibility (AoR) partners reached 111,202 boys and girls, and 2,633 women and men through awareness raising interventions; MHPSS for children and caregivers; identification and registration of Unaccompanied and Separated Children (USAC); and distribution of clothing kits.
- Partners distributed essential supplies, including Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) kits and hygiene kits for women and girls. A total of 3,500 Dignity Kits and 8,926 MHM kits have been distributed by Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Sub-Cluster partners.
- GBV responders are conducting procurement and distribution of Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) kits, and identification of health service points to provide CMR. Partners are also trying to establish emergency safe spaces, to provide PFA and recreational activities for vulnerable women and girls. Partners continue to expand PFA services for vulnerable groups, including GBV survivors, through frontline responders.

### Challenges and Gaps

- The increased hostilities in Rafah governorate pose a significant threat for partners providing lifesaving protection services in the governorate. There is a lack of available space to provide group-based psychosocial support activities, due to the population density.
- Limited access to other governorates prevents thousands of affected people from being reached with critical protection services.

## Education

### Needs

- More than 625,000 students and nearly 23,000 teachers in the Gaza Strip have been affected by school closures and attacks on education, leaving them with no access to education or safe places.
- According to the Ministry of Education, as of 13 February, more than 5,055 students and 246 educational staff have been killed and more than 8,497 students and 836 teachers have been injured in Gaza since 7 October.
- Some 92 per cent of all school buildings in Gaza are being used as shelters for IDPs and/or have sustained varying levels of damage. Some 394 schools (79.5 per cent of the total school buildings in Gaza) have sustained damage, including 142 schools that sustained major damage or were destroyed. Combined, these schools previously served some 459,231 children and more

than 17,110 teachers. The North, Gaza, and Khan Younis governorates have been especially impacted, accounting for 76 per cent of all damaged schools (source: [Education Cluster Damaged School Dashboard](#).)

- The Education Cluster conducted a [Satellite-derived Damage Assessment](#) of all Gaza schools to verify damage to schools based on proximity to damaged sites. Key findings include:
  - -Satellite-derived Damage verification exercise confirmed the large level of damage to schools previously reported by the cluster in Gaza.
  - -Actual damages to school infrastructure might be 15 to 20 per cent higher than what has been previously reported by the Education Cluster.
  - -At least 55 per cent of schools in Gaza will either need full reconstruction or major rehabilitation work to be functional again.
  - -One quarter of directly hit and damaged schools are UNRWA-run schools.
  - -Forty-five per cent of school buildings that have been used by IDPs as shelters, have been either directly hit or damaged.
  - -The satellite-derived images provide evidence for the military use of schools.
- Education partners are concerned about reports, videos and pictures depicting schools being used for military operations by Israeli forces, including their use as detention and interrogation centres, or as military bases.
- Key priorities include the provision of Education in Emergencies (EiE) recreational activities and psychological support, including Social Emotional Learning (SEL) activities to children in shelters and designated emergency shelters (DESS); establishing Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) in shelters/DESS to start non-formal learning for children; and provision of emergency supplies and learning kits. In addition, a key need is to identify and support of children with disabilities and other needs, with assistive devices for learning.

#### Response

- Since October 2023, eleven partners have reached more than 160,975 students and teachers with psychosocial support, emergency learning, recreational supplies and activities, and awareness sessions in the Deir al Balah, Khan Younis, and Rafah governorates. Most of the cluster responses are delivered by local partners (source: [Education Cluster 5W dashboard](#)).

#### Challenges and Gaps

- No activities have been undertaken in the North Gaza and Gaza governorates due to ongoing hostilities and access challenges.
- As of 18 February, the education response remains significantly underfunded, receiving less than 10 per cent of its requirements. Urgent funding is required to meet immediate response requirements.

