

GAZA SITUATION REPORT 114



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- In response to the violence and fear that have taken hold in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), including East Jerusalem, and in Israel, UNRWA issued a [statement](#) by Spokesperson Chris Gunness. The Agency is deeply alarmed by the escalating violence and widespread loss of civilian life and the statement calls for political action and accountability to stem the spiral of violence and fear, and also highlights the loss of hope amongst youth in the oPt. On 6 October, the [United Nations Secretary General](#), Ban Ki-moon stressed "the need of urgent action by both sides" to avoid further escalation. UNRWA reiterates this call. In a separate press release, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, [urged calm and restraint](#).
- The elections for the UNRWA School Parliaments concluded on 12 October. All pupils between grade four and nine had the chance to anonymously vote for their preferred representatives in a structured and democratic election process. Prior to the elections, an UNRWA Election Committee explained the structure and rules of the voting process to the students. Interested candidates had to fill in a nomination form and were given the chance to run a 3-7 days election campaign. The voting usually takes place in the classrooms and votes are counted in front of the students immediately after the end of the voting process. School Parliaments in Gaza are responsible for raising concerns, suggestions and problems of students to the School Principal, teachers, parents' councils and the overall UNRWA education team. They also actively promote human rights concepts through school radio programmes or school magazines, the organizing of events or visits to civil society and human rights organizations. Each parliament will also choose a leader (the "president") to be part of the Central Student's Parliament of UNRWA schools in the Gaza Strip, as well as a Vice President and a Secretary. Parliament members are divided into different committees, such as the cultural, social, health or mediation committee. School parliaments promote a culture of human rights in schools and strengthen democratic practices and life among students. They also teach children civil and social skills, including leadership, participation, decision-making and communication. The electoral process helps students understand the values needed for practicing elections, such as forgiveness, conflict resolution, dialogue and self-confidence.
- To celebrate and highlight the invaluable expertise and vital role of UNRWA educators, following the annual UNESCO-led [World Teachers Day](#) on 5 October the UNRWA Gaza Field Education Programme organized a ceremony on 8 October in the UNRWA Gaza Training Centre in Gaza city. Approximately 300 persons attended the ceremony, including students, teachers, School Principals, Area Education Officers, the Chief of Gaza Field Education Programme, the Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza and Local Staff Union teacher's sector representatives. During the ceremony, students presented and performed shows, songs and poems and UNRWA senior staff members gave speeches, emphasizing UNRWA's commitment to the [Education 2030 Agenda](#) which promotes inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning for all. At the conclusion of the ceremony, a group of senior teachers was honoured and presented with certificates of appreciation.
- UNRWA Gaza has submitted 42 portfolios of UNRWA schools to the [British Council International School Award \(ISA\)](#). In total, 111 school portfolios had been submitted in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) by the Ministry of Education and the UNRWA Field Offices in the West Bank and Gaza. The portfolios had been reviewed from 6 to 9 October by an ISA panel comprised of eight ISA ambassadors. 41 UNRWA schools in Gaza received a full award from the panel, and one UNRWA school received an intermediate award. ISA recognizes, celebrates, develops and encourages successful practice in curriculum-based international work in schools and provides opportunities for creative teaching and learning that inspires young students. The awarded schools receive certificates, stationery and promotional material. UNRWA will also hold small celebrations in the awarded schools over the coming weeks.
- From August to October 2015, the UNRWA Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (ICIP) facilitated the connection of 13 UNRWA schools to the main electricity network in Gaza. The 13 schools, located in northern, central and southern Gaza, had been constructed by ICIP during 2013 and 2014 but so far were not able to be connected to the main electricity network due to import restrictions on "dual use" items. Israel considers as "dual use" items materials which could potentially have a military purpose and thus restricts the import of aggregate, steel bar, concrete or wood thicker than one centimetre into the Gaza Strip. Due to the lack of the necessary equipment, the schools had to run using generators, which resulted in additional costs for UNRWA and contributed to environmental pollution. ICIP addressed the problem and, on behalf of the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO), successfully negotiated with the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) the import of the required electrical equipment and premixed concrete into Gaza. The GEDCO then facilitated the connection of the 13 UNRWA schools to the main network.
- 15 UNRWA Medical Officers (MO) are currently enrolled in a Postgraduate Training in Family Medicine. UNRWA launched the first Postgraduate Diploma in Family Medicine in Gaza in the beginning of July in cooperation with the Rila Institute of Health Sciences, the University of Westminster's Academic Development Centre, and Al-Azhar University. The 15 MOs are supported by four tutors selected by Al Azhar University and will be able to improve their skills and gain experience in the management of clinical and service aspects of family medicine through tailored e-learning modules as well as through extensive workshops and lectures. The MOs started with the online-training at the end of July and the first practical session was held on 15 September. Once a month, the trainees will do hospital training in UNRWA Health Centres under the supervision of the Al Azhar University tutors.
- On 6 October a Brazilian delegation visited UNRWA in Gaza, including Ambassador Paulo Franca, the Representative for Brazil in Ramallah, his deputy and a diplomat from the Brazilian Embassy in Tel Aviv. Upon arrival, the delegation was briefed by UNRWA senior staff on the overall situation in Gaza and was then accompanied to an UNRWA Distribution Centre in Beach refugee camp, in Gaza city. At the Centre, the delegation met with representatives of the UNRWA Relief and Social Services Programme to learn about UNRWA food assistance, the Poverty Assessment System and the food distribution process. Afterwards, the delegation proceeded to an area in the heavily destroyed neighbourhood of Shujaiya in eastern Gaza city and was briefed by representatives of the UNRWA Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (ICIP) on the UNRWA repair and reconstruction efforts for Palestine refugees in Gaza. One day later, a delegation from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited the coastal enclave. The delegation visited an UNRWA school in Gaza city and was briefed on the overall situation in Gaza by the Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza, Bo Schack. Later, the delegation proceeded to the Al Afaq Association for Development in Gaza city to learn more about the UNRWA Gender Initiative. They also met with young Palestine refugee women who are participating in the UNRWA Young Women's Leadership Programme.

