



Medical personnel evacuating a casualty in Gaza, 18 March 2025. Photo by PRCS

# Humanitarian Situation Update #273 | Gaza Strip

18 Mar 2025

*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 20 March.*

## Key Highlights

- Israeli airstrikes and bombardment on Gaza result in hundreds of casualties and trigger new waves of displacement amid devastating humanitarian conditions.
- Over one million people risk being left without food parcels in March, if supplies are not allowed into Gaza, compared with more than two million people reached during the first 42 days of the ceasefire, the Food Security Sector warns.
- Between 10 and 20 per cent of 4,500 surveyed pregnant and breastfeeding women are malnourished, a recent analysis by the Nutrition Cluster reveals.
- With the closure of crossings for incoming cargo, for the seventeenth consecutive day, UN agencies warn that life-saving health equipment, including 20 ventilators for neonatal intensive care units and nine portable newborn incubators, alongside other aid supplies, are stalled at the border.

## Humanitarian Developments

- Since the early morning hours of 18 March, Israeli airstrikes and bombardment were reported across the Gaza Strip, resulting in civilian casualties, displacement and destruction of property. According to initial reports, among the areas and facilities hit are At Tabeen Governmental School in Ad Daraj area of Gaza city, Az Zawayda area in Deir al Balah, a site for internally displaced persons (IDP) in Al Mawasi area, in western Khan Younis, and IDP tents in Tal as Sultan area, in western Rafah. In a [statement](#), the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Muhannad Hadi, described the situation as “unconscionable.” UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres, [Under-Secretary-General](#) for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Tom Fletcher, and Mr. Hadi called for a return to the ceasefire, unimpeded humanitarian access and the unconditional release of hostages.
- According to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, as of 12:00pm, 404 people were killed and 562 were injured since the early morning hours, when Israeli airstrikes and bombardment intensified. Many bodies remain under the rubble of destroyed structures, according to MoH. The Palestinian Civil Defense (PCD) stated that among the over 400 people killed, there were more than 170 children and 80 women. PCD and medical teams report that they have responded to the best of their ability, amid the lack of equipment and an inability to reach the targeted areas due to the lack of vehicles and heavy machinery. MoH has urgently [appealed](#) for blood donations at all functional hospitals after the stock was depleted from the blood bank. MoH General Director, Dr. Munir Al Bursh, stressed the need for field hospitals, beds and operation rooms. [According](#) to the Health Cluster, 13 hospitals and four field hospitals remain non-functional, 22 hospitals and six field hospitals are partially functional, four field hospitals are fully functional and no hospitals are fully functional.



