

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Emergency

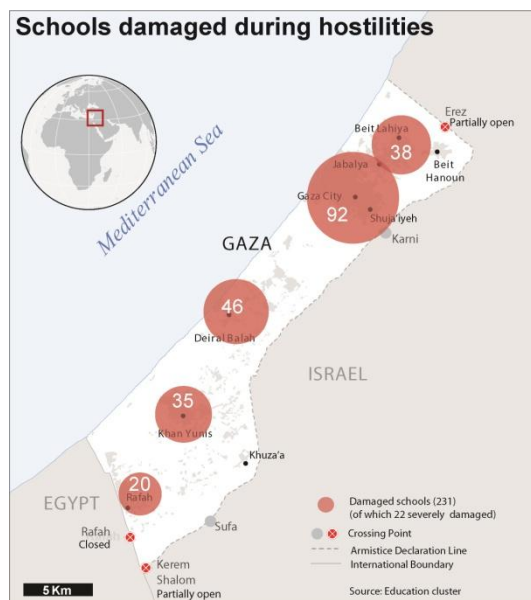
Situation Report (as of 21 August 2014, 08:00 hrs)



This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. This report covers the period from 20 August (08:00 hrs) to 21 August (08:00 hrs). The next report will be issued on 22 August.

Highlights

- Hostilities have continued, resulting in additional Palestinian casualties. The Palestinian fatality toll is now 2,030, of whom 1,444 have been identified as civilians, according to preliminary estimates.
- An estimated 1,000 of the 3,000 children who have been injured will suffer from a life-long disability.
- Since 7 July, at least 140 Palestinian families in Gaza have had three or more members killed in the same incident for a total of 735 fatalities
- The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has risen to 435,000, and is expected to increase further with the resumption of hostilities.
- Latest development: 17:00 UNRWA is reporting an additional 23,000 IDPs seeking shelter in its schools and the seven PA schools which it supports.



2,030

Palestinians killed, including 1,444 civilians, of whom 475 are children and 246 are women.¹

66

Israelis killed, including 64 soldiers and two civilians. One foreign national also killed.

140

Families in Gaza have lost at least three or more members in the same incident, totaling 735 fatalities.

1,000

Children will suffer a life-long disability.

435,000

People hosted at UNRWA, government shelters and with host families.

Situation Overview

Hostilities have continued during the reporting period, resulting in additional Palestinian casualties and property damage and a significant rise in internally displaced persons (IDPs.) Little movement or economic activity is reported because of the pervasive insecurity. Access restrictions to the sea, which were partially lifted on 17 August to three nautical miles (NM) from the Gaza shore, have been reinstated, with all fishing again prohibited.

Hostilities and casualties

Since the last situation update, at least 31 persons, many of whose status still needs to be verified, have reportedly been killed. This brings the cumulative death toll among Palestinians since 7 July to at least 2,030, according to preliminary data collected by the Protection Cluster from various sources, including 351 persons who could not be yet identified or their status established. Of the initially verified cases, 1,444 are believed to be civilians, including 475 children and 246 women, and 235 members of armed groups. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, as of 20 August, 10,224 Palestinians, including 3,106 children and 1,970 women and 368 elderly, were injured.

¹ Data on fatalities and destruction of property is consolidated by the Protection and Shelter clusters based on preliminary information, and is subject to change based on further verifications.

+ For more information, see “background on the crisis” at the end of the report

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Coordination Saves Lives

The number of child fatalities exceeds the combined number of children killed in the two previous conflicts in Gaza, 350 in 2008-9 and 35 in 2012. An estimated 1,000 children injured will suffer from a disability for life, and a further 6,000 children will have a parent with a life-long disability. Based on the total number of adults killed, there may be up to 1,500 children orphaned. It is estimated that at least 373,000 children require direct and specialized psychosocial support and that every child in the Gaza Strip is affected by the crisis and will require some level of psychosocial support.

We ran away from ash Shuja'iyeh at midnight. We saw our home being destroyed. I was crying because we have memories and dreams there. I am afraid they may bomb us. We are now in my grandfather's house. I cannot live, I only feel pain. My memories, pictures, clothes, toys... everything is gone.

A 12-year-old girl to the Sawa Child Protection Helpline, which has provided counselling to over 2,300 callers since 13 July.

