

**JOINT
STATEMENT:
AID
ORGANISATIONS
WARN OF
DRAMATIC
ESCALATION
OF
HUMANITARIAN
CATASTROPHE
IN NORTHERN
GAZA**

- Published: **9 Oct 2024**

- Short URL: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/mc/kxw3gw/>

Israel's new displacement orders in northern Gaza threaten to force civilians into ever-shrinking areas and endanger aid operations

On 6 October 2024, Israel issued new mass displacement orders targeting the remaining Palestinians of the northern Gaza Strip, ordering them to leave to the south. This move will worsen the already dire humanitarian situation in the north and has prevented international and national humanitarian organisations from carrying out already very limited life-saving aid operations.

The new orders have obstructed humanitarian actors from providing necessities such as health services, clean water, food and nutrition services, taking away the remaining lifelines for the civilian population.

Nowhere in Gaza is safe for civilians. Given the severity of the needs, humanitarian actors must be able to distribute aid and continue their work, without threat of displacement or military operations. The undersigned aid organisations urge all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations to protect civilians and facilitate unhindered humanitarian access at all times.

The UN estimates 400,000 people remain in the north. On Sunday, Israel ordered residents to flee through dangerous routes to already overcrowded areas such as Al-Mawasi in the south. These areas remain insecure with active fighting and routine airstrikes, despite being unilaterally designated by Israel as a “humanitarian zone”. Given the short notice to move and the large population in the affected area, many are likely to remain, increasing the risk of further civilian casualties.

The undersigned aid organisations demand the protection of all civilians in line with international humanitarian law and are particularly concerned about children, pregnant women with complications or at advanced stages of pregnancy and other people who are sick, older people, persons with disabilities, or are otherwise unable to leave. The new orders impact Palestinians living close to the Netzarim corridor. Further reports indicate that Israel intends to expand the Netzarim corridor to reinforce the separation between the north and south, effectively preventing people from returning north and further restricting aid flow to a population already enduring catastrophic levels of hunger.

Civilians who do not leave the area do not lose their right to protection. Under international humanitarian law, Israel is defined as the occupying power and a party to the conflict. Both roles carry obligations to guarantee the protection of the civilian population and facilitate their unhindered access to humanitarian aid.

Paula Gaviria Betancur, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons has said that “Israel is seeking to permanently alter the composition of Gaza’s population with ever-expanding evacuation orders and widespread and systematic attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure”, in violation of International Humanitarian Law.

The undersigned aid organisations call for a permanent ceasefire, the protection of civilians and a scale up of humanitarian aid.

Ends

Notes to editor

The forcible transfer of Palestinian civilians in Gaza is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and does not amount to a permissible evacuation. Relocation areas have not provided safety, adequate shelter or essential services, and there has also been no guarantee that displaced populations will be able to return once hostilities end.

Signatories:

ActionAid

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

War Child

Médecins du Monde France, Spain and Switzerland

HelpAge International

Terre des Hommes Italia

Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

Humanity & Inclusion/ Handicap International (HI)

Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA)

Save the Children

CARE International

Islamic Relief

Plan International

Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)

Oxfam

Premiere Urgence Internationale

Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS)