



Displaced people returning to Jabalya following the start of the ceasefire, 19 January 2025. Photo by UNRWA

Humanitarian Situation Update #257 | Gaza Strip

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The Humanitarian Situation Update is issued by OCHA Occupied Palestinian Territory twice a week. The Gaza Strip is generally covered on Tuesdays and the West Bank on Thursdays. Today's update is exceptionally issued on a Wednesday. The Gaza Humanitarian Response Update is issued every other Tuesday. The next Humanitarian Situation Update will be issued on 23 January.

Key Highlights

- A ceasefire came into effect in Gaza at 11:15 on 19 January 2025. Aid organizations from the UN and beyond immediately began dispatching critically needed goods and scaling up response efforts across the Gaza Strip
- A surge of supplies has entered Gaza since the beginning of the ceasefire, enabling an increase in the humanitarian response to critical needs. Distributions have increased, repairs to critical infrastructure have begun and fuel has been distributed.
- Debris management, retrieval of bodies, and addressing explosive ordnance contamination in Gaza remain critical to enable safe population movements, the further scale up of humanitarian aid and reinstatement of essential services.
- The Protection Cluster underlines the traumatic pattern of child and forced family separation in Gaza and the need for continued tracing of unaccompanied or separated children and unifying them with their families.

Humanitarian Developments

- On 19 January 2025, at 11:15, a ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian armed groups came into effect, through mediation by Egypt, Qatar and the United States. The first 42-day phase entails the gradual release of some Israeli hostages in exchange for the release of some Palestinian detainees, withdrawal of Israeli forces from population centres except for identified buffer zones, a gradual withdrawal from the Netzarim corridor between northern and southern Gaza, and the large-scale expansion of aid delivery into Gaza. On 18 January, the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Muhannad Hadi, [thanked](#) mediators and all involved parties for entrusting the UN and its partners with contributing to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. He emphasized the UN's readiness to contribute to collective efforts for large-scale relief in Gaza, "guided by the shared goal of saving lives and addressing people's needs efficiently, meaningfully and in line with humanitarian principles."
- As part of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement, on 19 January, three Israeli female hostages were released from Gaza and handed over to the Israeli authorities via the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which subsequently facilitated the release of 90 Palestinian detainees, including 69 women and 21 children, from Israeli prisons. Noting that this marks the beginning of a multi-phase operation agreed by the parties to bring hostages and detainees home, ICRC [stated](#): "The operation was complex, requiring rigorous security measures to minimize the risks to those involved. Navigating large crowds and heightened emotions posed challenges during the transfers, and in Gaza, ICRC teams had to manage the dangers posed by unexploded ordnance and destroyed infrastructure."
- As of 22 January, it is estimated that 94 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including hostages who have been declared dead and whose bodies are withheld in Gaza.

