



A young girl collects water in the Gaza Strip. Photo by UNRWA

Humanitarian Situation Update #197 | Gaza Strip

29 Jul 2024

The Humanitarian Situation Update is issued by OCHA Occupied Palestinian Territory three times per week. The Gaza Strip is covered on Mondays and Fridays, and the West Bank is covered on Wednesdays. The next update will be issued on 31 July.

Key Highlights

- Evacuation orders and intensified hostilities continue to push thousands more people into recurrent displacement.
- Regional health ministers call for a “safe and enabling environment” to stop a polio outbreak in Gaza, as WHO dispatches over one million vaccines to the Strip.
- People in Gaza city are facing a near total lack of fresh fruits and vegetables, according to a UNICEF rapid market assessment.
- Nearly 85 per cent of school buildings in Gaza have been directly hit or damaged, a new assessment by the Education Cluster finds.

Humanitarian Developments

- 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. Ground incursions and heavy fighting also continue to be reported.
- In a 26 July briefing to the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, UN Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSC/RC/HC) for the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Mr. Muhannad Hadi, [emphasized](#) that “current procedures in place for getting aid and fuel consignments from crossings to people in need are cumbersome, dangerous and costly.” He noted that the risks facing humanitarian staff in Gaza are “unacceptable” and reiterated the UN’s call for inter alia the protection of civilians, the concurrent opening of all crossings (including Rafah crossing) and all checkpoints within Gaza and permitting aid trucks to drive directly from Egypt and Jordan to destinations inside Gaza.
- Between the afternoons of 25 and 29 July, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 188 Palestinians were killed and 520 were injured. Between 7 October 2023 and 29 July 2024, at least 39,363 Palestinians were killed and 90,923 were injured, according to MoH in Gaza.
- On 27 July, the Israeli military reportedly struck Khadija Girls’ School in Deir al Balah, which was sheltering over [4,000](#) internally displaced people (IDPs) according to Palestinian Civil Defence (PCD) as cited in the media, and housed a field medical unit belonging to the nearby Al Aqsa Hospital. According to MoH in Gaza, the attack resulted in the death of at least 30 Palestinians and the injury of over 100 others. In a subsequent statement reported by the [media](#), the Government Media Office further indicated that at least 15 children and eight women were among those killed. Most of the wounded were transferred to Al Aqsa Hospital, which had to cope with a new mass casualty influx as a result. Between 7 October 2023 and 22 July 2024, WHO [recorded](#) at least 492 health attacks throughout the Strip, affecting 109 health facilities, including 32 hospitals, and 114 ambulances.
- The following are among other deadly incidents reported between 25 and 27 July:

- On 25 July, at about 13:15, three Palestinians were reportedly killed when a location was hit in the vicinity of Gaza European Hospital in southeastern Khan Younis.
 - On 25 July, at about 13:35, four Palestinians were reportedly killed and several others injured when a location was hit in At Tahlya area in Maan in eastern Khan Younis.
 - On 27 July, at about 16:55, four Palestinians were reportedly killed when a group of Palestinians was hit on Al Barka Street in Deir al Balah.
- Between the afternoons of 26 and 29 July, one Israeli soldier was reported killed in Gaza, according to the Israeli military. Between 7 October 2023 and 29 July 2024, according to the Israeli military and official Israeli sources cited in the media, over 1,529 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed, the majority on 7 October and its immediate aftermath and including 329 soldiers killed in Gaza or along the border in Israel since the beginning of the ground operation. In addition, 2,165 soldiers were reported injured since the beginning of the ground operation. As of 29 July, it is estimated that 115 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including hostages who have been declared dead.
 - Humanitarian partners tracking population movements in Gaza estimate that new directives issued by the Israeli authorities on 27 and 28 July affected parts of Rafah, Khan Younis and Deir al Balah governorates, where an estimated 56,000 people had been sheltering. According to the Site Management Working Group (SMWG), the areas are estimated to include dozens of sites for IDPs, including collective centres (UNRWA and non-UNRWA), makeshift sites and scattered sites, in addition to educational and water and sanitation (WASH) facilities as well as medical points.
 - Tens of thousands of people continue to experience new waves of internal displacement across Gaza due to the issuance of evacuation orders by the Israeli military and intensified hostilities. Between 22 and 27 July, the SMWG estimated that more than 200,000 people were displaced, including 9,000 people who arrived in Al Mawasi on 27 July. Following the evacuation order issued on 27 July, the Gaza MoH [stated](#) that they are no longer able to restore the functionality of the Gaza European Hospital in Khan Younis, adding that four Primary Health-care Centres and several field medical points have been rendered out of service. Describing the dreadful conditions facing people across Gaza, UNRWA [noted](#) that, “people in Gaza are exhausted. Almost every day they are forced to flee their makeshift shelters, with nowhere safe to go,” and “often with very little [time](#) to do so.”
 - Amid only scant [access](#) to water and sanitation, communicable diseases and skin infections continue to rage across Gaza, highlighted [WHO](#), [UNICEF](#) and [UNRWA](#) this week. Similarly, PCD [warned](#) that overcrowding of displaced people in areas that lack water, hygiene and a sewage system has already led to the spread of diseases, including skin diseases among children. While accurate and timely disease surveillance is impossible under current conditions, as of 7 July, WHO had already [recorded](#) nearly one million cases of acute respiratory infections, 577,000 cases of acute watery diarrhea, 107,000 of acute jaundice syndrome, 12,000 of bloody diarrhea, as well as hundreds of cases of suspected mumps and meningitis. Moreover, 103,385 cases of scabies and lice, 65,368 of skin rashes and over 11,000 of chicken pox had already been registered as of 30 June.
 - Efforts continue to avert the spread of polio after six circulating variant poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) strains were detected in environmental samples from Deir al Balah and Khan Younis in late June. The WHO Director-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has [announced](#) that the organization will be sending to Gaza more than one million polio vaccines. Gaza had a vaccination coverage of 99 per cent prior to the war, a rate that has now dropped to 86 per cent due to the “decimation of the health system, lack of security, destruction of infrastructure, mass displacement and shortage of medical supplies,” explained the WHO Director-General. “While no cases of polio have been recorded yet, without immediate action, it is just a matter of time before it reaches the thousands of children who have been left unprotected,” he added, stressing that children under the age of five are at risk, “especially infants under two because many have not been vaccinated over the nine months of conflict.”
 - On 25 July, the WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Dr. Hanan Balkhy, [convened](#) the 11th meeting of the Regional Subcommittee on Polio Eradication and Outbreaks, which brought together health ministers from across the Eastern Mediterranean region, Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners and UNICEF to collectively discuss decisive actions to contain the outbreak in Gaza. Participants unanimously called for a “safe and enabling environment, by way of a ceasefire or days of tranquillity, to allow for steps to be taken to stop polio from paralyzing children in Gaza, and surrounding areas and countries.” Such steps include intensified surveillance, multiple mass polio immunization campaigns “that may be integrated with other crucial health service delivery when feasible”, as well as enhanced community engagement.
 - According to a new [assessment](#) by the Education Cluster, which relies on satellite imagery collected on 6 July, nearly 85 per cent of school buildings in the Gaza Strip (477 out of 564) have been directly hit or damaged and are currently estimated to require either full reconstruction or major rehabilitation work to be functional again. Fifty-five per cent of these schools (264) are government schools, a third (156) are UNRWA schools, and 12 per cent (57) are private schools. The increase is mainly attributed to an increase in the number of directly hit schools, particularly in Rafah governorate where 21 out of 35 schools newly classified as “directly hit” over the past two months are located. Moreover, according to the assessment, the majority of directly hit schools are in areas that were subject to evacuation orders by the Israeli military. Prior to the war, “direct hit” or “damaged” schools served about 525,000 students and had more than 19,000 teachers and represent, respectively, about 84 and 85 per cent of the total student population and teaching staff in Gaza. In addition, 47 schools are now assessed as “likely damaged,” where at least one damaged site has been identified within 30 to 70 metres of school buildings, indicating the possibility that school structures have sustained moderate damage; including this category indicates that up to 93 per cent of school buildings have sustained some level of damage. Two months ago, 76 per cent of school buildings were estimated to require full reconstruction or rehabilitation, which demonstrates how ongoing hostilities have a grave impact on school facilities and the possibility that they can be used again for educational purposes to safeguard the right of children to learn.