## Logistics

#### Response

- As of 18 February 2024, the Logistics Cluster has stored 7,256 cubic metres of cargo on behalf of 17 organisations, and so far supported 21 organisations with cargo notification service in Rafah.
- Of relief items transported through the Jordanian corridor, the Logistics Cluster facilitated partners' access to the inter-agency convoy, transporting a total of 6,159 metric tons of relief items on 463 WFP trucks on behalf of six partners.
- The Logistics Cluster has circulated the Compiled Logistics Supplier List through the mailing list. The aggregated list comes from partners to partners and is intended to ease access to and exchange of information; it is the list is based on partners' vendors'/suppliers' contributions. The list will be circulated on a regular basis.

#### Challenges and Gaps

- The storage and transport capacity inside Gaza remains limited. The Logistics Cluster continues to facilitate access to temporary storage, transport from handover points to common warehouses, and cargo notification trans-shipment services.
- The Logistics Cluster is coordinating the pipeline for incoming cargo through the Egyptian and Jordanian corridors for the coming three months. This is a vital exercise for operational planning, in terms of understanding the resources available and making allocations based on the prioritization list. Partners have received a dedicated form and are requested to update it weekly. Partners who have not received the form can reach out to [palestine.logcluster@wfp.org](mailto:palestine.logcluster@wfp.org).

## Emergency Telecommunications

#### Needs

- Recurrent telecommunications shutdown in the Gaza Strip continues to restrict people from accessing life-saving information and is impeding other forms of humanitarian response.

#### Response

- On 12 February, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator received approval from the Israeli authorities to import 30 digital Very High Frequency (VHF) handheld radios for the use of UN agencies in Gaza, and solar solutions to power radio repeaters. Since its establishment on 3 November 2023, the ETC has been engaging with the Israeli authorities to obtain authorizations to import all essential telecommunications equipment into Gaza and provide independent access to communications for humanitarian responders.
- Since 9 January, the ETC has supported humanitarian agencies with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) assessments, technical advice and information, repairs, and guidance on the use of ICT equipment in Gaza. To date, the ETC has conducted eight ICT assessments across four locations in Rafah and supported 14 humanitarian agencies with ICT repairs, technical advice, and guidance on the use of ICT equipment, in order to maximize the available telecommunications resources on the ground.

### Challenges and Gaps

- Limited access to electricity, fuel, and telecommunications services continues to hamper the humanitarian response in Gaza.
- The import of telecommunications equipment into Gaza is fraught, lengthy, and extremely challenging.

## Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)

