



Families leaving Rafah on 7 May 2024 following an evacuation order by the Israeli authorities. Photo by OCHA/Olga Cherevko

# Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #163

08 May 2024

The OCHA oPt Flash Update is published every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, with a comprehensive update on the West Bank included every Wednesday. The next update will be issued on 10 May.

## Key Highlights

- With the continued closure of Rafah Crossing, humanitarian agencies warn that existing fuel stocks to sustain aid operations will be depleted within days.
- Tens of thousands of people have been forcibly leaving Rafah in search of safety, but the few displacement sites they arrive at lack essential infrastructure.
- All key medical facilities in Rafah could soon become inaccessible or inoperable, Health Cluster partners warn, as An Najjar Hospital - one of three remaining in Rafah - was already abruptly vacated on 7 May.
- The Israeli Supreme Court rules in favour of the return of 360 Palestinians to their homes in Khirbet Zanouta herding community in Hebron six months following their displacement due to settler attacks.

## Gaza Strip Updates

- Israeli bombardment from the air, land, and sea continues to be reported across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure.
- On 7 May, a ground operation by the Israeli military began in eastern Rafah, including the areas of Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings as well as some 31 square kilometres where residents were ordered to evacuate on 6 May. Israeli authorities closed Kerem Shalom crossing on 5 May, following a mortar attack by Palestinian armed groups on the area, and closed Rafah Crossing for the movement of goods and people on 7 May. On 8 May, the Israeli authorities [announced](#) the re-opening of Kerem Shalom Crossing from the Israeli side. As of 8 May, Rafah crossing remains closed. The UN is engaging with stakeholders to advocate for the facilitation of the entry of fuel and other supplies through all routes into and within the Gaza Strip. In a press briefing on 7 May, UN Secretary-General António Guterres [stated](#): "I am disturbed and distressed by the renewed military activity in Rafah," warning that a full-scale assault on Rafah, the epicentre of the humanitarian operation, would be catastrophic and cripple all efforts to deliver critical assistance to the population. The UN Chief stressed the imperative to protect civilians whether they stay in Rafah or leave and emphasized Israel's obligation to facilitate safe and unimpeded humanitarian access into and across Gaza.
- Between the afternoons of 6 and 8 May, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 109 Palestinians were killed and 296 injured, including 55 killed and 200 injured in the last 24 hours. Between 7 October 2023 and 8 May 2024, at least 34,844 Palestinians were killed in Gaza and 78,404 Palestinians were injured, according to MoH in Gaza.
- The following are among the deadly incidents between 5 and 7 May:
  - On 5 May, at about 17:20, nine Palestinians, including at least four children and two women, were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit in Yebna Refugee Camp in southeastern Rafah.
  - On 5 May, at about 22:50, nine Palestinians, including four children and three women, were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit on George Street in eastern Rafah.