- In a media interview, Dr. Mohammed Abu Silmiyeh, the Director of Al Shifa hospital in Gaza city, [described](#) the situation as “catastrophic,” with a very high number of casualties, resembling the first days after 7 October 2023. Highlighting the challenges facing the hospital in handling the influx of casualties, Dr. Abu Silmiyeh stated: “This morning, there were 50 bodies at the emergency department and another 30 at the morgue refrigerator. Operation rooms were full, and many injured people have died in front of our eyes while we couldn’t treat them.” The health system in North Gaza has largely collapsed with only one oxygen generator, one computerized tomography (CT) scanning machine, and one X-ray machine, according to Dr. Abu Silmiyeh, and there are shortages of medicines and consumables such that the exhausted medical teams had to wash and sterilize gauze to use it again. Some casualties were brought to the hospital by animal carts and the hospital received several cases of amputees as well as beheaded and ripped bodies, Dr. Abu Silmiyeh added.
- The destruction of critical medical infrastructure in Gaza, particularly oxygen generation stations that used to serve vital departments in hospitals, such as operating rooms, intensive care units, and neonatal units, has severely affected the ability of the health system in Gaza to deliver life-saving services. On 13 March, Mr. Bassam Al Hamdeen, Deputy Director-General of the MoH, [said](#) that 10 oxygen generation stations had been destroyed during the escalation, of which four were located at Al Shifa Hospital and two at the Indonesian Hospital. Mr. Al Hamdeen added that the ongoing electricity outage is a significant barrier to the restoration of hospital operations and primary health care centres. Furthermore, on 17 March, Dr. Alaa Hiles, Director of the Pharmaceutical Care Department at MoH, noted that there is a critical shortage of drugs and medical consumables, including essential items for basic surgeries, which are insufficient for scheduled procedures, open heart surgeries, the treatment of kidney patients, and cardiac catheterization procedures, among others.
- Between the afternoons of 11 and 17 March, the MoH in Gaza reported the killing of 74 Palestinians and the injury of 114 others; this includes 44 newly retrieved bodies. Since the ceasefire came into effect on 19 January, and as of 17 March, a total of 889 bodies were retrieved from areas that were previously inaccessible, the MoH reported. Since 7 October 2023 and as of 17 March 2025, the MoH in Gaza reported the killing of at least 48,577 Palestinians and the injury of 112,041 others.
- Between 10 and 17 March, incidents resulting in fatalities were reported across the Gaza Strip, including the following:
  - On 10 March, at about 13:50, three Palestinian brothers were reportedly killed when a group of people was hit in Al Bureij refugee camp, in Deir al Balah.
  - On 11 March, at about 18:40, a Palestinian girl was reportedly shot and killed in southeastern Deir al Balah.
  - On 13 March, at about 18:30, a Palestinian boy was reportedly killed, and his mother seriously injured, when an IDP tent was hit in Beit Hanoun, in North Gaza.
  - On 13 March, at about 17:00, a Palestinian boy was reportedly killed when a group of young people was hit in Ash Shuja’iyeh area of Gaza city.
  - On 14 March, at about 18:00, a 22-year-old Palestinian fisher was reportedly killed when a shell was fired at a boat off the coast of As Sudaniya, northwest of Beit Lahiya.
  - On 15 March, at about 13:00, 10 Palestinian men were reportedly killed when a group of Palestinians and a vehicle were hit northwest of Beit Lahiya, in North Gaza. According to [Al-Khair Charity foundation](#), eight of its staff including cameramen, were killed in the incident. The Palestinian Journalists Protection Center (PJPS) [reported](#) that three journalists were killed in the airstrike while documenting humanitarian relief efforts in northern Gaza. According to the Israeli military, Israeli forces [targeted](#) a “terrorist cell” operating a drone.
  - On 15 March, at about 17:00, a Palestinian child was reportedly killed when IDP tents were hit near Erez Crossing in Beit Lahiya, in North Gaza.
  - On 17 March, at about 9:30, three Palestinian men, from the same family, were reportedly killed and several others injured when a group of people collecting firewood was hit near Wadi Gaza in northeastern Al Bureij refugee camp.
  - On 17 March, at about 14:45, a Palestinian man and his child were reportedly killed and others injured when a group of people was hit inside an UNRWA school used as an IDP shelter in eastern Al Bureij refugee camp.
- Between 7 October 2023 and 18 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 2,584 soldiers injured, in Gaza or along the border in Israel since the beginning of the ground operation in October 2023. As of 18 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.
- Since 2 March, the entry of all humanitarian supplies, alongside any other cargo, into Gaza has been halted by the Israeli authorities. This has severely affected humanitarian operations and exacerbated the already dire humanitarian situation. On 18 March, the World Health Organization (WHO) [said](#) that the medical evacuation planned for the day through Rafah Crossing had been denied and called for the resumption of such evacuations. Between 1 February and 17 March, 1,702 patients, including 616 children, were evacuated along with 2,557 companions to receive specialized care in Egypt and other countries. According to [WHO](#), about 11,000 to 13,000 people, including more than 4,500 children, remain in urgent need of medical evacuation.
- On 18 March, the Israeli military issued an evacuation order for areas in North Gaza and eastern Khan Younis, ordering residents to evacuate immediately to shelters in Gaza city and Khan Younis. In total, 19 neighbourhoods were directly affected, including 13 in North Gaza and six in eastern Khan Younis, affecting an estimated 30,000 and 35,000 people, respectively. According to the Site