During the reporting period, at least 26 houses were totally destroyed in Israeli air strikes. In the majority of cases the targeted houses had already been evacuated, but surrounding houses were severely damaged or destroyed. Since the launch of the Israeli military operation, over a thousand homes have reportedly been directly targeted by Israeli airstrikes, and it is estimated that at least 17,200 housing units have been totally destroyed or severely damaged during Israeli air strikes and shelling from 7 July to 20 August. Human rights organizations have expressed serious concerns regarding incidents where civilians or civilian objects have been directly hit by Israeli airstrikes, in circumstances where there was allegedly no rocket fire or armed group activity in the close vicinity. Such cases raise concerns about the targeting of civilians, in violation of the principle of distinction.

Of particular concern is the alarming number of incidents since the onset of the emergency in which multiple members of the same family have been killed. As of 20 August, at least 140 families have lost three or more family members in the same incident, for a total of 735 civilian fatalities. A number of such incidents have been recorded since the resumption of hostilities in the afternoon of 19 August:

- At approximately 21:30 on 19 August 2014, Israeli planes attacked a three-storey house belonging to Rabah Shihda al-Dalu, in Sheikh Radwan, northwest of Gaza City. According to Israeli media, the target was Mohammed al-Deif, the Head of the Hamas military wing, and the ordnance used consisted of five one-ton bombs. The house was completely destroyed, four neighbouring houses were extensively damaged, as were the building and vehicles of a local transportation company. It is unclear if Al-Deif was killed, but his wife, son, daughter, and another woman and her two sons were killed. Fifteen others were injured. The body of Al-Deif's daughter was recovered today.
- At approximately 04:50 on 20 August, an Israeli plane launched a missile at a house in Deir al-Balah belonging to Mustafa Mohammed al-Louh. The house and a neighboring house belonging to the owner's son were destroyed, and seven members of the family were killed; three men; the pregnant wife of one; and their children. Another family member, a 17-year-old girl died of her wounds today.
- At approximately 02:30 today, 21 August, Israeli aircraft fired missiles at the house of Nasser Kellab, west of the town or Rafah. The targets were three senior Hamas commanders who were killed, as were another five persons, including children; bodies are still being recovered. Two people were also killed in a neighbouring house.

No additional Israeli casualties were reported as a result of the renewal of rocket and mortar fire from Gaza into Israel, with most projectiles landing in open areas or intercepted in the air. Since 8 July, three civilians in Israel have been killed, including one foreign national, and dozens directly injured by rockets or shrapnel. The total number of Israeli military fatalities remains at 64.

Displacement

As of yesterday afternoon, there were 261,341 IDPs hosted in 82 designated UNRWA schools, up from 238,564 the previous day. Another 29,030 IDPs were hosted in seven government shelters supported by UNRWA, up from 26,085 the previous day. There is no update available on the 10,241 IDPs in 11 government schools not assisted by UNRWA or the 134,660 IDPs residing with host families, who have been registered and reached by various partners. However, it is anticipated that with the resumption of hostilities, these numbers are also rising and that more people will return to designated shelters or to host families in the absence of another ceasefire agreement. There is a need to open additional shelters in government schools, particularly in Gaza city.

Given the length of hostilities and the large numbers of IDPs overcrowding is a growing concern. It is estimated that over 100,000 Palestinians have lost their homes through destruction or serious damage. Based on these figures, UNRWA is

expecting some 65,000 to 70,000 Palestinians to stay in its schools as long-term displaced, and is urgently looking for donors who can support cash assistance to cover rental expenses to enable these individuals to rebuild their lives.

The new school year was scheduled to start on 24 August, with UNRWA expecting an enrollment of over 235,000 students in its schools, but a return to formal education is currently impossible. In line with global education practices and building on its experiences in Gaza and Syria whilst making use of pre-existing structures, such as the UNRWA TV and the Integrated Learning Programme, UNRWA will put into practice an alternative education system. The UNRWA education infrastructure has been severely damaged and requires extensive rehabilitation and refurbishment of all school buildings. Schools currently used as shelters will require varying degrees of rehabilitation in order to be ready for normal schooling, at least some three weeks subsequent to the clearance of unexploded ordnance through UNMAS and IDPs moving out of the schools.

Key humanitarian priorities:

Humanitarian space: access for humanitarian workers to carry out life-saving activities should be ensured, among other reasons, to complete search and rescue operations in several areas, and repair critical water and electricity infrastructure. Removal of the threat of numerous UXO in built up areas is vital.