- Between 19 and 25 July, UNICEF conducted a rapid market assessment in Gaza city and Deir al Balah to examine food stock prices and diversity of products in supermarkets, wholesaler food suppliers and street market stalls. Flour prices in Gaza city have been found to be stable recently but had regularly fluctuated depending on the supply from about 1,000 shekels (US\$268) per 25 kilogrammes to around 10 shekels (\$2.68). According to the assessment, Gaza city markets, however, have no vegetables and fruits due to the lack of private commercial trucks entering the area and traders face the triple challenges of high transportation costs, insecurity and spoilage of fresh foods due to prolonged transit periods of trucks at crossings. In Deir Al Balah's main markets, fruit and vegetable wholesalers possess more diverse stocks of fresh fruits, but with only two types of vegetables. One supermarket was found to be very busy, as it had three payment methods available: cash, bank cards and e-wallets. The Gaza Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) working group [reports](#) that between 8 and 21 July, more than 11,127 households in Gaza received emergency MPCA, either first payments or top-ups in the case of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities (PwD) and nursing mothers. Overall, between 7 October 2023 and 21 July 2024, 197,407 households (1,362,156 people) received at least one MPCA payment. The current MPCA transfer value is ILS 1,000 (around US\$275). The use of "e-wallets" for digital transactions and purchases continues to expand among humanitarian Cash actors and the first Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey of e-wallet payments indicates a redemption rate of up to 80 per cent.

Funding

- As of 29 July, Member States have disbursed about \$1.54 billion out of \$3.42 billion (45 per cent) requested 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 January and December 2024. On 10 July, DSC/RC/HC Hadi stated that "more funding is urgently needed – as is a safe, enabling environment inside Gaza. Increased funding now will enable the humanitarian community to scale up operations as soon as conditions permit. For funding analysis, please see the Flash Appeal Financial Tracking [dashboard](#). (*2.3 million reflects the projected population of the Gaza Strip upon issuance of the Flash Appeal in April 2024. As of July 2024, the UN estimates that about 2.1 million people remain in the Gaza Strip, and this updated number is now used for programmatic purposes.)
- The [occupied Palestinian territory Humanitarian Fund](#) (oPt HF) has 111 ongoing projects, for a total of \$88 million, addressing urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (89 per cent) and the West Bank (11 per cent). Of the total, 63 projects are being implemented by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), 34 by national NGOs and 14 by UN agencies. Since 7 October, the oPt HF has mobilized over \$112 million from Member States and private donors to support urgent humanitarian and life-saving programmes across the OPT. Of total funding, 89 per cent has been allocated to projects in Gaza. A summary of the oPt HF activities and challenges in June 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 [oPt HF](#).