



Children at a school used as a shelter for internally displaced persons in Rafah city. Photo by UNICEF/EI Baba

Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #148

29 Mar 2024

As of 25 March, the OCHA oPt Flash Update will be published three times a week and will provide an update on the West Bank on a weekly basis. The next update will be issued on 3 April.

Key Highlights

- Access impediments have severely compromised the ability of humanitarian actors to reach people in need across the Gaza Strip.
- Since 1 March, 30 per cent of humanitarian aid missions to northern Gaza and 10 per cent of missions to southern Gaza were denied access by the Israeli authorities.
- Nearly 40 per cent of school buildings in Gaza have been directly hit, according to an updated assessment of satellite imagery by the Education Cluster.

Gaza Strip Updates

- Intense Israeli bombardment and ground operations as well as heavy fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups continue to be reported across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure.
- Between the afternoon of 27 March and 11:30 on 29 March, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 133 Palestinians were killed, and 203 Palestinians were injured, including 71 killed and 112 injured in the past 24 hours. Between 7 October 2023 and 11:30 on 29 March 2024, at least 32,623 Palestinians were killed in Gaza and 75,092 Palestinians were injured, according to MoH in Gaza.
- Incidents resulting in the killing of journalists and media workers in Gaza continue to be reported. On 26 March, at about 22:30, a Palestinian journalist was reportedly killed along with her husband and children when a house in Rafah was hit. On 28 March, at about 4:55, a Palestinian journalist was allegedly shot and killed in Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza city.
- The following are among other deadly incidents reported between 26 and 28 March:
 - On 26 March, at about 10:30, 30 Palestinians were reportedly killed when a residential building near Al Shifa Hospital, in Gaza city, was hit.
 - On 26 March, at about 11:30, 12 Palestinians, including four children and four women, were reportedly killed and others injured when tents for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Al Mawasi area, in western Khan Younis, were hit.
 - On 26 March, at about 20:00, at least 20 Palestinians were reportedly killed or buried under the rubble when a residential building near Al Shifa Hospital, in Gaza city, was hit.
 - On 27 March, at about 3:15, nine Palestinians, including three children and three women, were reportedly killed when a house in Khirbet Al Adass area in northern Rafah was hit.
 - On 27 March, at about 17:50, four Palestinians, including two girls and one woman, were reportedly killed, and over 10 others injured, when an agricultural greenhouse in northern Rafah was hit.

