

# UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

# OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

# DONOR UPDATE

## 13 DECEMBER 2006

### UNICEF REQUESTS US\$ 7 MILLION TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN

- High death toll among children: 123 killed since outbreak of hostilities, more than double the 2005 figure. Some 340 children remain in detention facilities
- Children are living in an environment of extraordinary violence, insecurity and fear; demand for psychosocial assistance has risen significantly
- New born health and Immunization coverage on the brink
- Catching-up in school is now critical following a long break
- Severely curtailed opportunities for safe play and recreation
- Funding gap of US\$ 7 million for health and child protection



## 1. OVERVIEW

2006 has been one of the worst years for children. Across oPt, the conflict and closures, the withholding of resources and suspension in funding to the Palestinian Authority, as well as the strike by some public sector workers, have collectively blocked the fulfillment of children's rights. This year, whether it is health care and education, protection from violence and abuse, or opportunities to play without fear – the rights of Palestinian children have been violated on an unprecedented scale. The killing of three young brothers in Gaza City on 11 December 2006 and injuring of another four child bystanders have shocked the Palestinian community. It highlights the serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory with often tragic consequences for civilians, including children.

The events of 2006 have impacted children in ways that will take years to unravel. Sonic booms, incursions and shelling created a context of extreme violence, stress and fear for children and their families. The summer, rather than being a time of recreation and play, turned out to be one without recreational opportunities as well as one with fear since it was among the most lethal summers ever, with 40 child deaths in July alone. At this point in time, more than twice as many children died due to the conflict compared with 2005 – 70 per cent of these deaths were in Gaza.

For the first time ever, children saw their schools and health clinics closed throughout much of the autumn due to a rolling strike. With a massive swell in unemployment, and two-thirds of the population already living below the poverty threshold, humanitarian conditions have been pushed to the brink of collapse. The very fabric of Palestinian society is under extreme duress.

UNICEF support is needed more than ever to help prevent a further deterioration in children's well-being. UNICEF bases its programmes on our Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies, working in our areas of expertise and comparative advantage. UNICEF will scale up projects where there is need, focusing mostly in education, health, nutrition, child protection, adolescent development, water and sanitation.

## 2. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

### Health and Nutrition

Essential drugs and disposables are in short supply and some 20 per cent of essential drugs are below security level and will be at zero stock by mid-January 2007. In the West Bank, movement and access restrictions, fuel shortages, and vehicle breakdowns hamper health care delivery in isolated areas. Over the last two months, health service delivery has been further compromised by a rolling strike among Ministry of Health (MoH) workers, who haven't received full salaries in over nine months. Across the West Bank, all services are now affected, including emergency care and immunization. Child nutritional status is seriously challenged by household poverty and restrictions to the movement of food products. Malnutrition is a problem of concern and anemia remains a public health challenge.

### Water and sanitation

The incursions and shelling have disrupted already fragile water and sanitation systems. At the height of the crisis this November, up to half the population of Beit Hanoun was without water and electricity. Many areas are not served by water networks at all, and even fewer communities have access to chlorination plants. Between 30 and 50 per cent of water is lost to leakage. Per capita consumption of drinking water in the West Bank and Gaza are below international standard for the protection of public health.

More than 70 per cent of the population is not connected to the sewerage network, and most households have old drainage pipes, septic tanks and toilets. Cesspits are a popular way of disposing wastewater, but they often leak or overflow. Treatment facilities for wastewater are largely unavailable or inadequate. Between 70 and 80 per cent of domestic wastewater is discharged into the environment untreated, and less than 1 per cent of sewerage is properly treated.

## Education

Closures, roadblocks, and random checkpoints continued to challenge student and teacher access to schools. There are few child-friendly learning environments and opportunities for sports and recreation. Many schools still lack more participatory and engaging teaching patterns and lack quality teaching aids. Poverty remains a major obstacle, however. Even though the PA has cut school fees from US\$11 to US\$5, many families, notably those with more than one child, are struggling to meet the costs of sending their children to school.

A strike among teachers called on 2 September following months of unpaid salaries was suspended on 5 November 2006, contingent upon a resumption of payments. Some 750,000 children who had been shut out of their classrooms have now returned to their schools, and will make up for lost school days by going in on their weekends and during holidays. This will further affect quality of learning, teacher training and the general tension in schools. Levels of violence in schools continue to rise. Outside classrooms, students have few opportunities for sports and recreation, especially as costs for extra-curricular activities are borne by parents.

## Child protection

The siege on Beit Hanoun this November struck directly at children, killing more than 19 children between 1 and 17 November. Most children had already spent the whole summer confined at home due to ongoing fighting in Gaza, and many more children across oPt live in households whose breadwinners haven't received salaries in more than eight months. Children throughout Gaza, and in Beit Hanoun especially, show acute signs of stress, including intense fear, nightmares and withdrawal. For the first time, psychosocial professionals have observed bedwetting among teenagers. In the West Bank, requests for assistance from UNICEF-supported psychosocial teams continue to increase.

