

GAZA SITUATION REPORT 106



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• Last 8,086 teachers (2,831 males and 5,255 females) in Gaza returned to 257 UNRWA schools on Monday, 17 August. This followed their summer 2015 vacation period, which commenced on 7 June. School principals and teachers typically start the semester in schools a week before students return, to finalize administrative work regarding students' movements and transfers, teachers' lesson schedules, ensuring the building and classrooms are prepared. This week, education programme colleagues, including teachers, education specialists, head-teachers, school principals, and education chiefs showed special dedication and courage as the Education Department was under immense pressure.

• UNRWA this week announced the results of the poverty assessment home visits undertaken between 31 May and 30 June 2015. These are the first results since UNRWA resumed home visits through the new Poverty Assessment System (PAS) after one year of interruption. Of the 2,178 families visited in June, 737 of them were found eligible for UNRWA food assistance. The remaining 1,441 families were assessed as not poor. Each of the cases assessed thus far are part of a larger group of about 25,000 new applications from families which have not been receiving UNRWA food assistance. This group will continue to be assessed by UNRWA's PAS team as a first priority. It is expected that eligible applicant families will start receiving food assistance in the current round (July - September 2015). Applicant families assessed as not poor will have the opportunity to lodge an appeal form within 21 days from the date they are notified of their PAS result. In case the appeal is successful, the PAS result would be overturned and the family would start receiving UNRWA assistance in the round following the communication of the appeal decision. The introduction of a robust appeal mechanism is one of the key innovations of the new PAS to enhance the quality and accuracy of the eligibility assessment.

• Since the year 2000, [International Youth Day \(IYD\)](#) has been celebrated on 12 August by the international community across the globe. In 2015, the theme was "Youth Civic Engagement", which is a main goal of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP), seeking to promote young people's effective inclusive civic engagement at all levels. This can result in reduced risky behaviour, increased success in school and greater civic participation in adulthood. "Engaging youth in positive opportunities of civic participation is important for healthy youth development and for good governance," said the United Nations' Humanitarian Coordinator in the oPt, Mr. Robert Pifer, in his [statement](#) marking the occasion. "It is time to show case inspiring ways in which young people engage in civic, political and social spheres and demonstrate how the issue of youth civic engagement enables greater and inclusive participation of young women and men in decision-making and public life." To celebrate this year's IYD, UNRWA Gaza's Gender Initiative programme, in cooperation with two of its partner Community Based Organizations (CBOs) - Future Home Association and Eastern Gaza Association for Family Development - organized volunteering days for youth in local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and CBOs as well as panel discussions on three topics – the youth situation in the Gaza Strip, youth engagement in voluntary work and youth in civil society. The events were attended by approximately 450 men and women.

• In early September 2015, UNRWA TV, the Agency's satellite television channel, will commence broadcasting a pilot educational season across the region. As the first step towards a new and modernized multimedia television format to enhance refugee students' learning, UNRWA TV has completed production of 144 episodes on English, Arabic, Science and Mathematics. The season features the use of drama, music and science experiments, to create a more dynamic learning environment. The season also allows questions from a virtual classroom to enhance two-way communication and interaction with students. The content curriculum is the first attempt by UNRWA to map skills and competencies throughout the region. The pilot model is designed to provide UNRWA education with a smart tool to make Self Learning Material (SLM) fit all fields. UNRWA TV also broadcasts and produces humanitarian communication campaigns and awareness material. The new season will be available on September 4, 2015, when relevant links will be shared. UNRWA TV is a regional satellite channel established as an UNRWA project in 2012, with production facilities based in Gaza.

• UNRWA strives to support the training and development of its dedicated teachers, including through cooperation between UNRWA's Education Programme and the British Council. This partnership started in January 2010 and involves three components. The first supports the professional development of UNRWA English teachers - 600 individuals have participated since 2010. The teachers are trained in teaching young learners, methods of teaching the skills of English Language and classroom management. The most recent training was held from 10-16 August for 47 new teachers in Ramallah. 600 teachers have been trained since 2010, with the British Council covering the cost of the training. The partnership also provides School Principals and Deputy School Principals with Management and Leadership skills and practices. Twenty-five School Principals and Deputy School Principals have been trained to date. Thirdly, UNRWA and the British Council connect classrooms via the Internet through the [International School Award \(ISA\)](#) project, which is part of [Connecting Classrooms](#), an initiative specifically designed to help teachers around the world to work on joint projects with their students. This builds relationships between UNRWA schools in Gaza and international schools, to discuss and agree on implementing school projects on international issues. In the first phase, 22 schools out of 25 participating schools won the Award. In the second phase, 43 schools are participating in the project.

• On 12 August, delegates from the Representative Office of Norway (NRO) to the Palestinian Authority visited UNRWA in Gaza. The NRO was represented by Mr. Tor Gjerde, Head of Development Cooperation and Ms. Samar Sayegh, Programme Manager. The overall objective of the visit was to discuss the progress of the Gender Initiative (GI) Programme's previous programme cycle (2010 – 2014). The GI programme was established with support from the Government of Norway, who continues to be the programme's core funder. Following meetings at Gaza Field Office, the delegation was accompanied by the GI team to Al Ata'a Charitable Society in Beit Hanoun, northern Gaza where they met with beneficiaries from the GI's female headed household project and Young Women Leaders Programme. This particular Community Based Organization was totally demolished during last summer's hostilities but has been able to rent new premises so that they can continue their operations.

