



A steep rise in malnutrition is being reported among children and pregnant and breastfeeding women in Gaza, as food and safe water become increasingly scarce and disease proliferates. A boy from a displaced family with a fortified biscuit provided as humanitarian assistance in southern Gaza. Photo by WFP/Ali Jadallahun

Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #122

20 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 Gaza city, Khan Younis and Deir al Balah.
- Between the afternoons of 19 and 20 February, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 103 Palestinians were killed, and 142 Palestinians were injured. Between 7 October 2023 and noon on 20 February 2024, at least 29,195 Palestinians were killed in Gaza and 69,170 Palestinians were injured, according to MoH in Gaza.
- Between the afternoons of 19 and 20 February, one Israeli soldier died of injuries sustained in fighting in Gaza. As of 20 February, 234 soldiers have been killed and 1,396 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 20 February, the Israeli authorities estimate that some 134 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza and include fatalities whose bodies are being withheld.
- The Global Nutrition Cluster is [reporting](#) a steep rise in malnutrition among children and pregnant and breastfeeding women in the Gaza Strip, as food and safe water become increasingly scarce and disease proliferates. The situation is especially serious in northern Gaza where 1 in 6 children under the age of 2 (15.6 per cent) who were screened at shelters and health centres in January were found to be acutely malnourished. Of these, almost 3 per cent suffered from severe wasting, the most life-threatening form of malnutrition. This rate of 15.6 per cent of wasting among children under the age of two indicates a decline in a population's nutritional status that is unprecedented globally in three months, according to the report. Prior to 7 October, just 0.8 per cent of children under 5 in Gaza were acutely malnourished. In Rafah in southern Gaza, where aid has been more available than in the north, 5 per cent of children under the age of two are acutely malnourished, evidence that access to humanitarian aid can help prevent the worst outcomes. Accordingly, UNICEF, WFP and WHO are [calling](#) for safe, unimpeded and sustained access to urgently deliver multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance throughout the Gaza Strip. According to UNICEF, "the Gaza Strip is poised to witness an explosion in preventable child deaths which would compound the already unbearable level of child deaths in Gaza. We've been warning for weeks that the Gaza Strip is on the brink of a nutrition crisis. If the conflict doesn't end now, children's nutrition will continue to plummet, leading to preventable deaths or health issues which will affect the children of Gaza for the rest of their lives and have potential intergenerational consequences."
- On 20 February, WHO [reported](#) that over the previous two days, it had succeeded in transferring 32 patients in critical condition from Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis to three other hospitals in Gaza, with the support of the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and OCHA. The transfer was requested by hospital staff following the siege and raid on the hospital complex by the Israeli military. Prior to the mission, WHO had received two consecutive denials to access the hospital, causing delays in urgently needed patient referral and leading to the death of at least five patients in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), according to WHO. The Israeli military [stated](#) that it had discovered weapons inside the compound and arrested hundreds of suspects. The WHO team and partners also provided limited supplies of essential medicines and food for the remaining 130 sick and injured patients, and the estimated 15 doctors and nurses staff who remain in the hospital, which has no electricity or running water. The ICU is no longer

functioning, and the remaining patient was transferred to a different part of the complex where other patients receive basic care. Efforts to facilitate further patient referrals are in process. Emphasizing that “the dismantling and degradation of the Nasser Medical Complex is a massive blow to Gaza’s health system,” WHO expressed its concern for the safety and wellbeing of the patients and health workers who remain and warned that further disruption to lifesaving care for the sick and injured would lead to more deaths.

