



Children gather around water trucks in Rafah. Photo by UNICEF/El Baba

Humanitarian Situation Update #271 | Gaza Strip

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The Humanitarian Situation Update is issued by OCHA Occupied Palestinian Territory twice a week. The Gaza Strip is covered on Tuesdays and the West Bank on Thursdays. The Gaza Humanitarian Response Update is issued every other Tuesday. The next Humanitarian Situation Update for the West Bank will be issued on 13 March.

Key Highlights*

- The halt on aid, now in its tenth consecutive day, is severely impacting humanitarian operations, as partners struggle to sustain bakeries and begin reducing rations. Meanwhile, UNFPA warns of far-reaching consequences for women and girls.
- The widespread presence of explosive ordnance in Gaza continues to pose life-threatening risks and hinder access to essential services.

Humanitarian Developments

- Since 2 March, and for the 10th consecutive day, the entry of all humanitarian and commercial supplies into Gaza has been halted by the Israeli authorities, severely impacting humanitarian operations and exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation. In a statement, Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Mr. Muhannad Hadi, [stressed](#) that "humanitarian aid in Gaza is a lifeline for over two million Palestinians who have endured unimaginable conditions for many months. A sustained supply of aid is indispensable to their survival." Calling for the immediate resumption of life-saving aid, he added that "any delays will further reverse any progress we have managed to achieve during the ceasefire."
- Between 1 February and 10 March 2025, the World Health Organization (WHO) has [supported](#) the medical evacuation of 1,473 patients, including 579 children, and 2,223 companions from Gaza, to receive specialized care in Egypt and other countries. About half of evacuated patients suffer from trauma injuries (30 per cent) or cancer (21 per cent). On 4 March, WHO [reported](#) the first WHO-supported medical evacuation to Jordan since the ceasefire, where 29 child patients were evacuated for specialized treatment, along with 43 companions. About 12,000 to 14,000 people, including more than 4,500 children, remain in urgent need of medical evacuation, according to the Health Cluster.
- Between the afternoons of 4 and 11 March, the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza reported the killing of 98 Palestinians and the injury of 92 others; this includes 74 newly retrieved bodies. Since the ceasefire came into effect on 19 January, and as of 11 March, a total of 845 bodies were retrieved from areas that were previously inaccessible, the MoH reported. Since 7 October 2023 and as of 11 March 2025, the MoH in Gaza reported the killing of at least 48,503 Palestinians and the injury of 111,927 others.
- Between 7 October 2023 and 11 March 2025, according to Israeli forces and official Israeli sources cited in the media, more than 1,607 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed, the majority on 7 October 2023 and its immediate aftermath. This includes 407 soldiers killed, in addition to 2,583 soldiers injured, in Gaza or along the border in Israel since the beginning of the ground operation in October 2023. As of 11 March, it is estimated that 59 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including hostages who have been declared dead and whose bodies are being withheld.
- Food security in Gaza remains highly dependent on the continued entry of aid supplies, rendering improvements achieved during the ceasefire period fragile, warns the Food Security Sector (FSS). According to the findings of recent post-distribution monitoring

by FSS partners, improvements in dietary diversity and food consumption frequency were observed among assisted people between December 2024 and February 2025, particularly following the surge in the entry of aid supplies after the ceasefire came into effect on 19 January. The previous Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analyses for Gaza showed that food security and malnutrition can deteriorate, and also recover, swiftly in response to the amount of food supplies that are permitted to enter into, and be distributed within, the Gaza Strip. On 7 and 8 March, six out of 25 bakeries supported by the World Food Programme (WFP), including five in Khan Younis and one in Deir al Balah, had to close due to the lack of cooking gas and the halt in supply since 2 March. As of 11 March, 19 WFP-subsidized bakeries are currently operational across Gaza, including one in North Gaza, eight in Gaza, five in Deir al Balah, four in Khan Younis and one in Rafah. FSS reports that while some flour and food parcel distributions from previous dispatches are ongoing, available flour has been prioritized for use at functional bakeries to sustain their operation. Partners are also assessing prioritization strategies to allocate the remaining food parcels to the most vulnerable, with reduced rations. On 9 March, WFP [underscored](#) that "unimpeded humanitarian access is the only means of survival for many families."

- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) [warns](#) that the ongoing blockage of aid entry into Gaza is jeopardizing progress made since the ceasefire in terms of expanding sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and scaling up gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, mitigation and response. In February 2025, UNFPA supported thousands of women, girls and infants across the Gaza Strip by expanding maternity services, strengthening protection services, and increasing the distribution of medical supplies, hygiene and postpartum kits, as well as winterization and sheltering items. At the same time, UNFPA notes that more than half a million women remain without adequate access to family planning, treatment for sexually transmitted infections and postnatal care, cautioning that high levels of need persist. Furthermore, despite efforts to address the dire hygiene needs since the ceasefire, UNFPA estimates that [at least 690,000 women and girls](#) lack sustained access to essential hygiene items, with the majority also deprived of privacy, clean water, and secure sanitation facilities, heightening risks of infections and worsening health conditions.
- Since the escalation of hostilities began in October 2023, Palestinian women in Gaza have endured immense hardships. Representing nearly half of Gaza's population, women have faced a relentless struggle for survival, with many losing husbands, homes, and access to basic services, according to a new [report](#) issued on the eve of International Women's Day on 8 March by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). About 13,900 women have become widows, who are solely responsible for their families, after losing their primary breadwinner. They now bear the burden of providing for their children amid worsening economic conditions and widespread destruction. According to PCBS, "mothers in [the] Gaza Strip live between daily nightmares and entrenched depression," and are "struggling to secure their basic needs such as food and water, while being also unable to provide the necessary healthcare for their injured children due to the collapse of Gaza's health system." Thousands of Palestinian women have been displaced and are now living in temporary tents after losing their homes.
- Despite ongoing efforts to restore the health system across the Gaza Strip, the North Gaza and Rafah governorates remain the most impacted in terms of the percentage of health facilities that remain non-operational. Both governorates sustained severe damage during the escalation, including damage to health facilities, rendering many health service points non-functional. Following the ceasefire, and as of 9 March, only 16 per cent of health service points in North Gaza governorate are fully or partially functional; this includes three out of five (60 per cent) hospitals, six out of 50 (12 per cent) medical points, and four out of 26 (15 per cent) primary health care centres (PHCs). Similarly, in the Rafah governorate, only 11 per cent of health service points are functional, including two out of six (33 per cent) field hospitals, four out of 68 (six per cent) medical points, and four out of 15 (27 per cent) PHCs, while none of the governorate's three hospitals are operational.
- On 10 March, the Director of the Medical Imaging Unit at the MoH, Mr. Ibrahim Abbas, [stated](#) that ill and injured patients are deprived of diagnostic medical imaging services, since related equipment has been largely destroyed during hostilities, including four magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines, four computed tomography (CT) scanners, 16 fixed X-ray machines, 17 mobile X-ray machines, 20 ultrasound machines, and other imaging equipment used in operating rooms. Mr. Abbas warned that this situation presents a significant challenge for medical teams and deprives patients of essential imaging services. The MoH [explained](#) that some X-ray machines have been relocated from various service sites to address urgent needs, prioritizing emergency services, intensive care, and surgeries. Coupled with the dearth of medical equipment, the Health Cluster reported that the healthcare system in Gaza faces a severe shortage of in-patient bed capacity, particularly in adult and paediatric intensive care units (ICUs), specialized medical personnel, essential medical supplies and consumables including those for laboratory services, and ambulances for patient referrals.
- On 9 March, the Israeli Minister of Energy and Infrastructure [announced](#) an order to cut off electricity to Gaza with immediate effect. The Gaza Strip has been under an electricity blackout since October 2023, after the Israeli authorities cut off the electricity supply, except for the South Gaza Desalination Plant which was reconnected to the electricity grid in November 2024. The latest decision will exclusively affect the operation of the South Gaza Desalination Plant supported by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), which has been able to supply up to 18,000 cubic metres of water of drinking quality per day since November 2024. Without electricity, the plant can only provide about 2,500 cubic metres of water per day and the amount of drinking water available in southern Gaza will be substantially reduced, affecting approximately [600,000 people](#) in Deir al Balah and Khan Younis. According to the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) cluster, restoring this connection is vital for thousands of vulnerable families and children.*
- According to the WASH Cluster, between 16 February and 1 March, 135,232 cubic metres of water was produced on average per day across the Gaza Strip. This is about a third of water produced prior to October 2023 but is a substantial increase compared with the pre-ceasefire water production level of about 80-90,000 cubic metres per day. The Cluster attributes this increase, primarily, to a rise in water production from groundwater wells, owing to the increased availability of fuel during the ceasefire. However, approximately 70 per cent of water that goes through the dilapidated and heavily damaged distribution networks is lost