The tragedy of the 3 children killed and 4 children injured in Gaza on 11 December comes in the wake of one of the most difficult and stressful periods in Gaza's recent history – a time when children have been denied their rights to health, education and protection. In December the UN humanitarian agencies working in the area stated in the 2007 CAP launch their alarm over the impact of ongoing violence on civilians and civilian infrastructure. The hostilities have resulted in a sharp decline in the situation facing Gaza's 1.4 million people—more than half of them children.

## Adolescents

The conflict has had a particularly damaging impact on adolescents, who comprise a large, vulnerable and volatile group. Those most directly exposed to violence have the greatest need for productive learning and recreational opportunities. Adolescents, who are two or three levels below their normal grade often end up dropping out of school and joining the unskilled labour market. Worsening socio-economic conditions point to the likelihood that the numbers of adolescents vulnerable to abuse, violence, and exploitation will increase.

At least two-thirds of adolescents in the West Bank and Gaza do not have safe spaces for recreation. Most of the 300 youth clubs across oPt lack funding, and are poorly managed and equipped. Programmes offered are usually limited to simple sporting activities without proper equipment.

## 3. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

### Health and Nutrition

UNICEF has procured or pre-positioned US\$ 2.9 million in medical supplies for over 400 health clinics and 17 hospitals. All vaccines for 2006 have been delivered. Eight generators have been delivered to primary health care facilities in Gaza. UNICEF and UNFPA continue to support fuel costs and help maintain or rent vehicles for MoH so that mobile health teams can reach isolated communities.

Over 180 primary health care facilities have been upgraded with equipment and supplies, and the neonatal units in 17 general hospitals are receiving a broad package of supplies, equipment and training to improve newborn care. Training on Haemophilus Influenza vaccine, which is being introduced into the immunization schedule, has been provided to MoH staff. Some 125 health workers have also undergone training in emergency maternal and child care, in growth monitoring and promotion, and in managing malnutrition.

UNICEF has provided more than 400,000 bottles of iron syrup, 13 million iron and folic acid tablets, and 108,000 bottles of vitamin A and D supplements, and has helped promote breastfeeding and appropriate child feeding practices.

### **Water and sanitation**

UNICEF is supplying 400 households affected by the shelling in Beit Hanoun in November with water tanks (1 cubic meter each), and helping repair damaged water networks.

UNICEF has provided large water tankers, water testing kits, and family water and hygiene kits to around 2,200 households in Gaza where water systems were destroyed during the fighting in the summer of 2006. Five wells are being drilled to provide emergency supplies of water to previously un-served areas, targeting 25,000 residents of Gaza city, Khan Younis and Nusseirat camp. Siafa community, previously not served by piped-water systems or other potable water sources, was provided access to water. Around 300m<sup>3</sup> of water is distributed daily 343 schools (reaching 230,000 students), across Gaza. Water facilities at 10 hospitals and 25 health centres (reaching about 7,500 patients and hospital staff) are being upgraded.

An awareness-raising campaign targeting at-risk populations on hygiene, food and water safety helped lower diarrhoea incidence following the destruction of water and electricity networks in Gaza this summer. UNICEF is also supplying Gaza's main water plant with spare parts to repair damaged networks and has procured 800 baby and family hygiene kits and 300 family water kits.

### **Education**

Ten schools in former enclaves or conflict zones have received a comprehensive package including lab and sports equipment, computers, library furniture and books, and training. Across oPt, UNICEF has delivered 380 school-in-a box kits (each containing material for up of 80 students and 2 teachers).

In Gaza, 36 centres provide 4,100 children with much-needed respite from the violence and stress that surrounds them. Activities including music, arts and crafts are ongoing in Nablus, Jenin and Hebron for 210 children. UNICEF is also supporting a pilot, community initiated extra-curricular activities for 500 school children in Tulkarem district.

UNICEF is supporting the Palestinian Authority in a Back to School campaign as part of an inter-agency effort to bring all students and teachers back into classrooms and prevent drop-outs. This includes:

- 155,000 school bags to the West Bank area and 134,000 school bags to Gaza (10,000 were distributed in September) including basic stationary items; 50,000 uniforms for vulnerable children have already been distributed.
- 1,000 recreation kits will be distributed to the neediest schools in the West Bank and Gaza to improve extra-curricular activities.
- 15 schools in disadvantaged areas (6 in Gaza and 9 in the West Bank ) will be equipped with 16 computers and 2 printers.
- Each education directorate will receive about US\$ 9,000 worth of office stationary items to facilitate administrative work.

### **Child protection**

Twelve psychosocial emergency teams operate across the occupied Palestinian territories: seven in the West Bank and five in Gaza, covering 12 out of 15 districts as follows:

- 41,925 children and adolescents have participated in psychosocial sessions that strengthen their capacity to protect themselves and to cope with violence;
- Of them, 10,343 children were referred for in-depth counseling;
- 19,518 children participated in fun days giving them the opportunity to relax, exercise and play with peers;
- In addition, 14,891 caregivers have received training on how to support children in distress and to foster a healthy family environment, as well as on how to deal with their own stress;
- More than 1,200 home and hospital visits took place following violent events.

