

Statement of the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lynn Hastings

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The 7-day ceasefire brought respite to everyone; hostages were reunited with their families and desperately needed aid went into Gaza. We need more of this; all hostages released and considerably more aid and protection for Palestinian civilians.

But since the resumption of hostilities in Gaza on 1 December, 700 Palestinians have reportedly been killed in addition to the 15,500 already killed. Israeli military operations have expanded into southern Gaza, forcing tens of thousands of others into increasingly compressed spaces, desperate to find food, water, shelter and safety.

Nowhere is safe in Gaza and there is nowhere left to go.

The conditions required to deliver aid to the people of Gaza do not exist. If possible, an even more hellish scenario is about to unfold, one in which humanitarian operations may not be able to respond.

What we see today are shelters with no capacity, a health system on its knees, a lack of clean drinking water, no proper sanitation and poor nutrition for people already mentally and physically exhausted: a textbook formula for epidemics and a public health disaster.

The quantities of relief supplies and fuel allowed in are utterly insufficient. Despite the enormous efforts of the Egyptian and Palestinian Red Crescent Societies, UN agencies and other partners, the use of only the Rafah crossing - meant for pedestrians - to bring in trucks of goods does not work.

Humanitarian operations cannot be kept on a drip feed of fuel. It is the foundation of social services and our operations; including for hospitals, desalination plants, clean drinking water and sanitation.

Space for the humanitarian response allowed inside Gaza is constantly shrinking. The two most important routes – the coastal road and Salahaddin road – are now cut off to our teams and trucks, hindering our ability to help people wherever they are.

The UN and NGOs alone cannot support a population of 2.2 million. Commercial and public sectors must be allowed to bring supplies into Gaza to restock markets. This must include fuel in a manner which ensures Israel's security.

Announcements of establishing so-called safe zones and tented cities without assurances that people will be able to move freely and that assistance can be delivered where there is need are alarming. These zones cannot be safe nor humanitarian when unilaterally declared.

The UN stands ready to work with all parties to expand the number of UN-managed safe shelters and to deliver assistance where it is needed.

* Also read [statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General – on the Middle East](#)