- The UN World Food Programme (WFP) has [announced](#) that it is pausing deliveries of food aid to northern Gaza. This follows incidents on 18 and 19 February when WFP convoys were unable to deliver aid as planned, largely due to a breakdown in civil order, leading to the looting of trucks and the beating of a driver on 19 February. The convoys had resumed on 18 February after a three-week suspension following a strike on an UNRWA truck and due to the absence of a functioning humanitarian notification system. WFP has reluctantly taken the decision to suspend operations, acknowledging that the situation in northern Gaza will deteriorate further and more people risk dying of hunger. WFP stated that it will seek to resume deliveries as soon as possible and reiterated that it is committed, “to urgently reaching desperate people across Gaza but the safety and security to deliver critical food aid - and for the people receiving it - must be ensured.” Between 1 January and 15 February, humanitarian partners planned 77 missions to deliver aid and undertake assessments to areas to the north of Wadi Gaza. Of these, 12 were facilitated by the Israeli authorities, three were partially facilitated, 14 were impeded, 39 were denied access, and nine were postponed. Facilitated missions primarily involved food distribution, while the access of missions to support hospitals and facilities providing water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) services remained among those overwhelmingly denied.
- The situation in Al Amal Hospital in Khan Younis continues to be critical, following a 29-day siege by the Israeli military. On 19 February, PRCS reported that the water desalination station at the facility is no longer functional after being hit by Israeli forces, and that available drinking water is only sufficient for three days. The facility already faces a lack of fuel reserves to generate electricity for high-risk patients and a near exhaustion of food supplies and has reportedly sustained damage due to recent artillery shelling.
- 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, 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. According to a recent assessment of satellite data by UNOSAT, it is estimated that over one million IDPs are currently residing in makeshift shelters, the majority in Rafah. On 20 February, the Israeli military [announced](#) an order for residents of two specific areas of Gaza city to evacuate to Al Mawasi area in Khan Younis. Since 7 October 2023, about 67 per cent of the Gaza Strip have been placed under evacuation orders.

Hostilities and casualties (Gaza Strip)

- Incidents of the targeting of people as they wait for humanitarian aid convoys continue to be reported in Gaza city. On 19 February, at about 14:00, five Palestinians were allegedly killed, and several others injured, when people who had gathered for a possible delivery of humanitarian aid at Al Kuwaiti roundabout were allegedly shot by Israeli Defence Forces quadcopters. On 18 February, at about 16:00, at least one Palestinian was allegedly killed, and others injured, when a group that was waiting for relief aid at Al Nabulsi roundabout came under fire.

The following are among the deadliest incidents reported on 18 February:

- On 18 February, seven Palestinians were reportedly killed, and others injured, when a residential building in Deir al Balah, central Gaza, was struck.
- On 18 February, at about 13:00, five Palestinians were reportedly killed, and others were injured, when a residential building in Ash Shuja’iyeh neighbourhood, eastern Gaza city, was struck.
- On 18 February, at about 15:30, at least five Palestinians, including three women and two girls, were reportedly killed, and others injured, when a residential building in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza, was struck.

West Bank Updates

- Since 7 October 2023 and as of 19 February, 393 Palestinians have been killed, including 100 children, and 4,522 Palestinians, including 702 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.
- On 19 February, large numbers of Israeli settlers, accompanied by Israeli forces, raided the village of Burqa in Nablus, after a Molotov cocktail was reportedly thrown at a settler vehicle driving in the area, injuring the passenger. Settlers set fire to two vehicles and damaged three others. Israeli forces reportedly conducted a search-and-arrest operation for fifteen hours, resulting in damage to at least ten houses. One Palestinian was injured after being physically assaulted by Israeli forces. Israeli forces have withdrawn but access to and from the village is still restricted.
- In two separate incidents on 18 and 19 February, Israeli settlers set fire to an agricultural structure and stole machines and tools from another in the outskirts of At Taybe village in Hebron. On 19 February, settlers set fire to a Palestinian vehicle and wrote anti-Arab slogans on walls in Turmus’ayya village in Ramallah.
- Since 7 October 2023 and as of 19 February, OCHA has recorded 561 Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians that resulted in Palestinian casualties (50 incidents), damage to Palestinian-owned property (450 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.
- 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 \$88 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

