



A WHO procurement of medicines and supplies with funds from Switzerland and Norway arrives in the Ministry of Health Central Drug Stores in Gaza. © WHO.

Occupied Palestinian Territory  
Conflict escalation in Gaza – complex emergency



1.8 MILLION AFFECTED



290,000+ DISPLACED



1.2 MILLION - 1948 REFUGEES



9536 INJURED



1865 DEATHS

WHO

52 STAFF (39 IN JERUSALEM/WEST BANK AND 13 IN GAZA)

HEALTH ASSISTANCE TO MOH



25 % FUNDED  
US\$60 M REQUESTED BY WHO FOR MOH

HEALTH SECTOR

35 HEALTH SECTOR PARTNERS

HEALTH FACILITIES

15 HOSPITALS DAMAGED (OF 32: 14 MOH, 15 NGO AND 3 OTHER)

9 HOSPITALS CLOSED

14 CLINICS DAMAGED

34 MOH/UNRWA CLINICS CLOSED (OF 75)

DAILY REFERRALS

6-10 PATIENTS VIA EREZ/ISRAEL

0-5 PATIENTS VIA RAFAH/EGYPT

HIGHLIGHTS

- A 72-hour cease fire began August 5
- Killed and injured (MoH, as of 20:00 August 4)
  - 1865 Palestinians killed, including 429 children, 242 females (aged 18-60) and 79 elderly.
  - 9536 Palestinians injured, including 2877 children, 1853 females (aged 18-60) and 347 elderly.
- 3 UNRWA clinics damaged for second time
- 3 ambulance workers killed in Rafah
- UN warns of impending health disaster



Casualties now exceed the number of the previous two conflicts in Gaza combined, in 2008-9 and in 2012. From initial assessments, 3,000 structures have been completely destroyed and 30,000 damaged.

A ceasefire began August 5 following several days of intense violence in many areas in the Gaza Strip. The Ministry of Health (MoH) estimates that at least 100 people may have been buried under rubble of destroyed buildings but ambulances could not evacuate them during the continuous violence. Three ambulance workers were killed evacuating patients in Rafah. Several hospitals reported damages, forcing one hospital to close, and were facing shortages of services staff and fuel, water and food due to difficult access and supply lines being cut. One-third of hospitals and one-half of primary health clinics are closed due to damage or due to being in an insecure location for staff and patients.

286,987 displaced persons are now sheltering in 90 UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools prepared as temporary shelters, with the average number of persons per shelter rapidly increasing. The Palestinian Red Crescent (PRCS) reported that 15,741 persons were in government schools and public buildings, and 200,000 are estimated to be with host families.

### **Hospitals**

Hospitals are treating a constant influx of new casualties in already overcrowded facilities and with vastly reduced supply of electricity, following last week's destruction of the Gaza power plant and most of the main power lines into Gaza from Israel. Only 40% of hospital staff have been able to report for work and existing health staff are fatigued, with critical staff working 24-hours shifts. Resources are limited: donated medical supplies had been maintaining only minimum levels of essential medicines due to the heavy caseload of wounded.

The Gaza European Hospital, located in an area where access has become dangerous, between Rafah and Khan Younis, reported stoppage of its water supplies, forcing the 250-bed hospital to bring water by trucks which can supply only 50% of its needs. On August 2 one of its two main generators failed, the daily supply of bread did not reach the hospital, and the laundry services were not working due to the manager not able to report to work.

### **Primary health care**

More than 17,000 patients utilized UNRWA's 13 open clinics on August 2 and 3, higher than the pre-war average of 14,000 patients a day. Currently more than 30% of clinic patients are displaced persons staying in shelters.

WHO and UNRWA are monitoring health in shelters in order to prevent and control any outbreak of communicable disease. A team of WHO, UNRWA and UNICEF visited three shelters for displaced persons on August 2 and found them to be crowded, and in need of water for washing and basic hygienic kits. One non-UNRWA center lacked drinking water. About 5% of the shelter population was being referred to nearby clinics or

hospitals for health care, many of whom were children with diarrhea. UNRWA reports that diarrhea is within the ordinary range and there are no obvious outbreaks of disease reported so far.

With water and sanitation facilities unable to function, the public health situation has become very difficult for most households without generator power, and for the several hundred thousand of displaced persons who have sought refuge in UNRWA and government shelters.

