



Heavily damaged school in Gaza. Photo by UNRWA

# Humanitarian Situation Update #217 | Gaza Strip

13 Sep 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 16 September.*

## Key Highlights

- Violence and obstruction continue to undermine humanitarian efforts. Israeli forces held a UN convoy at gunpoint, preventing it from fulfilling its humanitarian mission. In a separate incident, a school, and its surroundings in Nuseirat in the middle areas was hit leading to at least 18 deaths, including aid workers.
- Over 560,000 children aged below ten years of age were vaccinated against polio during the first round of an emergency vaccination campaign in Gaza.
- On 12 September, the World Health Organization successfully evacuated the largest number of patients from Gaza since the escalation of hostilities in October 2023. About 12,000 patients continue to wait, unable to exit.
- About 68 per cent of Gaza's cropland and road network have been severely degraded by hostilities, with significant damage increases reported since July.

## Humanitarian Developments

- Israeli bombardment from the air and land continues to be reported across the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure. Ground operations, particularly in Beit Hanoun, southwest Gaza city, eastern Khan Younis and Deir al Balah, and east as well as south Rafah, with heavy fighting, also continue to be reported, alongside Palestinian rocket fire at Israel.
- Between the afternoons of 8 and 12 September, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 146 Palestinians were killed and 364 were injured. Between 7 October 2023 and 12 September 2024, at least 41,118 Palestinians were killed and 95,125 were injured, according to MoH in Gaza.
- The following are some of the deadly incidents reported between 8 and 11 September:
  - On 8 September, five Palestinians were reportedly killed and at least seven others injured when a house was hit in northern An Nuseirat, in Deir al Balah.
  - On 9 September, six Palestinians, including a baby girl, were reportedly killed and others injured when a residential building was hit in Jabalya city, in north Gaza.
  - On 9 September, five Palestinians including three women were reportedly killed and others injured when a residential building was hit near the Jordanian Hospital in Tal Al Hawa, Gaza city.
  - On 10 September, nine Palestinians, including six children and women were reportedly killed when a residential building was hit in Jabalya city, in northern Gaza.

- On 11 September, 13 Palestinians, including nine women and girls, were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit in Khuza'a area, in eastern Khan Younis.
- On 11 September, five Palestinians including two children were reportedly killed and others injured when a residential building was hit in Ash Shamaa area, in Gaza city.
- Between the afternoons of 9 and 13 September, two Israeli soldiers were reportedly killed in a helicopter accident in Gaza, according to the Israeli military. Between 7 October 2023 and 13 September 2024, according to the Israeli military and official Israeli sources cited in the media, more than 1,542 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed, the majority on 7 October and its immediate aftermath. The figure includes 342 soldiers killed in Gaza or along the border in Israel since the beginning of the ground operation. In addition, 2,280 Israeli soldiers were reported injured since the beginning of the ground operation.
- On 10 September, Israeli airstrikes hit a makeshift site that was hosting thousands of internally displaced people. The site was in the area where the Israeli military had instructed civilians to take shelter for their safety, in Al Mawasi part of Khan Younis. People staying there had evacuated from the eastern parts of Khan Younis and Rafah. [According](#) to the UN Human Rights Office, the attack that involved weapons with wide area effects killed at least 19 civilians and 60 others were wounded. According to a Shelter Cluster assessment conducted on 11 September, 68 families comprising 413 people lost their shelters in the attack, requiring new tents and other items. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, [condemned](#) the air strikes stressing that “the use of heavy weapons in densely populated areas is unconscionable.” The UN Human Rights Office [deplored](#) the strikes and further indicated that safety of civilians as well as food, shelter and life necessities were not ensured in the unilaterally designated zone, where people have been forced to move to over the past 11 months.
- On 30 August, the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) cropland damage [assessment](#), based on satellite imagery collected in August 2024, revealed that 68 per cent of permanent crop fields in the Gaza Strip (102 out of 150 square kilometres) exhibited a significant decline in health and density compared with the average over the previous seven years. This marks a 4-percentage point increase in damaged cropland since July 2024, driven by razing, heavy vehicle activity, bombing, shelling, and other conflict-related dynamics. In Gaza Governorate, 75 per cent of cropland was observed to be damaged in August, up from 73 per cent in July, while Deir al Balah saw a five-percentage point increase in the same period. Simultaneously, a satellite-based [assessment](#) of the road network, conducted by UNOSAT on 18 August 2024, revealed that about 68 per cent of Gaza's road network has been damaged, with 1,190 kilometre of roads destroyed, 415 kilometre severely affected, and 1,440 kilometre moderately affected.
- Violence and obstruction continue to impede humanitarian aid workers' ability to support those in need. “What's happening in Gaza is totally unacceptable,” stated the Secretary-General of the UN, [António Guterres](#) after the killing at least 18 Palestinians, including six UNRWA staff members on 11 September in an Israeli airstrike on a UN school, which was sheltering about 12,000 people in An Nuseirat Refugee Camp in Deir Al Balah. According to [UNRWA](#), this incident represents the highest death toll among its personnel in a single event since the escalation of hostilities, with the manager of the UNRWA shelter and other team members among those killed. According to UNRWA, the school has been hit five times since October 2023.
- On 9 September, Israeli forces stopped, threatened and attacked a UN aid convoy of 12 staff members at Al Rasheed checkpoint en route to northern Gaza to support the third phase of the polio vaccination campaign. The movement had been fully coordinated with the Israeli authorities. The situation escalated quickly, with soldiers pointing their weapons directly towards the convoy personnel. Live shots were fired, and tanks and bulldozers engaged with, and damaged UN vehicles, endangering the lives of UN staff inside the vehicles. The convoy remained held at gunpoint while senior level UN officials engaged with the Israeli authorities to de-escalate the situation. Two staff were questioned, one by one, and then released. After seven and a half hours at the checkpoint, the convoy returned to base without being able to fulfil its humanitarian mission to support the polio campaign. The Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, [Muhannad Hadi](#), stated, “the United Nations and humanitarian organizations face continuous obstruction and insecurity in their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the devastated population in Gaza.” This incident follows at least 16 instances of UN convoys being hit since the beginning of the year.
- The third and last phase of the polio vaccination campaign took place in northern Gaza between 10 and 12 September. More than 231 teams were deployed in the North Gaza and Gaza governorates, with a total of 112,311 children immunized in the three-day effort. The first round of the campaign has thus officially concluded across Gaza, with round two, aimed at administering the second dose of the vaccine, set to commence in four weeks' time. Meanwhile, following the successful conclusion of the four-day vaccination efforts in south Gaza on 8 September, five health facilities are [continuing](#) to offer polio vaccines to ensure that no child is missed. As of 13 [September](#), over 560,000 children aged below ten years of age were vaccinated against polio during the first round of an emergency vaccination campaign in Gaza.
- In another significant development, on 12 September, the World Health Organization (WHO), jointly with partners and the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, managed to [evacuate](#) 97 critically injured and sick patients, along with 155 caretakers, from Gaza to the UAE. This was the largest single medical evacuation since October 2023. The patients comprised 45 children and 52 adults with injuries, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other conditions. Despite severe operational challenges and insecurity, WHO and its partners were able to transfer all patients from their initial locations across the Strip to the European Gaza Hospital (EGH) in Khan Younis, where a facility was set up to gather the patients before departure. Overall, only 221 patients and their 292 caretakers have been evacuated from Gaza on five separate occasions since the closure of the Rafah crossing on 7 May. All other evacuations remain halted and an estimated 12,000 patients are still unable to exit the Strip.
- UNFPA has warned about an alarming increase in high-risk pregnancies, birth and postpartum complications in the Gaza Strip. Beyond a marked rise in pre-term births and sexually transmitted, urinary and reproductive tract infections, other severe complications like eclampsia, sepsis and postpartum hemorrhage are being increasingly reported by health workers and Sexual

and Reproductive Health (SRH) service providers. The number of neonatal complications and admissions to Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) has also increased. Nearly one in 10 pregnant and breastfeeding women screened by the Nutrition Cluster in June and July were found to be acutely malnourished – a condition contributing to severe anemia, infections and delayed recovery after delivery. The lack of adequate water and sanitation services further exacerbates the risk of maternal and newborn infections. Currently, 11 hospitals and field hospitals across the Strip offer comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) - four in northern Gaza, two in Deir al Balah, four in Khan Younis, and one in Rafah - and seven facilities have NICUs. The Health Cluster, and the SRH Technical Working Group are endeavoring to expand EmONC services and NICUs in partially functioning hospitals and UNFPA has also established six maternal health units in Deir al Balah and Khan Younis, which are mobile and can be relocated as the situation evolves. Moreover, to alleviate the pressure on overstretched hospitals, ten primary health-care centres have been equipped to provide specialized gynecological services, and to address human resource shortages, qualified SRH personnel, including midwives, are being recruited, trained and deployed across the Strip. Yet, despite all efforts made, ongoing insecurity, exacerbated by repeated evacuation orders, and chronic shortages of essential medical supplies, equipment, generators and fuel continue to undermine access to and the functionality of SRH facilities.

## Funding

- As of 13 September, Member States have disbursed about US\$1.61 billion out of the \$3.42 billion (47 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. 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.)
- During August 2024, the occupied Palestinian territory Humanitarian Fund (oPt HF) managed 93 ongoing projects, totalling \$79.7 million. These projects aimed to address urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (89 per cent) and the West Bank (11 per cent). They were strategically focused on education, food security, health, protection, emergency shelter and non-food items, water, sanitation, and hygiene, coordination and support services, multi-purpose cash assistance and nutrition. Of these projects, 52 projects are being implemented by international non-governmental organizations, 29 by national NGOs and 12 by UN agencies. Notably, 32 out of the 64 projects implemented by INGOs or the UN are being implemented in collaboration with national NGOs. Monthly updates, annual reports, and a list of all funded projects per year, are available on the oPt Humanitarian Fund [webpage](#), under the financing section.