Management Cluster (SMC), affected areas in Beit Hanoun in North Gaza comprise 19 makeshift displacement sites, four UNRWA collective centres, of which two are active, and one non-UNRWA collective centre. In Abasan al Jadida and Khuza'a, east of Khan Younis, according to SMC, there are five makeshift displacement sites. According to the Health Cluster, three primary health care (PHC) facilities and one field hospital are within the areas placed under evacuation. Additionally, within 1,000 metres of these areas, there are four PHCs, two hospitals, one field hospital, and four medical points. According to initial information, the displacement of people has been reported from multiple areas across the Gaza Strip, including from Beit Hanoun and eastern Khan Younis.

- The Israeli halt to all incoming humanitarian and commercial aid since 2 March threatens to rapidly reverse the [hard-won food security gains](#) achieved during the 42-days of ceasefire. The fragility of these improvements underscores the critical need for sustained aid, with food assistance remaining a lifeline for 2.1 million people. Food Security Sector (FSS) partners are now entirely dependent on stocks brought in during [Phase One](#) of the ceasefire to sustain their activities, but these supplies are rapidly dwindling. To cope with shortages, FSS partners are drastically reducing food assistance to families, suspending flour distribution to families to prioritize supplies for bakeries, pausing the distribution of fresh produce, and scaling down hot meal preparations at some community kitchens. FSS warns that over one million people risk being left without food parcels in March, and at least 80 of the 170 community kitchens may be forced to close in one to two weeks, if supplies, including cooking fuel, are not allowed into Gaza. The FSS estimates that more than 50,000 metric tons (MT) of food supplies are required monthly to assist everyone with full rations, in addition to 9,700 MT of flour needed monthly to keep the subsidized bakeries running.
- The abrupt disruption in food assistance is being compounded by a surge in local market prices. According to a market survey carried out by the World Food Programme (WFP), covering key developments during the first half of March, [commercial food prices have surged](#), with some fruits and vegetables increasing by over 200 per cent compared with levels prior to the closure of the crossings. Traders have begun [withholding goods](#) due to uncertainty over when new supplies will arrive, while some shops are unable to replenish stocks. Furthermore, the closure of crossings for cargo has further worsened Gaza's severe energy crisis, with diesel prices rising by up to 105 per cent and cooking gas prices soaring by up to 200 per cent, compared with February, significantly limiting access to essential fuel amid a continued electricity blackout. This comes at a time when cash liquidity shortages remain a major challenge and purchasing power is extremely limited.
- Since the ceasefire took effect on 19 January, and as of 15 March, 4,646 children have enrolled in malnutrition treatment programmes, 672 of whom were diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition. The Nutrition Cluster notes a decrease in monthly enrolments in such programmes from about 5,000 in the month prior to the ceasefire to a monthly average of 2,500 in Phase One of the ceasefire. This is attributed to improvements in food accessibility conditions and to limited screening and detection due to massive population movements and the time needed for partners to re-established services in new locations. The cluster warns that the current closure of crossings for cargo may derail some of the achieved progress unless urgent action is taken to improve the availability of food, dietary diversity, and access to water, sanitation and hygiene services. At the same time, Nutrition Cluster partners observed a rising number of pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBW) with mid-upper arm circumference measurements below 23 cm, indicating acute malnutrition. The most recent comprehensive analysis of routine mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) data, covering nearly 4,500 PBW and analyzed with the technical support of the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) initiative to ensure quality, shows that between 10 and 20 per cent of them were malnourished.\*
- "Without aid entering the Gaza Strip, roughly 1 million children are living without the very basics they need to survive – yet again," [stated](#) the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Director, Edouard Beigbeder, stressing that large quantities of critical supplies are stalled just a few dozen kilometres outside the Gaza Strip, including 20 ventilators for neonatal intensive care units and more than 180,000 doses of essential childhood, routine vaccines, enough to fully vaccinate and protect 60,000 children under the age of two. UNICEF [stressed](#) that these life-saving health supplies must be allowed to enter, warning that any further delay risks reversing the gains made for children during Phase One of the ceasefire. "Tragically, approximately 4,000 newborns are currently unable to access essential lifesaving care due to the major impact on medical facilities in the Gaza Strip. Every day without these ventilators, lives are lost, especially among vulnerable, premature newborns in the northern Gaza Strip." Moreover, according to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), nine portable incubators intended to support premature and low-birth-weight newborns are being held at the Zikim Crossing, further endangering neonatal survival rates. In February 2025, 3,540 deliveries (an average of 126 per day) were reported in Gaza. At least 20 per cent of newborns are low birth, preterm or face other complications, requiring advanced medical care that is now largely unavailable in Gaza, UNFPA reported.