• The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is currently undertaking an evaluation of UNRWA that focuses on the Agency's promotion of a decent standard of living among Palestine refugees, one of the Agency's main objectives and further defined as a Human Development Goal. On 11 October a delegation of the OIOS's Inspection and Evaluation division arrived in Gaza for a 5-day mission to collect the required data through interviews and focus groups with key managers, staff and beneficiaries, and with the Agency's external stakeholders such as host authorities, Non-Government Organizations or other UN entities. The OIOS delegation is also attending key meetings and visiting UNRWA programme delivery sites such as Health Centres, Distribution Centres and Relief and Social Services Programme offices. The OIOS reports to the United Nations Secretary-General as well as to the General Assembly. Its Inspection and Evaluation Division conducts independent inspections and evaluations on behalf of the Secretary-General and Member States.

• Shelter update

at 11am on 13 October A comprehensive shelter update will be provided in the next weekly situation report issued on Wednesday 21 October 2015.

GENERAL

Operational environment: With the developments over the past days, tension and fear, but also frustration and anger, are running high in the Gaza Strip. More than one year after the last conflict ended, the world has still not kept its promise about rebuilding Gaza, and thousands of families continue to live in their damaged homes, with cold winter temperatures and winter's heavy rain approaching. Gaza still holds the scars from the 2014 conflict. With worryingly high unemployment, poverty and food insecurity rates, the outlook especially for Gaza's young generation remains bleak. Gaza's youth is at risk and many seem to have lost their hope in a dignified, stable and secure future.

The violent developments in the West Bank since 1 October have led to demonstrations in the access restricted areas (ARA) near the fence with Israel in Gaza, and resulted in violent clashes with Israeli forces. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), the developments over the past week present a high potential for further deterioration.

During the reporting week, hundreds of Palestinian civilians gathered in different locations in the Gaza Strip, some in the vicinity of the fence, to demonstrate against the current situation in Gaza and the West Bank. Some protestors reportedly burned tyres and approached the fence between Israel and Gaza and started to throw stones towards Israeli forces observation posts; Israeli forces reportedly responded with gunfire and tear gas.

A total of 11 Palestinians, among them refugees, have reportedly been killed and at least 186 injured. Nine people, including three children were reportedly killed during demonstrations in Gaza and two people – a pregnant woman and a child – were killed when a house collapsed due to the impact of a nearby Israeli strike. Four people were reportedly injured in the latter incident.

As tensions run high in Gaza, family disputes continue to be reported each week. On 6 October, a family dispute in Khan Younis ended with one person suffering stab wounds due to the use of edged weapons.

On 7 October, clashes erupted between the police and residents in Khuza'a area, in southern Gaza, after the police reportedly attempted to stop residents from connecting their area to the electricity network after it was cut off by the electricity company. On 8 October, a family dispute in Deir El Balah, central Gaza, erupted; the police intervened and no injuries were reported. On 9 October a family dispute in Nuseirat led to two persons being injured and several arrests by the police.

On 9 October, unknown persons stabbed the leader of Al Sabreen Movement (a dissident from the Islamic Jihad movement) in Shuja'iya in eastern Gaza; he was moderately injured.