Health

Needs

- Primary health services are critically needed in informal shelters across the Gaza Strip.
- There is a need to increase routine immunization coverage as well as the provision of medication for non-communicable diseases, psychotropics, and anaesthesia, due to the number of surgeries and procedures being carried out, to address the health needs of the population and prevent the spread of infectious disease.
- Expanding sexual and reproductive health services at the community level is necessary to alleviate overcrowding in maternity hospitals and ensure that women have access to the care they need.
- The establishment of field hospitals in additional areas of the Gaza Strip is crucial to accommodate the medical needs of the local population. Health partners indicate the need to support case management and to decongest hospitals.
- People are unable to effectively access healthcare due to the lack of laboratory equipment and reagents needed for accurate diagnosis and testing.
- There is an urgent need for blood products in hospitals to ensure a timely and necessary blood transfusions for patient.
- The waiting list of patients in need of medical evacuation continues to grow, as options for medical evacuation remain very limited.
- There is a need to strengthen health logistics at all levels to ensure an adequate flow of supplies across the five governorates.

Response

- On average, response activities have reached approximately 170,000 people weekly, as of 15 February. This includes more than 152,000 people receiving primary healthcare services, including in fixed and mobile facilities, and medical points, and more than 89,000 people receiving trauma and emergency care services. For more information on the Health Cluster response, consult the [Gaza Health Cluster Partners Bi-Weekly Update](#).
- On 18 and 19 February, 32 critical patients, including two children, from Nasser Hospital were evacuated and transferred to other hospitals.
- UNFPA, in collaboration with the Emergency Medical Team (EMT) in Al Awda Maternity Hospital, in An Nuseirat Area, is conducting an assessment to determine the necessary needed support.
- Some 12 EMTs are currently operational and providing primary, secondary and specialized care in Deir al Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah. EMTs engaged at primary healthcare are also systematically monitoring and collecting data for disease surveillance for early detection of outbreak-prone disease. In addition, they are undertaking Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) screenings, to assess acute malnutrition levels among vulnerable populations.
- From 13 to 19 February, psychotropics medicines were distributed to for some 30,000 patients.

Challenges and Gaps

- The influx of IDPs to Rafah has overwhelmed the available bed capacities in hospitals, leading to insufficient capacity to meet the healthcare needs of the population.
- Response operations by health partners are negatively affected by the displacement of the medical staff, social stresses and telecommunication challenges.
- The high insecurity and limited access to health facilities in the northern and middle governorates continues to present major challenges to partners' response activities. Furthermore, ongoing fighting and persistent siege of hospitals have severely affected their functionality and accessibility.
- Limited and proper access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities is hindering disease prevention services.
- Referring patients outside of Gaza remains a major challenge.

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 Deir al Balah and the 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 15 partners engaged in providing food assistance across the Gaza Strip. Around 1.7 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 (DESSs); establishing Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) in shelters/DESSs 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 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.

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.
- The assistance provided 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.

IASC Protection from Sexual and Exploitation Abuse (PSEA) Network

Needs

- There is a need to mainstream PSEA messages & safeguarding practices across the Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- There is a pressing need to prioritize protection interventions at large. Safeguarding and SEA risk have become prominent in a context of severe aid dependency. The lack of safe aid delivery increases vulnerability and leads to exploitation and abuse.
- Provide safe and accessible reporting channels, that lead to assistance and investigations of PSEA allegations.
- Ensure that services are available for people at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).