To cope with the crisis in Gaza, a toll-free counseling line, staffed by teams of social workers, lawyers and psychologists, provides support from 9 a.m. to midnight. Five socio-legal defense centers (2 in the West Bank and 3 in Gaza) are also providing psychological, social or legal assistance to children who are victims of

violence, conflict-related or otherwise. Since June, mine risk education has targeted 43,668 children in high risk areas including Northern Gaza. 196 volunteers have been trained to carry out awareness raising sessions. A database of victims of UXOs and ERW has been set up.

### Adolescents

Around 12,000 adolescents participate each month in activities at 37 safe play areas established by UNICEF in isolated, deprived or incursion-prone zones. Art and sports equipment have been provided to each of the sites. Tens of thousands of children and adolescents also use the safe play areas for non-structured recreational activity.

In Gaza, around 500 indoor recreation kits including art supplies, stationary and sports equipment have been distributed to families in or near combat zones, enabling about 2,000 children and adolescents to play at home safely. UNICEF supported training for 24 university students in Gaza on peer-to-peer counseling. Around 500 peer-to-peer counseling sessions have been conducted reaching 2,500 adolescents every month in Gaza. Eleven episodes of a TV program hosted by psychosocial counselors on the issue of violence among children have been broadcast.

Around 1,200 adolescents have been participated in daily activities held at four adolescent-friendly learning spaces (two in Gaza, two in the West Bank) in areas with a high proportion of school drop outs. The activities are conducted by trained facilitators and include non-formal education such as language, math, reading, computer training and life skills based education; as well as extra-curricular activities such as sports, music, art, and drama. The four centers are receiving a broad package of supplies, including computers, music equipment, art material, sports equipment, as well as library furniture and books. Furthermore, in 12 youth centers located in small towns and villages, 840 adolescents participate in sports, environmental activities and arts, and are reaching out to peers in their communities.

## 4. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

UNICEF's CAP was originally budgeted at US\$ 8.4 million based on the needs assessment framework completed in November 2005. In light of recent developments in the humanitarian context, additional funds for the emergency response amount to US\$ 14.3 million, for a total requirement of US\$ 22.7 million. The breakdown is as follows:

**Table 1: Funds received against the OPT Consolidated Appeal 2006 by Sector (US\$)**

SECTOR	Original CAP Appeal	Additional Requirement	Total	Funds received	Unmet requirements	% unfunded
Health, Nutrition, WES	3,360,000	9,128,000	12,488,000	5,540,453	6,947,548	56
Education	2,560,000	2,707,000	5,267,000	5,458,693	-	-
Child Protection	1,432,000	1,366,357	2,798,357	1,887,524	854,017	31
Adolescents	1,068,000	1,082,048	2,150,048	2,716,425	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8,420,000</b>	<b>14,283,405</b>	<b>22,703,405</b>	<b>15,603,095</b>	<b>7,801,565</b>	<b>34</b>

As of 12 December, donors had contributed some US\$ 14.3 million and US\$ 1.2 million in pipeline.

**Table 2: Funding received per donor**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>US\$</b>
European Commission	892,857
Government of Australia	763,360
Government of Canada	515,015
Government of Finland	381,678
Government of Iceland	100,000
Government of the Netherlands	2,674,294
Government of Norway	969,540
Government of Spain	1,475,130*
Government of Sweden	2,665,400
UN Human Security Trust Fund	834,460
French National Committee	255,102
German National Committee	132,000
Irish National Committee	249,974
Italian National Committee	592,290
UK National Committee	573,913**
UNICEF Internal Resources	2,455,000
UNICEF Oman	17,982
US Fund for UNICEF	55,100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,603,095</b>

\* Of which 839,000 are in the pipeline

\*\* Of which 400,000 are in the pipeline

#### **4. IMPACT OF UNDER-FUNDING AND CURRENT PRIORITIES**

UNICEF expresses its gratitude to the donors who have thus far contributed to its emergency interventions and looks forward to receiving additional support from other donors. The flexible and early funding received in 2006 was a great importance and allowed for early start of activities and effective responses for new emergencies. For instance the flexible funding for CAP allowed UNICEF to respond to the water and sanitation problem in Gaza during the summer of 2006.

It should be noted that UNICEF invested a significant amount of core resources for the emergency response. The funds facilitated responding and scaling up activities in education (back to school campaign), water and sanitation as well as setting up a mechanism to detect and refer children of abuse would not have materialized.

There has been a significant shortfall for health activities. The shortfall of close to US\$ 7 million meant less distribution of micronutrients, awareness raising and training. Furthermore, fewer essential drugs for new born and child health were distributed meaning that as at mid-January 2007, 20 per cent of the essential drug list will be at zero stock and not in pipeline. The shortfall of US\$ 0.8 million in child protection resulted in significant delays in setting-up the mechanism to detect and refer children of abuse. As mentioned above, this was later started with the UNICEF internal resources. The shortfall also affected the number of people reached by the psychosocial support teams since fewer sessions could be held. While the end of 2006 is near there are still opportunities to procure critical supplies and initiate action in both health and child protection.

Details of the occupied Palestinian Territories' emergency programme can be obtained from:

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