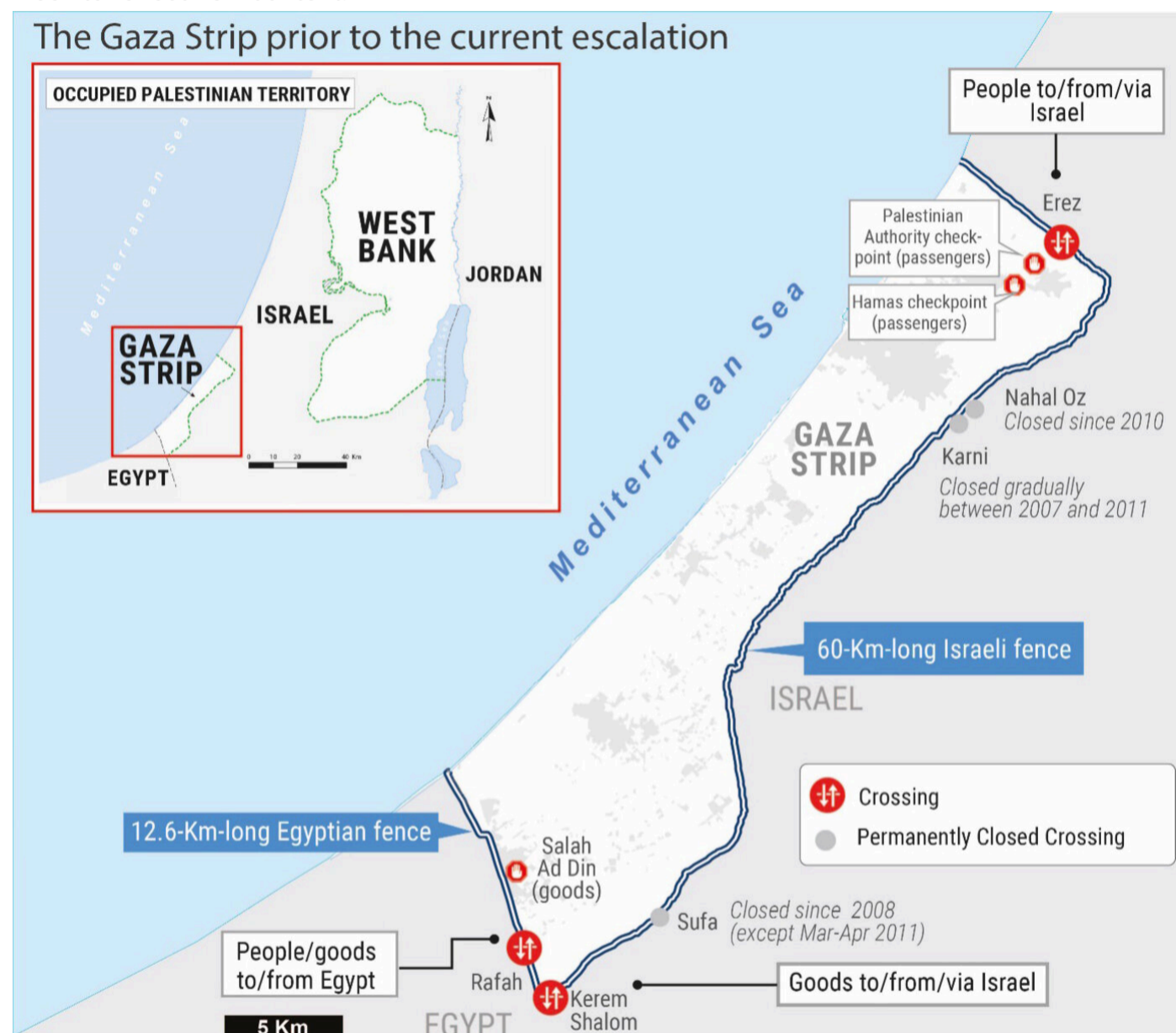
- On 27 March, the bodies of 15 Palestinians including six children were reportedly recovered from various areas in Rafah. The circumstances and exact locations of their killing were not reported.
- On 27 March, at about 21:15, four Palestinians, who are reportedly members of the popular committee tasked with securing the delivery of humanitarian aid, were reportedly hit and killed on Salah Ad Deen Street in Az Zaytoun area, in Gaza city.
- Between 27 and 28 March, at least 15 Palestinians were reportedly killed, including women and children, and others injured, when residential buildings near Al Shifa Hospital were hit.
- Between the afternoons of 27 and 29 March, one Israeli soldier was reported killed in Gaza. As of 29 March, 252 soldiers have been killed and 1,523 soldiers have been 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, the vast majority on 7 October. As of 29 March, the Israeli authorities estimate that 134 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including fatalities whose bodies are withheld.
- The health system in Gaza is barely surviving, according to the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), with only 10 out of 36 hospitals currently functional, albeit partially. Partially functional hospitals provide limited services, are overwhelmed with patients, and face critical shortages of fuel, medicines, medical supplies, and health personnel. More than 400 health attacks in the Gaza Strip have been [documented](#) by WHO as of 12 March, affecting some 100 ambulances and nearly 100 health facilities. On 28 March, the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) [reported](#) that the whereabouts of eight PRCS team members remain unknown and seven were released by the Israeli authorities 47 days after they were detained from Al Amal Hospital in Khan Younis. WHO [demanded](#) “an immediate end to attacks on hospitals in Gaza” and called for the “protection of health staff, patients and civilians.”
- The siege imposed on Gaza, including closed crossings, no water and no electricity have been key ingredients for the major humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza, according to [OCHA](#). Combined with intensive Israeli ground and air operations, this has severely compromised the ability of humanitarian actors to ensure there is a reliable and predictable supply chain and safe humanitarian access to reach people in need, leaving the humanitarian operation “on its knees.” In lieu of faster access from Ashdod port in Israel through Erez crossing to reach northern Gaza (see [OCHA map](#)), where famine is [projected](#) to occur anytime between mid-March and May 2024 and 70 per cent of the population is projected to face catastrophic hunger between March and July 2024, the delivery of aid offloaded in Port Said, Egypt, to Gaza is lengthy and riddled with obstacles. It involves offloading, reloading, storage, and screening of aid supplies at multiple locations in Egypt and at Israeli crossing points leading to Gaza, resulting in significant delays and inefficiencies. “Once inside Gaza, aid convoys have to travel on crowded, impassable roads, at risk of unexploded ordnance, often close to fighting and amid desperate hungry crowds. IDF soldiers too often delay or deny convoys from crossing checkpoints, with rejected requests for safe passage, searches, detentions and sometimes violence against aid convoys and awaiting crowds,” OCHA [added](#). On 22 March, UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, reiterated his call for a ceasefire and [called](#) on Israel to lift all impediments to aid.
- Between 23 and 29 March, 42 per cent (8 out of 19) of humanitarian aid missions to northern Gaza were facilitated by the Israeli authorities, 42 per cent (8) were denied, and 16 per cent (3) were postponed or withdrawn. During the same period, 93 per cent (38 out of 41) of aid missions to areas south of Wadi Gaza that require coordination were facilitated by the Israeli authorities, and 7 per cent (3) were withdrawn. In total, since 1 March, 48 per cent (29 out of 60) of aid missions to northern Gaza were facilitated by the Israeli authorities, including one that was initially facilitated but later impeded, 30 per cent (18) were denied, and 22 per cent (13) were postponed or withdrawn. Moreover, out of 187 aid mission requests for areas south of Wadi Gaza that require coordination, 80 per cent (150) were facilitated by the Israeli authorities, 10 per cent (19) were denied, and 10 per cent (18) were postponed or withdrawn. Facilitated missions involved: food distributions; movement of emergency medical teams; fuel, nutrition and health assessments; delivery of supplies to hospitals; and support for water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities.
- A new [assessment](#) by the Education Cluster of school damages in the Gaza Strip concludes that at least 67 per cent of schools in Gaza will either need full reconstruction or major rehabilitation work to be functional again. The assessment is based on an analysis of satellite imagery due to access limitations, especially in northern Gaza, intensive Israeli bombardment and recurrent telecommunications shutdowns. The analysis also provides evidence that complements reports, photos, and videos previously received by the Cluster “showing that schools are being used for military operations by Israeli Security Forces (ISF) including use as detention, interrogation centers, and military bases.” In total, according to the assessment, about 38 per cent of school buildings (212) have been “Directly Hit” since 7 October, 30 per cent “Damaged,” 18 per cent “Likely or Possibly Damaged,” and 12 per cent with no reported damage. Directly hit schools exclude 35 incidents where school playgrounds but not structures were hit, which are classified under the “damaged” category. Some 84 per cent (94 out of 212) of directly hit schools are in Gaza governorate, followed by Khan Younis, North Gaza and Deir al Balah. Moreover, among the 122 directly hit schools, 58 per cent (112) are public schools, 29 per cent (62) are UNRWA schools, and 13 per cent (28) are private schools. The assessment additionally finds that 59 per cent of school buildings that have been used as IDP shelters have been either directly hit or damaged, 53 schools are now classified as totally destroyed, and 38 schools have lost at least half of their structures.

