



Jabalya, February 2025. Photo by OCHA/Olga Cherevko

Humanitarian Situation Update #269 | Gaza Strip

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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 6 March.

Key Highlights

- On 2 March, Israeli authorities announced a halt to humanitarian aid entering Gaza, jeopardizing progress made in delivering vital, lifesaving assistance since the ceasefire took effect on 19 January.
- In February, a slight improvement was found in dietary diversity and since the ceasefire, over 3,000 children and 1,000 pregnant or breastfeeding women have been referred for acute malnutrition treatment.
- Over 150,000 students have enrolled in 165 schools since the Ministry of Education launched the new, compressed academic year on 23 February, marking the first return to some form of in-person learning at schools since October 2023.
- Two months into 2025, less than 4 per cent of the US\$4 billion in funding required to meet the most basic humanitarian needs of people across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in Gaza, has been secured.

Humanitarian Developments

- On 26 February, Palestinian armed groups returned to Israel the remains of four deceased hostages, through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). On 26 and 27 February, the Israeli authorities released a total of [642](#) Palestinian detainees, including 491 who were reportedly detained from the Gaza Strip after 7 October, among them 44 children, and 151 others. In total, [97](#) detainees were reportedly released to Egypt. Since 19 January, 25 Israeli and five Thai hostages, the bodies of eight Israeli hostages, two of whom were children, and 1,777 Palestinian detainees have been released.
- As of 25 February, 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.
- On 24 and 26 February 2025, the Palestinian Prisoner's Society announced the death of two detainees from Gaza while in Israeli custody, which raised the reported number of Gaza detainees who have died in custody since October 2023 to 40. As of March 2025, according to [data](#) provided by the Israel Prison Service (IPS) to Hamoked, an Israeli human rights NGO, there are 9,406 Palestinians in Israeli custody, including 1,486 sentenced prisoners, 2,960 remand detainees, 3,405 administrative detainees held without trial, and 1,555 people held as "unlawful combatants." These figures do not include Palestinians who have been detained from Gaza since 7 October 2023 and are still held by the Israeli military.
- Between the afternoons of 25 February and 4 March, the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza reported the killing of 57 Palestinians and the injury of 74 others; this includes 49 newly retrieved bodies. Since the ceasefire came into effect on 19 January, and as of 4 March, a total of 771 bodies were retrieved from areas that were previously inaccessible, the MoH reported. Since 7 October 2023 and as of 4 March 2025, the MoH in Gaza reported the killing of at least 48,405 Palestinians and the injury of 111,835 others.

- Between 26 February and 2 March, several incidents resulting in fatalities were reported across the Gaza Strip. On 28 February, an 18-year-old Palestinian man was reportedly killed in Rafah and a boy was reportedly killed in North Gaza. On 2 March, a young Palestinian man was reportedly killed while on the roof of his house in central Rafah and a woman was reportedly killed and others injured in Khan Younis. Moreover, the widespread presence of explosive ordnance continues to pose risk to people in Gaza. On 26 and 27 February, two people were reportedly killed and five others injured by explosive ordnances in North Gaza and Rafah, where people were reportedly digging to erect tents.
- Between 7 October 2023 and 3 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 2,582 soldiers injured, in Gaza or along the border in Israel since the beginning of the ground operation in October 2023.
- Between 1 February and 2 March 2025, the World Health Organization (WHO) has [supported](#) the medical evacuation of 1,136 patients, including 451 children, and 1,720 companions from Gaza to receive specialized care in Egypt and other countries. About 12,000 to 14,000 people, including more than 4,500 children, remain in urgent need of medical evacuation, according to the Health Cluster.
- On 26 February, the polio vaccination campaign concluded, [reaching](#) 602,795 children under 10 years of age. Among them were 101,777 children in the North Gaza governorate, 210,279 in Gaza, 100,279 in Deir al Balah, 143,931 in Khan Younis and 46,529 in Rafah. Noting that the “ceasefire allowed health workers to reach more children than during previous vaccination rounds,” Director-General of WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, [emphasized](#) that ending “polio hinges on fully vaccinating every last child and ensuring uninterrupted access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene, and proper nutrition.”
- On 23 February, the Ministry of Education (MoE) launched the new, compressed academic year for 2024-2025, marking the first return to some form of in-person learning at schools since the escalation of hostilities in October 2023. As of 3 March, according to MoE, over 150,000 students have enrolled in 165 governmental schools across Gaza, more than half of which are operating on three shifts a day, and over 7,000 teachers have been mobilized to support teaching. According to the Education Cluster, 30 of these schools are in Gaza governorate, 52 in Deir al Balah, 57 in Khan Younis, and 26 in Rafah. Most schools were severely damaged due to hostilities and/or used as shelters for displaced people and have become worn down, the Cluster added, noting that at least 88 per cent of school buildings still require full reconstruction or major rehabilitation. Yet, shortages in construction materials are preventing essential repairs, and the lack of capacity to clear explosive ordnance is preventing the use of some damaged buildings and increasing the need for temporary learning spaces. At the same time, between 19 January, when the ceasefire took effect and 1 March, only 100 out of an estimated 600 special tents needed to serve as temporary learning spaces entered Gaza and the entry of educational supplies continued to be limited, making it difficult to re-establish an effective learning environment with the required equipment and materials, particularly in North Gaza, where damage levels are especially high.
- On 2 March, Israeli authorities announced a halt to humanitarian aid entering Gaza, including fuel. Describing Israel's decision to halt aid into Gaza as “alarming,” Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Tom Fletcher, [stated](#): “International humanitarian law is clear: We must be allowed access to deliver vital lifesaving aid. We can't roll back the progress of the past 42 days. We need to get aid in and the hostages out. The ceasefire must hold.” Also, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) [warned](#) that the stoppage of aid deliveries into Gaza will quickly lead to devastating consequences for children and families who are struggling to survive.
- According to the Food Security Sector (FSS), if the disruption to aid entry continues, at least 80 community kitchens may soon run out of stock. Among the kitchens that remain operational, some will need to start to adjust meal content or reduce the number of meals prepared to cope with anticipated shortages. Additionally, FSS partners would be forced to reduce food rations. While the distribution of previously dispatched food parcels is ongoing, these remaining supplies, which will support 500,000 people, will soon run out. Furthermore, household-level flour distribution will have to be suspended to prioritize the available flour stocks for sustaining bakery operations.
- Beyond the critical need to ensure the continued flow of food assistance, in line with the [2025 Flash Appeal](#) for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, FSS partners are supporting the restoration of local food production systems and agricultural livelihoods in Gaza. These efforts are seeking to complement general food and bread distributions and healthy cooked meals. By providing the necessary resources to small-scale farmers, livestock herders and other agri-food actors, FSS partners aim to enhance access to a diverse and highly nutritious diet, including fresh milk, meat and vegetables. For example, since 19 January, FSS partners have distributed over 1,000 MT of animal feed to approximately 3,000 livestock holders in Gaza city, Deir al Balah, Khan Younis and more than 3,000 vegetable seed kits to support home and community gardening in Rafah, Khan Younis and Deir al Balah. The distribution of the remaining 7,000 vegetable seed kits that have entered the Gaza Strip is underway. However, according to FSS, even before the halt to the entry of humanitarian supplies to the Gaza Strip, the re-activation of agricultural activities was constrained due to restrictions on the entry of most agricultural inputs, such as seed kits, organic fertilizers and nylon sheets for greenhouses, through both humanitarian and private sector channels. These humanitarian items, FSS emphasizes, are critical to supporting emergency livelihoods, enhancing dietary diversity and reducing food gaps in Gaza.
- In addition, FSS highlights that safe access of farmers, breeders, and fishers to their lands, livestock and the sea is critical for resuming agricultural activities and restoring the food supply chain. Yet, an estimated 50 million tons of debris are scattered across Gaza, large swathes of agricultural land have sustained damage, and incidents of fishers being fired at while fishing just metres from the shore continue. To enable the resumption of safe agricultural practices and fishing activities, FSS emphasizes that the import of agricultural and fish production inputs and tools needs to resume, the removal of hazardous materials, including unexploded ordnance, should continue, and fishers must be granted safe access to fishing waters without fear of harm. According to the Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (IRDNA) [issued](#) by the World Bank, European Union, and UN on 18 February,