Joint needs assessments: the first phase initial rapid needs assessment, covering the governorate level, was launched on 13 August to inform responses by humanitarian organizations. The second phase, covering the municipal level, began on 18 August and was completed yesterday. Information collected will be collated and analysed to determine the overall level of humanitarian needs.

Additional fuel supply: fuel is needed to operate backup generators at essential facilities, including water, sanitation and health, for longer hours.

Strengthen response to IDPs: improving priority response to IDPs in non-UNRWA facilities and with host families; ensuring common standards of response to IDPs throughout the Gaza Strip, including comprehensive and common registration.

Erez: Open for movement during normal working hours (08:00-16:00).

Beit Hanoun (Arba-Arba): Operational.

Kerem Shalom: Open as per its regular operating hours (08:00-16:00).

Rafah: Open from 09:00 to 15:00.

Humanitarian needs and response

Updated information on needs and response will be included tomorrow.

General Coordination

The first phase of the joint rapid needs assessment, led by the EOC started on 13 August, and data analysis is ongoing. The second phase of the joint rapid needs assessment started on 18 August, covering 19 municipalities (some 80 assessment staff were involved and at least 250 key informants interviewed, including youth, persons with disabilities and elderly). The remaining six municipalities were covered on 19 August and the eight refugee camps will be covered as soon as the situation allows. Data collected will be entered on tablets and linked directly to a database. The information will be subsequently validated and analysed, before it is disseminated. Protection and gender concerns have been integrated throughout the process as have questions on the information needs of affected communities.

Funding

Based on available information, funding to the Gaza Crisis Appeal stands at US \$176 million out of a total request of US \$367 million (48%), however, of this around US \$148 million is for UNRWA, US \$20 million for WFP and only US \$8 million for others, leaving large gaps to respond in other critical sectors such as Health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Education and Shelter and Non Food Items. Many key UN and NGOs partners identified for the Gaza response have received little to no funding to date for their projects in the Crisis Appeal. The Crisis Appeal is available online at www.ochaopt.org.

Donors and recipient agencies are kindly requested to report funding received to fts@un.org.

The Emergency Response Fund (ERF) is an additional mechanism available to fund interventions in Gaza through rapid and flexible support to affected civilian populations. The ERF has begun processing project applications in regards to the Gaza

emergency. To date, thirteen project proposals were approved for a total of US \$3.1 million. Further funding for the ERF is still being sought.

UN humanitarian agencies, in cooperation with NGO partners have applied to the CERF Rapid Response window to cover urgent needs in food assistance, psychosocial support, WASH, rubble removal and critical drugs, and the request is under processing by CERF.

Background to the crisis

On 7 July 2014, the Israeli army launched a large military operation in the Gaza Strip, codenamed “Protective Edge”, with the stated objective of stopping Palestinian rocket firing at southern Israel and destroying the military infrastructure of Hamas and other armed groups.

This development marked the collapse of the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire understanding reached between Israel and Hamas in November 2012, which has been gradually undermined since December 2013. The latest escalation round started in early June, characterized by an intensification of Israeli airstrikes and rockets launched from Gaza at southern Israel. Tensions further increased following the abduction and killing of three Israeli youths in the southern West Bank, on 12 June, which the Israeli government attributed to Hamas. Overall, in the period leading up to the start of the current operation a total of 15 Palestinians, including one civilian, were killed, and another 58 others, mostly civilians, injured, as a result of Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip; seven Israelis, five of whom were civilians, were injured due to rocket fire.

The current crisis comes against a backdrop of heightened vulnerability and instability. Unemployment increased dramatically since mid-2013, following a halt of the illegal tunnel trade, exacerbating the impact of the Israeli blockade in place since June 2007. Additionally, former de facto government employees, including the security forces, have not been paid salaries regularly since August 2013 and no salaries at all since April 2014. Delivery of basic services has been also undermined due to an ongoing energy crisis, involving power outages of 12 hours per day.

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Katleen Maes, Head of the humanitarian Emergency Operations Center in Gaza, maes@un.org, +972 592 911 047
Mr. Ray Dolphin, Analysis, Communications and Protection Unit, OCHA oPt, dolphin@un.org, +972 54 331 1827

For media enquiries, please contact:

Ms. Hayat Abu-Saleh, Communications and Information Analyst, OCHA oPt, abusaleh@un.org, +972 (0) 54 3311816

For more information, please visit www.ochaopt.org