• 19 August marks [World Humanitarian Day](#). Led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the day is designed to pay tribute to all people affected by humanitarian crises and those who lost their lives in humanitarian service. It's a day to celebrate the spirit that inspires humanitarian work around the world. In an [opinion editorial](#), to be published on the observance, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in the occupied Palestinian territory, Mr. Robert Pifer, recognised the eleven UNRWA personnel and other first-responders from the Gaza Strip who tragically lost their lives during last summer's hostilities. "We salute their dedication and mourn their loss. On this occasion, I would also like to extend my gratitude and admiration to the thousands of aid workers across the oPt - the vast majority of them Palestinians of course - who tirelessly

continue their efforts to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground and provide much-needed assistance under difficult circumstances.” The hashtag for World Humanitarian Day in 2015 is [#sharehumanity](#), as shared on UNRWA’s social media platforms.

• 26 August marks the one year anniversary of an open ended ceasefire after 50 days of conflict between Gaza and Israel. UNRWA continues to show the human element behind the war, through its [50 voices for 50 days of conflict: Gaza in its own words](#) campaign. In related advocacy efforts, [The Elders](#), an independent group of global leaders who work together for peace and human rights and were brought together in 2007 by [Nelson Mandela](#), have asked two locally based experts – Ms. Kathleen Maes, Head of the Gaza Sub-Office of [OCHA](#) and Ms. Tania Hary, Deputy Director of [Gisha](#), to answer questions from the public, to mark the anniversary and highlight the progress that still needs to be made. Their answers to questions will be published on The Elders website on 26 August. Questions will continue to be posted to The Elders’ [Facebook](#) page until Wednesday, 19 August. This provides the general public with an opportunity to engage with experts on the ground and learn more about Gaza one year on from the ceasefire.

Shelter Update

- Approximately US\$ 6.6 million in funding made available for minor repair work, will reach 5,897 refugee families across the Gaza Strip. The families will be able to access this assistance through local banks. Shelter assistance is financed by earmarked donor funds to emergency shelter – including support for home repairs, reconstruction and interim shelter solutions. The Agency remains committed to supporting affected families yet requires new funding to continue the shelter cash assistance programme.
- Since the start of the 2014 emergency shelter response, the Agency has distributed over US\$ 124.3 million (excluding Programme Support Costs) to Palestine refugee families whose homes were damaged or demolished during the 2014 summer conflict. To date, UNRWA has completed the payments to over 65,900 Palestine refugee families – almost half of the caseload – for minor repair works and to 428 families to repair their severely damaged shelters.
- The funding for 12,009 families to continue repair or reconstruct their shelters is secured and ongoing. Furthermore, as of 17 August 2015, 12,528 families have received a rental subsidy payment to cover the period from September to December 2014 and 78,359 families have received payments to undertake repair works.
- Due to lack of sufficient funding, to date 47,300 eligible families still have not received the first tranche for repair works of their shelter and 7,350 have not received the second tranche to continue repair works. UNRWA has processed these cases and they have received approval through the [Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism](#); as soon as funding is secured, the Agency can distribute the urgently needed financial support to these families.
- UNRWA engineers confirmed 139,817 Palestine refugee houses were impacted during last summer’s conflict; 9,117 of them are considered totally demolished. 5,000 shelters have suffered severe, 3,700 major and 122,000 minor, damages.

GENERAL

Operational environment : The potential delay in the start of the school year for Palestine refugee children in the region has kept tensions high in Gaza. Families unsure of whether to buy school uniforms or equipment for their children said to be having an effect on the livelihoods of local shop owners. This uncertainty contributed to the protests and sit-ins reported this week, including in front of UNRWA installations.

During the reporting week, several demonstrations were held in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails or in solidarity with journalists killed during the 2014 summer hostilities, as well as regarding perceived potential cuts to UNRWA services. A peaceful protest organized by the UNRWA Local Staff Union was held inside the UNRWA Gaza compound in solidarity with teachers and against a delay in the 2015/16 school year.

On 16 August, a woman passed away from injuries sustained from an unexploded ordinance (UXO) exploding in a house earlier in the month. The following day, a UXO was found at the seashore of Rafah, southern Gaza. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Police arrived to the scene and handled the situation. On 16 August, a Palestinian male who illegally entered into Egypt was found killed in north Sinai. The motive of the incident is still unclear.

Several incidences of domestic disputes were reported during the week. On 12 August, a dispute broke out between cousins, where edged weapons were used. The Police intervened and arrested several persons and no injuries were reported. On 14 August, a dispute broke out between three families in Nuseirat camp. Edged weapons were used and seven injuries were reported. The Police intervened and arrested several persons. On the same day, a dispute broke out between two families in Dair El Balah. Edged weapons were used and one injury was reported. The Police intervened and arrested several persons. On 16 August, a dispute broke out between two families. Edged weapons were also used. The Police arrested several persons and one injury was reported. On 17 August, a dispute took place between cousins and an exchange of fire occurred. The police brought the situation under control after arresting several persons. No injuries were reported.