- As of January 2025, according to [data](#) provided by the Israel Prison Service (IPS) to Hamoked, an Israeli human rights NGO, there are 10,221 Palestinians in Israeli custody, including 2,025 sentenced prisoners, 2,934 remand detainees, 3,376 administrative detainees held without trial, and 1,886 people held as “unlawful combatants.” These figures do not include Palestinians from Gaza who have been detained by the Israeli military since 7 October 2023.
- The announcement of an imminent ceasefire on 15 January was welcomed by UN agencies and humanitarian organizations, who expressed hope for a rapid scale-up of aid using all possible crossings. Stressing that the scale of humanitarian needs is enormous, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), for instance, [called](#) for “unimpeded access to reach all children and families with essential food and nutrition, health care and psychosocial support, clean water, and sanitation, education, and learning, as well as cash assistance and the resumption of commercial trucking operations.” The agency added that this would enable it to “increase the screening and treatment of children suffering from malnutrition, facilitate vaccination catch-up for 420,000 children under 5 years, and support the prevention of disease outbreaks, including polio, measles, and cholera.” Moreover, in the coming period, tracing and unifying unaccompanied or separated children (UASC) with their families will remain critical; in its latest analysis, the Protection Cluster [underlined](#) the traumatic pattern of child and forced family separation due to the escalation of hostilities since October 2023, with conservative estimates pointing to at least 17,000 UASC cases and a further 35,000 children estimated to have lost one or both parents over the past year.
- With the implementation of the ceasefire on 19 January, large volumes of humanitarian aid have been entering Gaza through Erez and Zikim crossings in the north and Kerem Shalom crossing in the south. Movement within southern and northern Gaza has become largely unhindered, allowing for the movement of aid cargo and humanitarian personnel, including to areas that were previously hard to reach, while access between southern and northern Gaza remains restricted. In the first four days of the ceasefire, partners on the ground report that the significantly improved operating environment, in terms of movements as well as the surge in the daily entry of supplies that have entered into Gaza due to an improvement in law and order, has enabled humanitarian partners to meaningfully scale up the delivery of lifesaving assistance and services. Whereas the bulk of incoming supplies currently consist of food items, an increase in the entry of medicines, shelter materials, as well as WASH and other supplies is anticipated over the coming days.
- Over the first four days of the ceasefire, the UN and its partners have been dispatching incoming aid to warehouses, designated emergency shelters and distribution centres as well as scaling up distributions and services across Gaza. For example, in central and southern Gaza, partners have resumed monthly food distributions with full rations, have adjusted the volume, portions and content of meals at community kitchens, and are preparing for the safe re-opening of subsidized bakeries. In addition, fuel deliveries in central and southern Gaza have enabled the sustained operation of functional water wells, desalination plants, and sewage pumps, while critical repair works of roads and water infrastructure are already underway. Solid waste collection by local municipalities has similarly resumed, with support from the UN. Efforts are additionally ongoing to establish trauma stabilization points to handle emergency cases, resume services at primary health care centres, and expand disease surveillance. To ensure an effective response, the UN and its partners are also conducting a wide range of rapid assessments in areas that were previously hard to reach in order to evaluate needs and guide response efforts, including in relation to water and sanitation facilities, non-functioning health facilities, emergency shelters, Explosive Ordnance Risk Education, and unexploded ordnance (UXO) surveys. These have included three inter-agency assessments carried out between 20 and 22 January to Beit Hanoun, Jabalya and Beit Lahiya, in North Gaza, which aid actors had been unable to access over the past three months and where massive levels of destruction and need were witnessed.
- Noting that the full scale of UXO contamination is yet to be fully determined, the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) [stressed](#) that it will take many years to remedy, highlighting the importance for the international community to mobilize resources and expertise to support Explosive Ordnance (EO) risk education work and begin UXO survey and clearance in Gaza so reconstruction and the restoration of services can take place. In a recent analysis, the Protection Cluster [highlighted](#) that the high levels of EO contamination in Gaza, provided there is an enabling environment, “will require approximately US\$500 million over 10 years to clear and will have critical impacts on human lives. Furthermore, EO is likely buried in the more than 42 million tons of rubble, created by the destruction of buildings, roads, and other infrastructure... [which] contains asbestos and other hazardous contaminants... [and] human remains” and has also affected markets and cropland.
- In a [press](#) conference on 20 January, the Palestinian Civil Defense (PCD) in Gaza stated, that it incurred severe losses after 470 days of escalation, with 99 personnel killed, 319 injured of whom many have suffered permanent disabilities, and 27 detained and their whereabouts remain unknown. According to PCD, 17 out of 21 PCD centres were reportedly targeted, of which 14 were destroyed, and 85 per cent of PCD vehicles, including fire trucks and ambulances, were destroyed. Amid immense challenges, PCD has continued to carry out life-saving operations, responding to over 500,000 distress calls, recovering more than 38,300 fatalities, rescuing 97,000 injured people, and extinguishing over 22,000 fires. At the same time, PCD teams were unable to respond to around 50,000 distress calls due to insecurity, denied access and fuel shortages, leaving hundreds of bodies unrecovered. PCD said that there were no traces of around 2,840 people whose bodies were reportedly incinerated due to the alleged use of Israeli forces’ weapons that generate extreme levels of heat. After 15 months of unprecedented devastation, PCD urged Arab and foreign civil defense crews to support body retrieval efforts in Gaza as more than 10,000 people are estimated to remain under the rubble.
- Between the afternoon of 14 January and the morning of 19 January, before the ceasefire came into effect, Israeli bombardment from the air, land and sea was reported across the Gaza Strip, resulting in civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of civilian infrastructure. Rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups towards Israel was also reported. During this period, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 268 Palestinians were killed and 738 were injured. Moreover, on 20, 21 and 22 January, MoH reported a total of 65 additional Palestinians killed and 416 injured, mostly in attacks that occurred prior to the ceasefire, and 183 bodies were retrieved. Between 7 October 2023 and 22 January 2025, at least 47,161 Palestinians were killed and 111,166 were injured, according to MoH in Gaza.