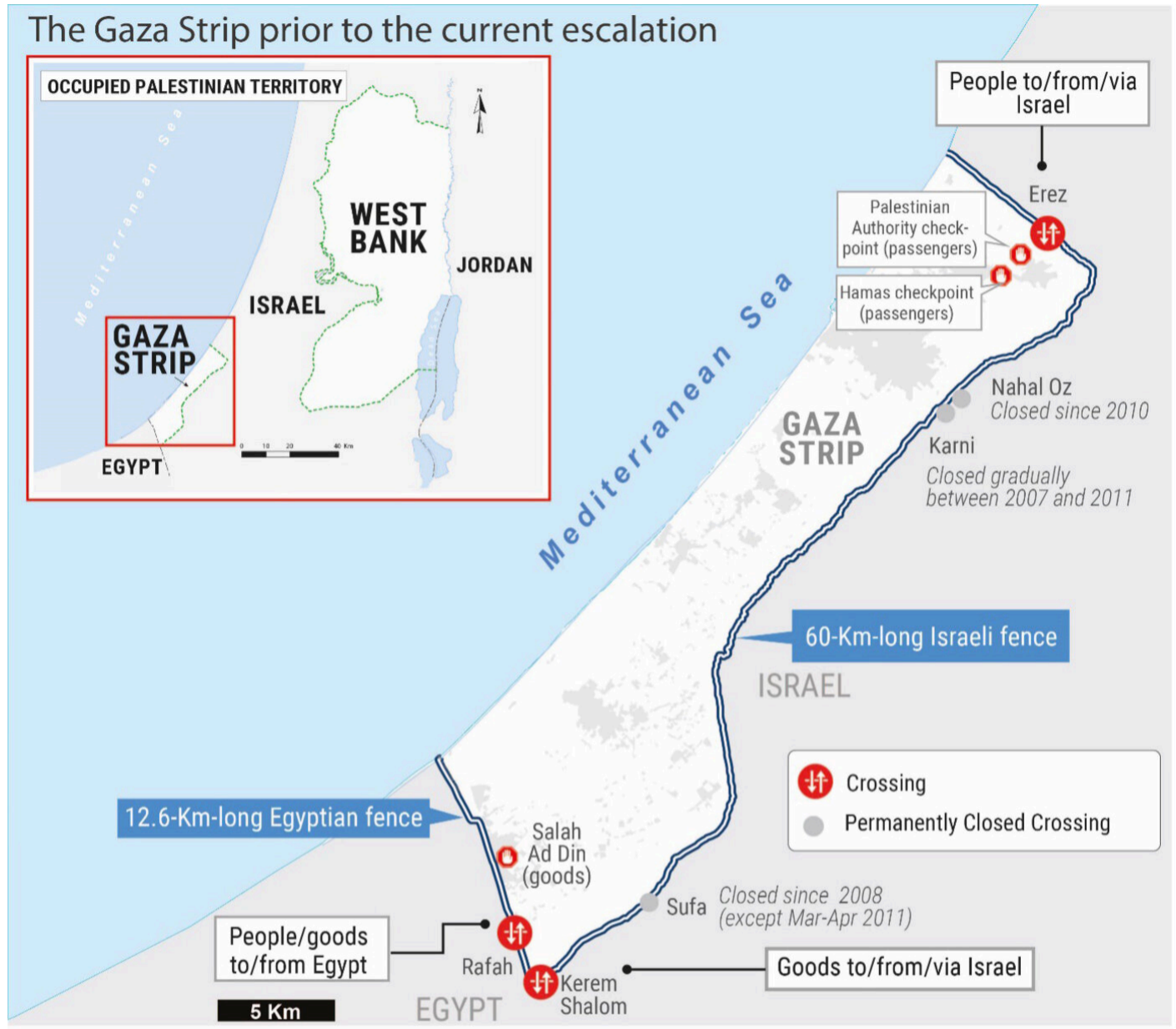
Response

- Since October 2023, more than 1,500 cases have been referred by the SAWA Foundation specialized counsellors, including eight per cent from the West Bank.
- Due to the communication cuts in Gaza, a range of public communication materials were produced and distributed.
- The PSEA Network has made available MHPSS support and remote counselling sessions for PSEA focal points on the ground in Gaza, who are documenting the impact and the emerging needs by collecting complaints and feedback.

Challenges

- Identifying cases and reaching vulnerable individuals pose significant challenges, particularly due to internet and telecommunication blackouts. Electricity and communication cuts make it challenging to establish contact with on-the-ground PSEA focal points.

Protection against sexual abuse and exploitation (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.



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