UNRWA RESPONSE

UNRWA FACILITATES DIALOGUE AND ACTION ON YOUTH AND VOLUNTEERING IN GAZA



Asma Al Zahar, a participant in the UNRWA Gender Initiative's volunteer project for International Youth Day. © 2015 UNRWA Photo

“How to engage youth in the civil society organizations,” was the discussion topic for a panel held on the occasion of International Youth Day in Gaza. The UNRWA Gender Initiative (GI) Programme, in partnership with Community Based Organizations in the Gaza Strip organized the event, as one of two panel discussions to mark International Youth Day on 12 August.

The GI team took the topic of the event and put it into action, organizing two-day voluntary work opportunities for 60 male and female Palestine refugee youth from Gaza. The young people had chance to complete voluntary work at UNRWA’s partner Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and CBOs.

Asma Al Zahar was one of the participants. She graduated from Al Aqsa University in Gaza in 2012. Since then Asma has tirelessly tried to engage in voluntary work at a local organization to enhance her skills, character and open a window of hope that might lead her to finding a full-time job.

“Youth in Gaza have so much potential, they only need someone to support and give them the chance to explore what’s going on around them and encourage their roles in the community,” said Asma.

“I got the chance this year to work as a volunteer for two days through UNRWA’s Gender Initiative partnering CBO, Gaza Graduates Society. Through this experience I felt confident and productive... as well, when somebody believes in you, then you will never think of letting them down.”

The eight year Israeli-imposed blockade on Gaza, which severely restricts the movement of people and goods means that most young people are unable to explore work opportunities beyond the coastal enclave. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics puts unemployment in Gaza at 41.6 per cent for the first quarter of 2015, one of the highest worldwide.

According to the World Bank, youth unemployment soared to more than 60 percent by the end of 2014.

“I really encourage the voluntary work for youth - it’s a chance to develop the skills, experiences and build character,” added Asma.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR INCIDENTS

Israeli forces fired towards Palestinians near the security fence or towards Palestinian boats on an almost daily basis. On 12 August, a Palestinian merchant was arrested by the Israeli Forces at Erez Crossing.

On 12 August, militants fired two rockets towards Israel. The rockets dropped short and landed near the northern fence inside Gaza. No injuries or damage were reported. On 11 and

16 August, militants fired two test rockets per day towards the sea. On 17 August, militants fired four rockets towards Israel. The four rockets dropped short and landed near the security fence inside Gaza. No injuries or damage were reported.

On 14 August, Egyptian patrol boats opened fire towards a Palestinian fishing boat approaching the Rafah-Egyptian border. The boat managed to escape and no injuries were reported.

On 17 August, five bulldozers entered approximately 100 metres inside Gaza at Rafah. Israeli troops reportedly conducted a clearing and excavation operation along the security fence before withdrawing. On the same day, four bulldozers and two tanks entered approximately 100 metres northeast of Bureij Camp. The Israeli troops reportedly conducted a clearing and excavation operation along the security fence before withdrawing. Also on 17 August, four bulldozers entered approximately 100 metres southeast of Al Fakhari area. The Israeli troops conducted a clearing and excavation operation along the security fence before withdrawing. On the same day, six bulldozers entered approximately 100 metres east of Shejayah. The Israeli troops conducted a clearing and excavation operation along the security fence before withdrawing. No injuries were reported for the four events.

FUNDING NEEDS

UNRWA is facing its most serious financial crisis ever: currently, UNRWA has a funding shortfall for core activities - such as schools for half a million children - of US\$ 101 million. Without further contributions, the Agency would only be able to continue to fund its core activities into September 2015. With unprecedented needs faced by the Palestine refugees, contributions are falling short of the need for services. In response, the Agency is currently exploring options for additional funding, but is also implementing a series of austerity measures aimed at decreasing costs where possible while preserving essential services to refugees.

US\$ 227 million has been pledged in support of UNRWA's emergency shelter programme, for which an estimated US\$ 720 million is required. This leaves a current shortfall of US\$ 493 million.

As presented in UNRWA's oPt Emergency Appeal, the Agency is seeking USD 366.6 million for its 2015 emergency operations in Gaza, including USD 127 million for emergency shelter, repair and collective centre management, USD 105.6 million for emergency food assistance, and USD 68.6 million for emergency cash-for-work. More information can be found [here](#).

CROSSINGS

- The Rafah Crossing was open on 17 and 18 August, and will remain so for two additional days. It was closed from 11-16 August.
- The Erez crossing was open for National ID holders (humanitarian cases, medical cases, merchants and UN staff) and for international staff from 11-13 August and from 16-18 August. On 14 August, Erez crossing was open for pedestrians only. It was closed on 15 August.
- Kerem Shalom was open from 11-13 and 16-18 August. It was closed on 14 and 15 August.

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/gaza-situation-report-106>