- Between the afternoon of 14 January and the morning 19 January, no Israeli soldiers were killed in Gaza, according to Israeli forces. Between 7 October 2023 and 19 January 2025, according to Israeli forces and official Israeli sources cited in the media, more than 1,605 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed, the majority on 7 October 2023 and its immediate aftermath. This includes 405 soldiers killed in Gaza or along the border in Israel since the beginning of the ground operation in October 2023. In addition, 2,571 Israeli soldiers were reported injured since the beginning of the ground operation. On 19 January, the Israeli military [announced](#) that the body of an Israeli soldier who was killed in Ash Shujai'yeh area in Gaza city on 20 July 2014 was recovered from Gaza.
- Deadly incidents reported between 13 and 18 January 2025 include:
 - On 13 January, at about 12:40, seven Palestinians including two children were reportedly killed and others injured when a group of people was hit in Ad Daraj neighbourhood in central Gaza city.
 - On 14 January, at about 02:15, ten Palestinians, including four women and two children, were reportedly killed when a house, sheltering internally displaced people (IDPs), was hit near Khalidiya Clinic in Al Manara neighbourhood in eastern Khan Younis city.
 - On 14 January, at about 22:15, ten Palestinians, including three women, a child and an unborn child whose pregnant mother was injured, were reportedly killed when a house was hit in Al Naser area in northern Rafah.
 - On 14 January, at about 23:30, at least seven Palestinians, including two children and one woman, were reportedly killed and at least seven others injured when a house was hit in An Nuseirat refugee camp in Deir al Balah.
 - On 15 January, at about 01:00, seven Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when a school, sheltering IDPs, was hit on Al Yarmouk Street in Gaza city.
 - On 15 January, at about 17:00, five Palestinians, including a photojournalist were reportedly killed and six others injured when a vehicle was hit in Camp 2 of An Nuseirat refugee camp in Deir al Balah.
 - On 15 January, at about 19:30, three Palestinians, including a journalist and a man recently released from Israeli detention, were reportedly killed when a community kitchen was hit in Al Mawasi area in western Khan Younis.
 - On 15 January, at about 23:30, 20 Palestinians including women and children were reportedly killed and tens of others injured when several houses in a residential block were hit in the vicinity of Ash Sheikh Radwan pool in Gaza city.
 - On 16 January, at about 11:00, two children were reportedly killed and 30 others injured when a school, sheltering IDPs, was hit in Az Zaytoun neighbourhood in southern Gaza city.
 - On 16 January, at about 04:00, five Palestinians were reportedly killed and ten others injured when a house was hit in Al Rimal neighbourhood in Gaza city.
 - On 16 January, at about 22:30, nine Palestinians were reportedly killed when a residential building was hit in Al-Jurn area, northeast of Gaza city.
 - On 16 January, at about 16:30, five Palestinians, including two children and two women, were reportedly killed when a residential building was hit in the vicinity of Al Nazla roundabout, west of Jabalya in North Gaza.
 - On 18 January, at about 00:35, five Palestinians, including a married couple and their three children were reportedly killed when an IDP tent was hit in western Al Qarara, in Khan Younis.
- As of 19 January, according to data received by the UN and its partners, at least 377 aid workers, including 270 UN staff and at least 73 NGO staff have been killed in the Gaza Strip since October 2023. On 14 January, a female staff working for Ma'an Development Center [succumbed](#) to her wounds sustained in a 6 January attack on a World Food Programme (WFP) warehouse operated by Ma'an in Deir Al Balah. On 14 January, 20 Palestinians, including a lawyer working for the Independent Commission for Human Rights, his wife who worked for Al-Awda Health and Community Association and their children, were [killed](#) when a house in which they were sheltering was hit in Deir al Balah. On 16 January, a staff working for the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) was [killed](#) along with his wife and two children when a house in which they were sheltering was hit in Gaza city. According to PCHR, this was the third PCHR staff member killed since October 2023.
- On 16 January, 12 patients, most of them suffering from cancer and immunological disorders, were [evacuated](#) to Albania, France, Norway and Romania, accompanied by 35 family members and caregivers, to receive specialized medical treatment. In total, since the closure of the Rafah crossing on 7 May 2024, only 458 patients including 276 children have been exceptionally evacuated to receive life-saving treatment outside Gaza. Describing some of the challenges in evacuating patients from Gaza, especially over the past eight months, MSF [reported](#) on 14 January that three critically injured children were medically evacuated to the MSF hospital in Jordan on 8 January "after months of delays and rejections by the Israeli authorities," two other patients continued to be denied medical evacuation from Gaza with no clear explanations, and in November the Israeli authorities had denied the evacuation of eight children and their caretakers from Gaza to the MSF facility in Jordan, including a two-year-old with leg amputations. Noting that MSF was only able to evacuate 13 children from Gaza to its hospital in Jordan since October 2023, MSF Country Director in Jordan, Moeen Mahmood, stressed that "timely treatment is critical to avert life-long disabilities or death from infections." Following the announcement of the ceasefire deal, the WHO Director-General [emphasized](#) that this "offers an opportunity for expedited medical evacuations for over 12,000 people, including many children, who urgently need lifesaving care

outside Gaza,” and later [highlighted](#) the challenging task of restoring the health system in Gaza and addressing the massive health needs “given the scale of destruction, operational complexity and constraints involved.”