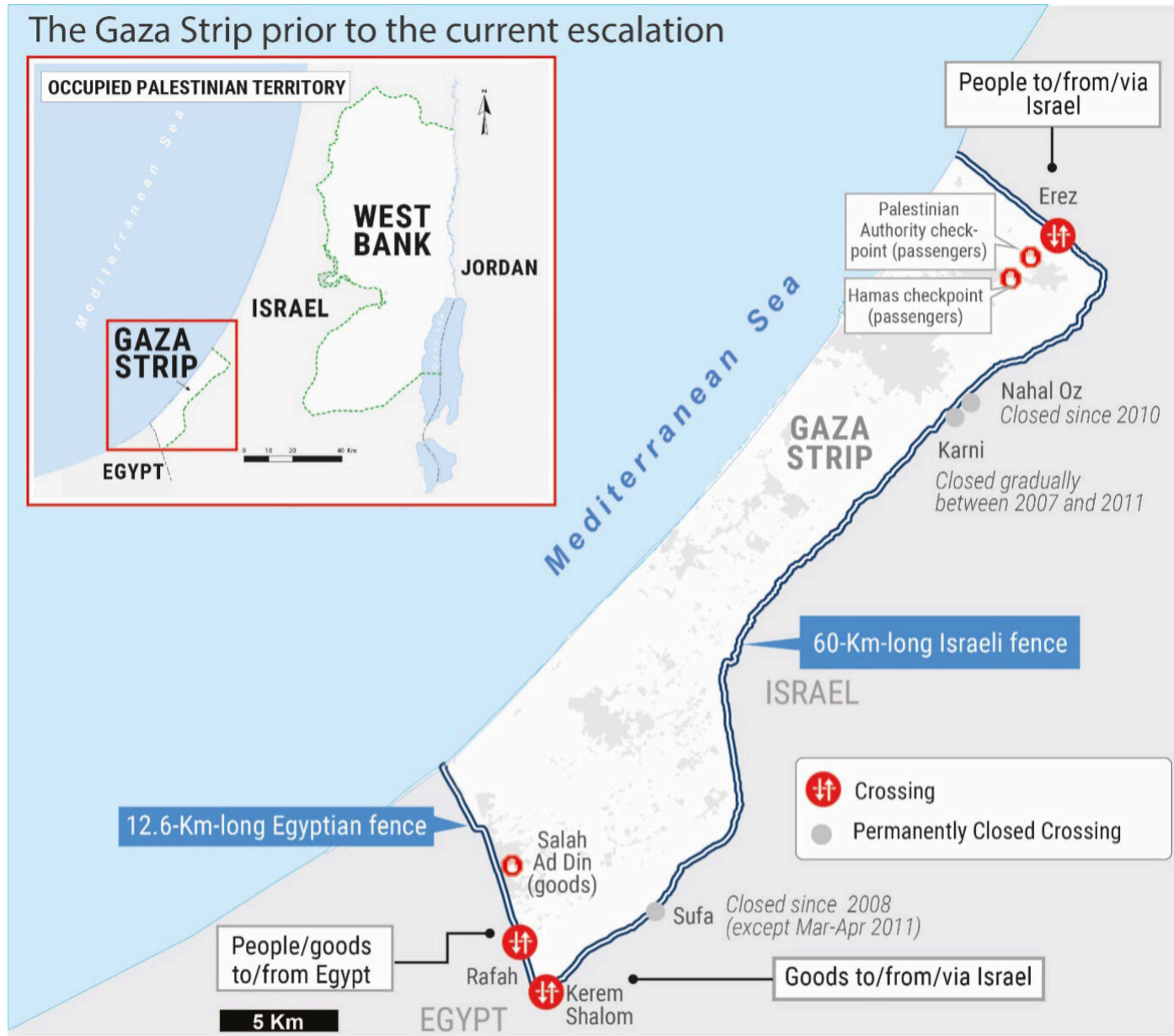
### Response

- Since the start of hostilities, one round of emergency MPCA was delivered to some 130,000 households, a top-up was delivered to 35,000 people (including people with disabilities and nursing mothers), and over 21,000 households have received a second round.
- Around 93,000 households have cashed out their assistance since 7 October. Around 5,400 payments have been cancelled after not being cashed out for months, despite multiple follow ups. Cash out operations are currently almost exclusively in the southern governorates.
- Provided assistance falls well short of need under the recurrent in-extremis circumstances, particularly given market collapse and price volatility. The last post-distribution monitoring data (PDMD) showed a significant decrease in the number of people who reported being able to meet all their needs with the received assistance, combined with a major decrease in the number of people who reported not being able to cover any need. Overall, some 70 per cent of respondents reported that the assistance helped them access needed basic goods and services.
- Based on the last PDMD collected between mid-January and mid-February, food remains the most purchased item with humanitarian cash (80 per cent), followed by medicines (39 per cent), water (23 per cent), hygiene bedding (10 per cent), and transportation.

### Challenges and Gaps

- Poor electricity supply and connectivity is affecting the ability of financial service providers to make cash accessible, compromising the encashment of the MPCA package.
- Since late December, commercial trucks have sporadically entered Gaza, with 770 trucks recorded up to date. Truck vendors sell goods on the streets and in informal markets, complicating efforts to track distributions and gather market data. Informal markets are the primary source of accessible goods. Currently, there is limited market data available on informal markets/street vendors due to challenges with collecting data about informal market transactions.

**Protection against sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA) remains a cross-cutting priority for all clusters. The SAWA helpline, reachable at 121 and through WhatsApp at +972 59-4040121 (East Jerusalem at 1-800-500-121), operates 24/7. This toll-free number is widely disseminated across all areas of intervention to report cases of SEA and to facilitate emergency counselling and referrals for affected communities to access life-saving services. The PSEA Network monitors calls daily and will increase the number of counsellors if necessary.**



\* Asterisks indicate that a figure, sentence, or section has been rectified, added, or retracted after the initial publication of this update.