UNRWA RESPONSE

FEMALE GRADUATES CELEBRATE THEIR SUCCESS WITH SUPPORT FROM THE UNRWA GENDER INITIATIVE



Asma Dweik is one of the 336 young female graduates who celebrated their successes at the Young Women's Leadership Graduation Ceremony on 8 October in Gaza city.
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Heavy rain was pouring down on Gaza in the morning of 8 October, but this did not deter 336 young female graduates from attending the closing ceremony of the Young Women's Leadership Programme (YWLP) at the Rashad Al Shawwa Centre in Gaza city.

The YWLP is implemented by the UNRWA Gender Initiative in partnership with Community-Based Organisation (CBOs) across the Gaza Strip. The programme aims at improving the skills of female graduates in management, administration, human rights, English language or interview techniques. Following the training, the graduates have the chance to apply their skills in a three-month practical training in one of the partner organizations of the Gender Initiative.

"The Young Women's Leadership Programme was comprehensive and included much valuable training. It helps fresh graduates like me to improve our chances in the labour market. Without these skills, we are unable to compete against the thousands of graduates looking for jobs in Gaza," commented 24-year old Asma Dweik who joined the YWLP to complement her theoretical knowledge with practical experience in communications and life skills.

Due to the Israeli-imposed blockade and severe restrictions on the movement of people and goods, the enclave's economy is devastated and unable to absorb the thousands of qualified graduates who enter its labour market each year. Gaza suffers from one of the highest unemployment rates world-wide, according to the World Bank. While the average unemployment rate stands currently at 41.6 per cent, the highest rate is recorded among female refugee youth with 71.2 per cent, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. In light of these rates, the outlook for Gaza's youth is bleak, yet the 336 young female graduates of the YWLP are not giving up.

Asma was one of the organizers of the graduation ceremony and she was proud to have given her graduation speech in English language. "Somehow I was deprived from enjoying my graduation ceremony at university, and this made me sad because I always wanted to know how it feels to celebrate your own success. This is why I insisted in delivering my speech in English, because I wanted to know how it feels to be a leader, and I am happy I decided to do so," she commented. "After finishing the three-month training, I feel like a new person. My self-esteem has increased and my involvement and understanding of the Gaza community has changed; now I can decide for myself," she added proudly.

Since the launch of the YWLP in 2011, the programme has provided training to 3,124 young female graduates. The aim of the programme is not only the professional development of young women, but also to raise their stance in the community and in their homes by helping them to gain self-confidence.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR INCIDENTS

On 10 October, one Palestinian was reportedly injured when Israeli patrol boats opened fire towards Palestinian boats.

On 6 October, militants fired four test rockets towards the sea. On 7 October, militants fired one test rocket towards the sea. On 9 October, militants fired two rockets towards Israel; both dropped short. On 10 October, militants fired six rockets towards Israel; one rocket was intercepted by the Iron Dome System, one landed in an open field in Eshkol Regional Council in Israel and four dropped short and landed inside Gaza. On 10 October, militants fired one test rocket towards the sea. On 11 October, militants fired four rockets towards Israel; three dropped short and landed inside Gaza and one landed in the Eshkol Regional Council in Israel. No rocket fire incident resulted in reported injuries.

On 8 October five Israeli bulldozers entered approximately 100 metres into northern Gaza and conducted a leveling and excavation operation.

FUNDING NEEDS

Thanks to generous donors, UNRWA has overcome its immediate and most serious financial crisis and was able to partially bridge the US\$ 101 million deficit in its General Fund; to date, a shortfall of US\$ 13.5 million remains.

In response to the unprecedented needs faced by Palestine refugees, and the continuous financial shortages and unstable financial footing of the Agency, UNRWA 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 US\$ 366.6 million for its 2015 emergency operations in Gaza, including US\$ 127 million for emergency shelter, repair and collective centre management, US\$ 105.6 million for emergency food assistance, and US\$ 68.6 million for emergency cash-for-work. Read more in the [2015 oPt Emergency Appeal](#).

CROSSINGS

- The Rafah Crossing was closed on 6 and 7 and from 9 to 13 October. It was open on 8 October in one direction.
- The Erez crossing was open for National ID holders (humanitarian cases, medical cases, merchants and UN staff) and for international staff from 6 to 8 October and on 11 and 12 October. On 9 October Erez was open for pedestrians only. It was closed on 10 October. It was also closed October.
- Kerem Shalom was open from 6 to 8 and from 10 to 13 October. It was closed on 9 and 10 October.

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/gaza-situation-report-114>