- On 6 May, at about 1:50, four Palestinians, including two children and two women, were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit in Al Junainah neighbourhood in eastern Rafah.
  - On 7 May, at about 0:20, at least five Palestinians, including a woman and a child, were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit in Al Barahma neighbourhood in Tal As Sultan area in western Rafah.
  - On 7 May, at about 2:15, four Palestinians, including one woman, were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit in Al Junainah neighbourhood in eastern Rafah.
  - On 7 May at about 4:00, four Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when two apartments were hit in Tal As Sultan area in western Rafah.
- Between the afternoons of 6 May and 8 May, no Israeli soldiers were reported killed in Gaza. As of 8 May, 266 soldiers have been killed and 1,610 soldiers have been injured in Gaza or along the border in Israel since the beginning of the ground operation, according to the Israeli military. In addition, according to the Israeli media citing official Israeli sources, over 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, including 33 children, have been killed in Israel, the vast majority on 7 October. As of 8 May, it is estimated that that 132 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including fatalities whose bodies are withheld.
  - Since 6 May, tens of thousands of people, many of whom have already been displaced multiple times, have been forced to leave Rafah governorate in search of increasingly limited options for safety. Monitoring of population movements shows that people have primarily moved to Khan Younis and Deir Al Balah using vehicles, trucks and donkey carts through the three main roads connecting Rafah and Khan Younis: Salah Ad Deen Road, the Coastal Road, and Meraj Road. UN agencies report that the few sites to which people are already relocating are without adequate latrines, water points, drainage, or shelter, but humanitarian agencies are unable to improve conditions with no fuel and other supplies coming in.
  - The continued closure of Rafah Crossing, where a daily average of 48 trucks and 166,000 litres of diesel entered Gaza between 1 and 5 May, essentially chokes off the entry of life-saving aid into Gaza and the fuel necessary for sustaining humanitarian operations and all life-critical sectors in Gaza.
  - Humanitarian agencies warn that existing fuel stocks in Gaza will be depleted within days. This will have an immediate impact on all humanitarian operations, communication networks, and banking activities. If fuel provision does not resume, this would sever the ability of aid actors to dispatch and distribute existing aid stocks, gather information on humanitarian needs, and support the functioning of bakeries. The main water production facilities also risk ceasing operations without fuel. Combined with active hostilities, this would additionally bring to a halt the already limited solid waste collection and render inoperable or inaccessible the remaining sewage pumping stations. As a result, some 1,400 tons of solid waste [estimated](#) to be generated daily in southern Gaza and sewage would accumulate, exacerbating public health concerns. The ability of families to connect during displacement in case of separation would also be compromised. Since 7 October and as of 7 May, a monthly average of about two million litres of diesel and benzene entered Gaza due to restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities, a decline of about 85 per cent compared with the monthly average of 14 million litres of fuel (diesel and benzene) that entered Gaza between January and September 2023.
  - The continued block on the entry of critical humanitarian items via Rafah Crossing and continued hostilities would have serious consequences on access to food and nutrition services and render impossible improvements at existing and new displacement sites. At present, and within a context where the majority of residential buildings have been damaged or destroyed and more than 75 per cent of the people have already been displaced, Shelter Cluster partners have a limited number of tents available for distribution in Gaza. There is also a lack of materials, such as tarpaulins, ropes, plastic sheeting, timber, nails, and tools to build shelters or make damaged buildings habitable. Moreover, the main warehouses of Food Security Cluster partners in Rafah have become inaccessible due to hostilities and most partners would run out of food stocks in one week. The treatment of several thousand children suffering from acute malnutrition would be interrupted and routine service delivery, including screening, case detection, referral and blanket supplementary feeding would be impacted.
  - Critical medical services in Rafah have already been disrupted by the evacuation orders by the Israeli military, the ground operation in eastern Rafah, and the closure of Rafah Crossing. Health Cluster partners also warn that there is a risk that intensified military activity will soon render all main health facilities in the area inaccessible or inoperable, depriving over one million people of healthcare. The Abu Youssef An Najjar Hospital—one of the three, alongside Al Kuwaiti Hospital and Al Emirati Maternity Hospital, which remained partially functioning in Rafah as of 6 May—had to be abruptly vacated on 7 May as it was in the area subject to the evacuation order. The hospital's dialysis department, WHO [reported](#), was the only one surviving in Gaza and represented a lifeline for patients suffering from kidney failure.
  - The head of Al Kuwaiti Hospital in Rafah, Dr. Suhaib Al Hams, explained in video posted on 7 May that the situation at the facility was “catastrophic in every sense of the word” as the hospital was facing a rising influx of casualties amid dire shortages of beds and medical staff. The doctor appealed to all medical students, trainee doctors and nursing staff in the Rafah governorate, as well as to international organizations and medical teams, to urgently help the overwhelmed facility. On 7 May, Médecins Sans Frontières [reported](#) that they had begun discharging patients able to walk from their clinic inside the Rafah Indonesian Field Hospital, and were also preparing for a potential medical evacuation. In the same way, Project HOPE [highlighted](#) that it had been forced to close its medical unit in Ash Shouka, which was in the evacuation zone, while operating hours had been reduced at its static clinic in Jafar At Tayyar displacement site, as medical personnel needed to leave to prepare for potential further evacuations. Surgical staff due to enter Gaza to support Kamal Adwan Hospital were also denied entry due to the closure of Rafah Crossing, Project HOPE reported. Meanwhile, in a press release, the Ministry of Health warned that 140 injured and sick patients,

alongside their companions, who had to be medically evacuated on 7 May were unable to leave Gaza. The Ministry also stressed that no medicines, supplies or fuel necessary to sustain hospital operations were entering Rafah.