due to leakages and is not available for end users. Persistent constraints remain on bringing in the appropriate materials and supplies needed to conduct repairs to the network.

- Gaza continues to grapple with major challenges in solid waste management that create unsanitary living conditions and exacerbate public health risks. According to the WASH Cluster, primary collection and the secondary transfer of solid waste from households and sites is heavily constrained due to damages and loss of 80 per cent of the vehicles (over 200) and containers (about 6,000) required to run solid waste collection services, with spare parts unavailable to repair remaining vehicles. Within this context, WASH partners continue to use 30 temporary dump sites, most of which are full, and to empty 70 spontaneous dump sites. Meanwhile, negotiations with Israeli authorities continue to gain access to the two main landfills (Juhor ad Dik and Sofa), necessary to enable the critical safe disposal of solid waste, and to import appropriate equipment and supplies for solid waste management and pest control. The WASH Cluster warns that inadequate management of infectious medical waste and the mixing of solid waste with debris contaminated with explosive hazards can further aggravate environmental conditions and public health risks, noting that urgent funding is needed to ensure that primary solid waste collection activities in southern Gaza can, at minimum, continue in the coming months.
- The extensive destruction of buildings and infrastructure in Gaza has resulted in vast amounts of debris, estimated to be between 41 to 47 million tons, primarily from the residential and road sectors. According to the World Bank's Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment ([IRDNA](#)), issued in February 2025, 81 per cent of the classified road network (primary, secondary, and tertiary roads) and 62 per cent of the total road network (including agricultural roads) have been damaged or destroyed. Additionally, 292,000 housing units have been destroyed, representing a staggering 61.8 per cent of the total housing stock. Since the ceasefire, rubble and debris removal has become critical to reopening blocked roads, facilitating the movement of people, reducing potential hazards, and enabling the effective delivery and resumption of humanitarian aid. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been supporting these efforts but has identified several challenges that continue to hinder debris removal operations. These include, inter alia, a severe shortage of heavy machinery and space to store and operate equipment, a critical shortage of lubricants, rubble volume that exceeds existing clearance capacity, and contamination with explosive ordnance or asbestos. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that 2.3 million tonnes of debris may potentially be contaminated with asbestos. Furthermore, according to the IRDNA, a critical aspect of debris clearance is the dignified removal and documentation of an estimated 10,000 bodies buried under the rubble, along with the disposal of exploded ordnance (EO), as thousands of bombs and ammunition remain deeply buried or unexploded.
- The widespread presence of EO continues to pose life-threatening risks to people across Gaza. According to the Mine Action (MA) Area of Responsibility (AoR) group, a sharp increase in reports of EO victims have been reported to the UNMAS-managed incident database. Notwithstanding the limited data, during 2025, and as of 10 March, 18 explosive incidents were recorded, resulting in three people killed and 38 injured. This includes two children killed and 18 injured, highlighting the increased vulnerability of children. In response, the MA AoR is working in close collaboration with Child Protection actors to scale up explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) and awareness raising activities for children, to ensure they have the knowledge required to conduct safe practice when confronted with EO. The majority of incidents in the post-ceasefire period resulted from displaced people returning to damaged buildings and previously inaccessible areas. To mitigate risks and enable the scale-up of humanitarian response, MA partners responded to 138 requests for explosive hazard assessments (EHAs) from partners since the ceasefire. EHA priority is given to sites highlighted as critical for the scale up of humanitarian aid delivery and designated as low, medium or high risk following the EHA. However, MA actors remain unable to conduct clearance and disposal of EO due to the lack of necessary resources and lack of permission from the relevant authorities.