## Findings of an inter-agency mission to eastern Khan Younis

- On 11 March, UN agencies and humanitarian partners carried out a joint assessment mission in Al Rabee and An Naem neighbourhoods of Abasan al Jadeda, located in eastern Khan Younis. This area was placed under evacuation orders by the Israeli military on 18 March (see above), triggering displacement.
- During the 11 March visit, Al Rabee area had approximately 1,600 households, including about 1,200 returnees. The majority (76 per cent) of households were scattered in makeshift shelters, which posed challenges to organized humanitarian response efforts. An additional 18 per cent were living in damaged and structurally unsafe buildings. Another five per cent were sheltering in UNRWA schools, and a small number were living in tents.
- Al Naem area had approximately 800 households spread over 300,000 square metres, where 95 per cent of structures had been destroyed. The majority (over 80 per cent) of households were living in makeshift shelters next to their destroyed homes, a small portion were living in tents, about 13 per cent were living in two UNRWA schools-turned-shelters, and five per cent were living in damaged buildings.

- At both sites, poor shelter conditions were observed, including overcrowding in collective shelters, generally substandard conditions, and the continued use of tarpaulins and plastic sheeting that have exceeded their intended short-term use period or have been reused multiple times due to repeated evacuation orders. The need of shelter rehabilitation and the provision of prefabricated shelter units and latrines was identified as a critical need, in addition to meeting critical shortages of bedding items, kitchen sets, clothing, water tanks, hygiene kits and dignity kits for women and girls. Moreover, both neighbourhoods lacked essential services and health points, including sexual and reproductive health services, while services addressing gender-based violence were absent.
- While households in both neighbourhoods had received some food assistance, distribution points were far away, and there were no community kitchens, UN-supported bakeries, or bread-selling points available. Cooking fuel shortages were severe, with many families relying on burning wood, if available, to cook or using plastic waste and garbage, posing health and environmental hazards.
- Both communities depended on municipal generators, which operated only a few hours per day, as their primary source of electricity. As a result, residents had to travel to charge devices such as phones and batteries. Failure to charge devices limited their ability to communicate, access information, or even register for aid online.
- Agricultural facilities in both neighbourhoods had been largely destroyed, including 1,400 dunums of open land, 150 greenhouses, 90 poultry farms, and dozens of livestock and dairy cattle farms. The remaining cultivated land did not exceed 70-80 dunums. There were no functioning irrigation systems, and agricultural wells had been damaged or destroyed. This was compounded by the critical shortage of seeds, fertilizers, and other agricultural inputs, leaving farmers able to grow only a few rainfed crops, mainly peas, wheat and leafy greens. Explosive ordnance remained present in both neighbourhoods, with hazardous areas marked, yet they still posed a life-threatening risk, particularly to children.
- Schools and kindergartens in both neighbourhoods had sustained varying levels of damage and lacked furniture, educational supplies, and internet and IT devices, with some schools being used as shelters. In Al Rabee neighbourhood, learning activities had been established at one government school and through a community-led initiative for young children.

## Funding

- As of 18 March 2025, Member States have disbursed approximately US\$174.9 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.