Funding

- The [Flash Appeal](#) for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), which requests US\$ 1.23 billion to meet the 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 29 March, member states disbursed nearly \$1.054 billion for the updated Flash Appeal (86 per cent); this includes about \$617 million out of \$629 million (98 per cent) requested for October-December 2023 and about \$438 million out of \$600 million (73 per cent) requested for January-March 2024. For funding analysis, please see the Flash Appeal Financial Tracking [dashboard](#).

- The oPt Humanitarian Fund (oPt HF) has mobilized a total of US\$ 88 million since 7 October from Member States and private donors, designated for programs throughout Gaza, with allocations of 43 per cent in Rafah, 21 per cent in Deir al Balah, 20 per cent in Khan Younis, and 16 per cent in Gaza and North Gaza governorates. However, it has experienced a delay in finalizing its First Reserve Allocation of \$3.5 million for 2024 due to restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on importing trucks intended to enhance aid transport capacity and enable humanitarian partners to scale up the delivery of essential aid and services across the Gaza Strip. A significant cost extension allocation of \$20 million is being prepared for key projects in Gaza to address the most urgent needs, marking the second phase of December allocation responses adapted to the changing operating environment. The HF is also developing an upcoming reserve allocation to bolster the capacity of national NGOs in the central areas of the Gaza Strip and Khan Younis, taking into account anticipated complexities in aid delivery to ensure a more robust and effective humanitarian response. For a summary of the oPt HF activities and challenges in February 2024, please follow this link. Private donations are collected directly through the [Humanitarian Fund](#).

For the Humanitarian Needs and Cluster Response Update for the period between 19 and 25 March, please visit: [Humanitarian needs and response update | 19-25 March 2024](#). The update for a given week is initially published on Mondays and is updated throughout the week to reflect new content.



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