- Many of the over 600,000 children crammed in Rafah are already “highly vulnerable and at the edge of survival” and a ground incursion would expose them to catastrophic risks, [reiterated](#) UNICEF. About 65,000 children in Gaza’s southernmost area are estimated to have a disability, 90 per cent of children under five are suffering from one or more infectious diseases, and nearly 8,000 infants under the age of two are already acutely malnourished, UNICEF estimates. The Health Cluster has warned that there is a shortage of vaccines for routine immunization in Gaza; unless the entry of these critical supplies urgently restarts, immunization rates among children could decrease, heightening the risk of preventable disease outbreaks. Forced displacement and an expanded ground incursion in Rafah would further curtail children’s access to water, food and vital medical care and would rapidly increase the number of unaccompanied and separated children, while the ability of humanitarian actors to provide them with basic support would be heavily reduced.
- In this rapidly deteriorating context, prolonged border closures and hostilities would deprive more than 690,000 women and girls of access to hygiene services and supplies and expose them to heightened health risks and violence amid renewed displacement. Furthermore, the fate of an estimated 30,000 pregnant women currently sheltering in Rafah is a grave concern. These women, hungry and exhausted, have already been living in desperate conditions, [stressed](#) UNFPA. So far, Al Emirati Maternity Hospital, albeit only partially functioning and overwhelmed, has represented a lifeline for them, and the potential disruption of this and other surviving facilities in Rafah now threatens to leave pregnant women without options for the safe delivery of their babies. On 7 May, the WHO team leader in Gaza, Dr. Ahmed Dahir, [reported](#) that, as part of contingency efforts, WHO and its partners had provided new medical supplies to the hospital in recent weeks. Should Al Emirati Hospital become inaccessible, pregnant women would be referred to field hospitals in Al Mawasi, as well as to the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, where a basic package of health services has been restored, Dr. Dahir added. A [survey](#) conducted by UN Women in Rafah at the end of April reveals that more than 60 per cent of pregnant women interviewed had been facing complications, including 95 per cent reporting urinary tract infections, 80 per cent anaemia and 30 per cent pre-term labour. Moreover, 72 per cent of surveyed households with nursing mothers reported challenges in breastfeeding and in meeting the nutritional needs of newborns.

## West Bank Update (30 April - 6 May)

- Between 30 April and 6 May, Israeli forces killed five Palestinians in two operations. Another Palestinian fell off the roof of a building while being chased by Israeli forces. In addition, 20 Palestinians, including seven children, and one Israeli soldier were injured. Fifteen Palestinians sustained injuries during search-and-arrest operations, particularly in Beita and Beit Furik villages in Nablus. Among the injured was an eight-year-old boy who was shot with live ammunition by Israeli forces and detained, reportedly while with his friends, in Aqbat Jaber Refugee Camp in Jericho. Since 7 October, 479 Palestinians have been killed, including 116 children, of whom 462 were killed by Israeli forces, ten by settlers and eight where it remains unknown whether the perpetrators were settlers or soldiers. These include 348 Palestinians killed in operations carried out by Israeli forces, one third of whom were killed in refugee camps in or near Tulkarm and Jenin cities. In addition, almost 5,000 Palestinians have been injured in the same period, 34 per cent of whom by live ammunition. Nine Israelis have also been killed and at least 105 have been injured in the West Bank since 7 October; these include five members of Israeli forces killed and 70 injured.
  - On 6 May, an Israeli soldier shot a 34-year-old Palestinian man during an Israeli operation in Tulkarm Refugee Camp. The man was reportedly in the street in Dhannaba neighbourhood adjacent to the camp when he was shot. During the operation, Israeli forces bulldozed multiple streets in the camp, resulting in extensive damage to infrastructure and cutting off water, electricity, and internet services. Israeli forces also restricted access to or in the area, including that of medical teams, as reported by the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). Between 18 and 21 April, a large-scale operation had also been carried out by Israeli forces in the nearby Nur Shams Refugee Camp, which resulted in the killing of 14 Palestinians and caused extensive damage to infrastructure and over 40 residential buildings.
  - On 4 May, Israeli forces, including special forces, killed four Palestinian men (aged between 20 and 44 years) and withheld their bodies in an operation in Deir al Ghusun village in Tulkarm governorate. An Israeli soldier was also injured during the operation. Israeli forces, supported by a military bulldozer, reportedly surrounded a residential building and exchanged fire with four Palestinians inside. According to the Israeli military, the four Palestinians were allegedly responsible for killing an Israeli civilian and a soldier and injuring several members of Israeli forces in the West Bank after 7 October. Human rights organizations, citing eyewitnesses, said that the residence was hit by at least 30 air strikes, ground missiles and bombs. Israeli forces pulled out four of the Palestinians and declared their identities to Palestinian authorities. The Palestinian Ministry of Health confirmed to have found under rubble a headless body of a Palestinian whose identity has remained unidentified. In law enforcement, the use of potentially lethal force can only be used when strictly unavoidable to protect life or prevent serious injury.
  - On 30 April, a 26-year-old Palestinian man died after he fell off a rooftop while running from Israeli forces who chased him in Ad Dhahiryeh town in Hebron. The incident happened after the man, along with another man, left their car and tried to run away upon seeing an Israeli military flying (non-permanent) checkpoint.
- Israeli settlers perpetrated 14 incidents that led to the injury of four Palestinians and damage to property, in addition to several incidents of intimidation and blocking of access mainly in the Jordan Valley communities. Overall, since 7 October, 829 Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians resulted in Palestinian casualties (86 incidents), damage to Palestinian-owned property (651 incidents), or both casualties and damage to property (92 incidents).
  - Two Palestinians were physically assaulted by settlers, including a 16-year-old boy in the old city of Jerusalem who sustained critical injuries in the head and face and one while in his house in Yatta (Hebron). The third was injured while driving on Road 60 in Ramallah governorate by settlers who threw stones at vehicles travelling on the road. On 30 April and 1

May, Israeli settlers threw stones at the offices of UNRWA headquarters in East Jerusalem, causing damage to the main gate.