- On 14 January, UNICEF [reported](#) that it distributed in January over 500 wheelchairs to children with injuries across the Strip, [adding](#) that only a single centre in Gaza city continued to work around the clock to address the overwhelming demand for prosthetic supplies, which are scarce throughout the Gaza Strip. In its latest Protection Analysis Update, issued on 16 January, the Protection Cluster [shed light](#) on the rising numbers of persons with disabilities (PwD) in Gaza due to hostilities, displacement and EO. Conservative estimates indicate that 20 per cent of the population have permanent disabilities and thousands of children have lost one or both legs, reports the Cluster. According to cited doctors at the European Gaza and Al Aqsa hospitals in Khan Younis and Deir al Balah, respectively, they have performed “numerous operations on children wounded by tiny fragments of shrapnel, which often leave barely visible entry points but cause extensive internal damage, and appear to be intentionally designed to increase the number of casualties.” Moreover, the Cluster estimates that the hostilities resulted in an 83 per cent loss of assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs and hearing aids, while the only two specialized rehabilitation hospitals – Al Wafa Medical Rehabilitation and Specialized Surgery Hospital in Gaza city and the Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Hospital for Rehabilitation and Prosthetics in North Gaza – have sustained severe damage.
- A joint [study](#) by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Agricultural Development Association (PARC) and Women’s Affairs Centre (WAC) finds that in addition to active hostilities and evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military over the past 15 months, lack of access to basic supplies, overcrowding, lack of privacy and the associated rise in tensions in makeshift sites have emerged as new drivers of displacement. On average, people in Gaza were displaced six times and up to 19 times between October 2023 and October 2024, often being forced to flee on foot and facing lengthy, dangerous journeys, according to the study, which is based on discussions held in October and November 2024 with 112 displaced people (74 women and 38 men) across four governorates as well as data from 19 DRC-managed displacement sites sheltering over 32,000 people. Forced to flee on average once every two months, people have been unable to find or retain even temporary employment, and small businesses – primarily women-led – have struggled to survive, also due to supply shortages. The study further highlights that the loss of personal, housing, land, and property documentation during forced displacement or active bombardment has aggravated people’s access to aid or prevented them from applying to jobs and will pose long-term threats to people’s rights and stability in the future. Drawing attention to the profound ways in which women’s roles have been affected by repeated displacement, the study notes that women and girls, while having little control over critical matters affecting their safety and wellbeing and being far more vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV), have borne the brunt of caring for ill and injured family members and taken on more responsibilities, such as ensuring the availability of food and water for their families.
- Between 1 and 18 January, before the ceasefire came into effect, out of 301 planned aid movements requiring coordination with Israeli authorities across the Gaza Strip, 39 per cent (117) were facilitated, 38 per cent (115) were denied, 14 per cent (43) were interfered with or initially agreed to but then faced impediments, and nine per cent (26) were cancelled by the organizers due to logistical and security challenges. Movements facing impediments were accomplished either partially or not at all. Of the coordinated movements, 52 needed to cross from southern Gaza through the Israeli military-controlled checkpoints on Al Rashid or Salah ad Din roads to areas north of Wadi Gaza (including both North Gaza and Gaza governorates); of these, only 29 per cent (15) were facilitated, 38 per cent (20) were denied, 23 per cent (12) faced impediments, and ten per cent (five) were cancelled. These include 21 attempts to reach the formerly besieged area in North Gaza, of which two were impeded. Coordinated aid missions to areas in the Rafah governorate, where there has been an ongoing Israeli military operation since early May, have faced similar challenges. Twenty-four out of 33 planned movements submitted to the Israeli authorities to access Rafah governorate between 1 and 18 January were denied, five were facilitated, and three were initially agreed to, but faced impediments and one was cancelled. This excludes 20 coordinated movements to Kerem Shalom crossing, of which 50 per cent (10) were facilitated, 15 per cent (three) were denied, ten per cent (two) were impeded, and 25 per cent (five) were cancelled. Since the ceasefire came into effect, such coordinations are no longer required except for crossing Netzarim corridor or entering the buffer zone.

Funding

- As of 22 January 2025, Member States have disbursed approximately US\$123.2 million out of the \$4.07 billion (three 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 OPT. Nearly 90 per cent of the requested funds are for the humanitarian response in Gaza, with just over 10 per cent for the West Bank. Moreover, during December 2024, the oPt Humanitarian Fund (oPt HF) managed 111 ongoing projects, totalling \$82.2 million, to address urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (86 per cent) and the West Bank (14 per cent). These include 64 projects implemented by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), 34 by national NGOs and 13 by UN agencies. Of the 77 projects implemented by INGOs or the UN, 46 are being implemented in collaboration with national NGOs. For more information, please see OCHA’s Financial Tracking Service [webpage](#) and the oPt Humanitarian Fund [webpage](#).

* Asterisks indicate that a figure, sentence, or section has been rectified, added, or retracted after the initial publication of this update.