



# Statement by UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa Adele Khodr on the continued killing and injuring of children in the Gaza Strip and the humanitarian situation

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**AMMAN, 9 December 2023** – “The Gaza Strip is the most dangerous place in the world to be a child. Scores of children are reportedly being killed and injured on a daily basis. Entire neighborhoods, where children used to play and go to school have been turned into stacks of rubble, with no life in them.

“UNICEF and other humanitarian actors have been ringing the alarm for weeks. Our team on the ground describe meeting children with missing limbs and third-degree burns, and children left shell-shocked by the continuing violence that surrounds them.

“Close to one million children have been forcibly displaced from their homes. They are now being pushed further and further south into tiny, overcrowded areas without water, food, or protection, putting them at increased risk of respiratory infections and waterborne disease. Their lives are further threatened by dehydration, malnutrition and disease.

“The restrictions and challenges being placed on the delivery of lifesaving aid going into and across the Gaza Strip are another death sentence for children. The quantities going in are nowhere near adequate compared to the level of need, and aid distribution has become an ever-greater challenge due to bombing and lack of fuel. The humanitarian system is buckling, particularly under the extreme strain caused by the measures imposed after the end of the ceasefire, as the population is pushed further into despair.

“An immediate, long-lasting humanitarian ceasefire is the only way to end the killing and injuring of children, the only way that civilians can be protected, and the only way to enable the urgent delivery of desperately needed lifesaving aid.

“Humanitarian aid must be allowed in at scale to prevent further suffering. UNICEF and the humanitarian organizations must have safe access to all the children and their families wherever they are in the Gaza Strip, including in the north.

“The world is watching, helpless and devastated – we cannot act quickly enough. This must stop immediately.”