- In March 2025, Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (ASDC) [conducted](#) a needs assessment to evaluate the needs and priorities of conflict-affected people in Gaza, both with and without disabilities. ASDC reported that several rehabilitation-focused organizations providing critical support for people with disabilities (PwD) have been directly attacked, with at least five major organizations specializing in disability services sustaining irreversible damage. This has affected the provision of physical therapy, assistive devices, and psychosocial support services, leaving thousands of people, particularly PwD, without essential care. The assessment, which surveyed 456 parents and people – 63 per cent of whom had a disability or lived in households with at least one member with a disability – highlighted several critical barriers to accessing assistance. For example, about 90 per cent of interviewed PwD reported that displacement sites or current residences had serious accessibility barriers, while 86 per cent of families with disabilities stated that the needs of PwD were not considered or met in an accessible or inclusive manner. Moreover, 81 per cent of respondents indicated that displacement sites or current residences did not offer a safe environment for girls with and without disabilities, exposing them to further psychological harm. The spread of rubble was also considered an impediment, with 91 per cent of respondents, both with and without disabilities, reporting that it hindered movement, creating crucial accessibility barriers to services and posing dangers to families, especially children. The survey also revealed that 67 per cent of respondents felt that PwD were a burden on those around them under current circumstances, while 63 per cent observed that PwD were being subjected to psychological harm through offensive and hurtful language. Finally, the survey highlighted key impacts of the conflict on children, with 75 per cent of respondents reporting a noticeable deterioration in the health condition of their children, such as a significant increase in crying and panic during sleep or an inability to express emotions due to extreme fear. Furthermore, 81 per cent reported increased violent behaviour and hyperactivity in children due to the ongoing crisis.
- Since the ceasefire took effect on 19 January, and as of 6 March, Education Cluster partners continued to establish Temporary Learning Spaces (TLSs) across the Gaza Strip to expand the engagement of children in learning activities. Some 214 new TLSs, including UNRWA-led TLSs, were established serving more than 21,785 children. As of 11 March, according to the Education Cluster, about 65 per cent of nearly 658,000 school-aged children have access to some form of learning, including TLSs, schools that have been re-opened by the Ministry of Education (MoE), as well as remote learning programmes, managed by the MoE and UNRWA, to mitigate learning losses. Overall, about 631 TLSs are now operational throughout Gaza, supporting more than 172,871 students. Moreover, about 70 per cent of over 250,000 children who have registered to enrol in UNRWA's distance learning programme are currently utilizing the digital platform, [reported](#) UNRWA's Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini.

Notwithstanding all the efforts made, the Education Cluster estimates that one-third of children are believed to remain completely cut off from any type of formal, informal, or distance learning activities.

Funding

- As of 11 March 2025, Member States have disbursed approximately US\$173.6 million out of the \$4.07 billion (4.3 per cent) requested to meet the most critical humanitarian needs of three million out of 3.3 million people identified as requiring assistance in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 2025, under the 2025 [Flash Appeal](#) for the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). Nearly 88 per cent of the requested funds are for humanitarian response in Gaza, with just over 12 per cent for the West Bank. Moreover, during February 2025, the [OPT Humanitarian Fund](#) (OPT HF) managed 87 ongoing projects, totalling \$62.6 million, to address urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (86 per cent) and the West Bank (14 per cent). Of these projects, 50 are being implemented by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), 25 by national NGOs and 12 by UN agencies. Notably, 37 out of the 62 projects implemented by INGOs or the UN are being implemented in collaboration with national NGOs. For more information, please see OCHA's Financial Tracking Service [webpage](#) and the OPT HF [webpage](#).

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