



Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell on the resumption of fighting in Gaza

01 December 2023



UNICEF/UNI463720/EI Baba

Available in: English [العربية](#)

NEW YORK, 1 December 2023 – “Today, the Gaza Strip is once again the most dangerous place in the world to be a child. After seven days of respite from horrific violence, fighting has resumed. More children will surely die as a result.

“Before the pause, more than 5,300 Palestinian children were reportedly killed in 48 days of relentless bombing – a figure that does not include many children still missing and presumed to be buried under rubble.

“Should violence return to this scale and intensity, we can assume that hundreds more children will be killed and injured every day. And if we are not able to get water, food, medical supplies, blankets, and warm clothes to those in need, we will face a humanitarian catastrophe.

“It does not have to be this way – for seven days, there was a glimmer of hope for children amidst this horrific nightmare.

“More than 30 children held hostage in Gaza were safely released and reunited with their families. And the humanitarian pause enabled an increase in the delivery of lifesaving supplies into and across Gaza. UNICEF and our partners were able to significantly scale up operations and programmes. And we were able to begin connecting separated children with their families.

“This was not nearly enough to meet the scale of the humanitarian needs, but it was a start. Now, we need increased safe and predictable access to reach those children who have been injured, displaced and traumatized. And we need to get supplies to children who are vulnerable to the cold, wet weather that has arrived.

“Children need a lasting humanitarian ceasefire.

“We call on all parties to ensure that children are protected and assisted, in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law. All children in the State of Palestine and Israel deserve peace and hope for a better future.”

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