- On 1 May, a 14-year-old boy was shot with live ammunition and injured by either Israeli settlers or soldiers in Qusra village in Nablus governorate. The incident took place after an Israeli settler grazing his sheep near the village reportedly approached Palestinian children in the village and they subsequently threw stones at him.
- On 2 May, Israeli settlers fired warning shots at Palestinian herders near Dura town (Hebron), causing them to flee the area and lose ten sheep. The following day, settlers vandalized two water tanks and killed a donkey in the Palestinian community of Juret al Khiel. Moreover, on several occasions, settlers grazed their livestock on Palestinian crops (in Ein Samiya in Ramallah and Umm at Turan in Hebron), stole troughs in Sinjil village (Ramallah), and a donkey in Masafer Yatta (Hebron).
- Between 30 April and 6 May, the Israeli authorities displaced 26 Palestinians, including 18 children, in home demolitions. Since 7 October 2023, some 1,790 Palestinians, 78 per cent of whom are children, have been displaced in home demolitions. These include nearly 55 per cent (980 people) displaced during operations carried out by Israeli forces mainly in the refugee camps in and near Tulkarm and Jenin cities, 37 per cent due to lack-of-permit demolitions, and eight per cent on punitive grounds.
- On 2 May, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled in favour of a petition filed on behalf of some 360 Palestinians of Khirbet Zanouta herding community in Hebron, who were forced to leave their community due to settler attacks after 7 October, ordering the Israeli authorities to secure their return to their homes. The community was vacated on 2 November and, on 4 December, settlers destroyed some residential shelters and parts of the community's school. Since 7 October, OCHA documented seven incidents where Israeli settlers attacked the community, destroying shelters and threatening families at gunpoint to leave. Across the West Bank, since 7 October, some 224 Palestinian households comprising 1,330 people, mostly herding families, including 643 children, have been displaced amid settler violence and access restrictions.
- In Hebron, Israeli forces opened road gates at the entrances of three towns located on Road 60, which had been closed after 7 October. The opening of these gates minimizes the detours that residents have been forced to take via secondary road infrastructure and improves the access of an estimated 180,000 people to their main service hub in Hebron city.
- The Israeli authorities continue to deny access to Palestinians holding West Bank IDs to East Jerusalem and have not issued permits for Christian Palestinians holding West Bank IDs to access the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in East Jerusalem on the occasion of Orthodox Easter. On 4 May, Israeli forces were heavily deployed in the Old City of Jerusalem and erected metal barriers and flying checkpoints that hindered the access of hundreds of Palestinian and foreign worshippers to the church. The forces also reportedly detained two Palestinians from inside the church.
- On 5 May, Israeli forces raided and closed the offices of Al Jazeera Media Network in Sheikh Jarrah area in East Jerusalem and seized broadcasting equipment and tools. This came hours after the Israeli government decided to shut down the offices and operations of Al Jazeera in Israel for 45 days, citing security concerns.

## Funding

- On 17 April, the Humanitarian Country Team released a new [Flash Appeal](#) for the oPt, which requests \$2.8 billion to meet the most critical needs of 2.3 million people in Gaza and 800,000 people in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between April and December 2024. As of 8 May, the appeal is 21.7 per cent funded.
- The [oPt HF](#) has 118 ongoing projects, for a total of \$72.5 million, addressing urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (85 per cent) and West Bank (15 per cent). In light of the updated Flash Appeal, the HF has allocated an additional \$22 million to bolster prioritized HF-funded projects in Gaza. Since 7 October, the oPt HF has mobilized \$90 million from Member States and private donors, designated for programmes throughout Gaza. A summary of the oPt HF activities and challenges in March 2024 is available through this [link](#) and the 2023 Annual report of the oPt HF can be accessed [here](#). Private donations are collected directly through the [Humanitarian Fund](#).

For the Gaza Humanitarian Response Update for the period between 29 April and 5 May, please visit: [Gaza Humanitarian Response Update | 29 April–5 May 2024](#). It is updated throughout the week to reflect new content.

## Access restriction on Humanitarian aid map