economic losses in the agricultural sector are estimated at US\$1.3 billion, and US\$1.06 billion is required to address agricultural and food systems needs in the immediate and short terms (up to three years), with a focus on stabilizing infrastructure and basic needs to achieve 70 per cent functionality of critical assets in the first year and increase local food production by 40 per cent.

- Data collected by the Nutrition Cluster in February showed a slight improvement in the number of children and pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBW) consuming the minimum required food groups, with about eight per cent of children consuming four or more food groups, and a noticeable increase in the consumption of fruits, vegetables, eggs and dairy products, which can be attributed to the then increased availability of goods on the local market. Within this context, Nutrition Cluster partners continue to support the scale-up of screening processes of children and PBW to identify acute malnutrition cases that need to be enrolled in treatment programmes. Overall, since the ceasefire took effect on 19 January, more than 3,000 children and 1,000 PBW have been diagnosed with acute malnutrition in the Gaza Strip and referred for treatment. As of 1 March, Nutrition Cluster partners provided services at four in-patient stabilization centres for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition with medical complications and 135 sites currently provide out-patient treatment of acute malnutrition, compared with 120 sites prior to the ceasefire. To strengthen preventative measures, partners have also scaled up the blanket distribution of nutrient supplements, reaching nearly 230,000 children and 90,000 PBW since 19 January, in addition to providing more than 19,000 children with ready-to-use complementary foods (e.g., jars of mixed fruit). At present, about 180 sites across Gaza are providing nutrient supplementation, compared with 151 sites prior to the ceasefire, and over 320 sites are providing infant and young child feeding services compared with 160 prior to the ceasefire.
- On 4 March, WHO [warned](#) that the, “lack of water and sanitation threatens the health, dignity and, survival of women and girls in Gaza ... [as the] inability to maintain hygiene increases anxiety and stress, deepening the mental health crisis among those displaced.” A female doctor displaced from North Gaza and interviewed by WHO described witnessing women cutting up their clothes to provide their daughters with makeshift sanitary pads in displaced sites, stressing that “only a woman can truly understand this suffering – lack of necessities, underwear, sanitary pads, and hygiene.” In response to the dire hygiene needs, since the ceasefire took effect, partners addressing gender-based violence have distributed 90,000 dignity kits, compared with 2,388 prior to the ceasefire, and WHO provided hygiene and sanitation supplies to meet the needs of over 77,000 women and girls.
- Drawing attention to the devastating mental health consequences if the ceasefire does not hold, a child psychotherapist and mental health activity manager for Médecins Sans Frontières [stated](#): “The mental health of both children and adults in Gaza has been severely affected. They have gone through immense trauma, worrying about their lives for more than a year. We see depressive symptoms in adults and children ... because they can’t take it anymore ... The ceasefire needs to hold because without it, these children will once again be trapped in extreme survival mode ... the uncertainty, fear and trauma have lasted too long for anyone to bear.”

Funding

- As of 3 March 2025, Member States have disbursed approximately US\$156.4 million out of the \$4.07 billion (3.8 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.