**Health structure damages** (*see Annex*)

The only government hospital serving the Rafah district, the 80-bed Abu Yousef Najjar Hospital, was damaged on August 1, at a time when it was receiving more than 200 casualties from heavy bombardments of surrounding neighborhoods, and 39 bodies were brought to the morgue, overwhelming capacity. The hospital's electricity and water lines were also damaged. On August 2 the hospital administration decided to evacuate patients and staff to the Kuwait Field Hospital to the west and to hospitals in other districts, and the Ministry of Health later announced the closure of the hospital. On August 6, the hospital was reported to be reopened and receiving patients.



Kuwaiti field Hospital, Rafah. Photo/WHO.

Both Najjar Hospital and Shifa Hospital received anonymous phone calls on August 1 threatening the hospital staff with an imminent attack, and causing panic. Telephoned warnings preceded attacks on al Wafa hospital in Gaza, which was evacuated and later destroyed.

Al Amal Hospital compound in Khan Younis was hit by a missile which impacted the top floor of its multipurpose building, where its guest house, rehabilitation department, mental health department, and the hospital administration are located.

The Cardiac Hospital in Gaza, operated by the Public Aid Society, suffered damage to the cardiac lab, administration building, windows and an ambulance and one person was injured.

Al Asqa Hospital reported being hit on the roof by a missile on July 30 which caused major damage to the female medical department and injured a nurse on July 30. The hospital has been working at 50% capacity following an attack on July 21 in which 6 people died.

Three UNRWA clinics were damaged on August 3 and 4 for the second time, Bureij, Maan and Tel al Sultan in the eastern and southern areas of Gaza. In total, nine UNRWA clinics out of 21 have been damaged since July 7.

### **Ambulance services**

A Ministry of Health ambulance evacuating patients from Najjar Hospital was hit shell and three paramedics killed. A total of five ambulance workers have been killed since July 7, 3 from the MoH and 2 from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

### **Referrals of patients to facilities outside Gaza**

The Ministry of Health in Gaza is planning to refer more patients to outside hospitals to access life-saving treatment as well as to reduce the case load in the hospitals to a more manageable level. The average number of referrals per month is 1250 patients, primarily seeking treatment in the main East Jerusalem specialty hospitals and in West Bank hospitals. The lack of security for patients to travel to Erez and the chaotic situation of referral procedures reduced the number in July to about 20% of normal. Ambulances required special security coordination to take patients to Erez during the military incursion in the north, but now the main north-south access route, Salah ad-Din Street, is accessible without coordination.

Improvement is being made in matching patients to particular destination hospitals by the needed specialization, streamlining the bureaucracy involved in referral procedures, and arranging for transportation for patients and accommodations for their companions. Reported Israeli efforts to divert patients to a field clinic set up within the Erez terminal also complicates the passage of patients through Erez. There is also the permit system bureaucracy for patients and companions in obtaining required permits and security clearance. For the past three years, men aged 18-40 have been much more likely to be called for a security interview and refused a permit, yet this cohort represents the greater number of casualties in this war.

Only seven PRCS ambulances are licensed and able to go to Erez checkpoint. There are efforts underway to expand this by mobilizing other ambulances. Cars can also be used for normal referral patients if access to Erez, permits and other logistical matters are facilitated. There are other issues involved in referring patients which the MoH, ICRC, WHO and the East Jerusalem hospitals are trying to address at the moment.

The 250-bed Makassed Hospital is the main referral hospital in East Jerusalem for Gaza and West Bank patients. It reported receiving only 30 patients from Gaza since July 7, as well as 350 emergency cases from Jerusalem and the West Bank from recent clashes, all of whom it treats without charge. In a statement issued on August 5, the hospital appealed for US\$ 5 million for medicines, disposables and medical equipment.

## Public health concerns

- Treatment of ongoing casualties, early discharge of cases and follow-up for complications.
- Quality of treatment under the current circumstances.
- Facilitation and access for referral of patients outside of Gaza
- Water-borne and communicable diseases
- Mental health disorders

## Health needs, priorities and gaps

- Supplies of fuel, electricity, medical supplies for hospitals.
- Follow up care for the large numbers of injured.
- Health needs of displaced persons.
- Mental health interventions for patients, bereaved families and displaced persons especially, and support to children.
- Elective surgeries for patients whose surgeries were postponed due to the emergency and postponed treatments for referral patients.

## WHO action

On August 2, the WHO together with the UN Office for Humanitarian Coordination in the occupied Palestinian territory and UNRWA issued a statement warning of a “rapidly unfolding” health disaster in Gaza. <http://www.emro.who.int/countries/pse/index.html>

A WHO team will be engaged in a week-long rapid assessment of the health sector to estimate health restoration and reconstruction needs in the coming days with OCHA and a comprehensive assessment later organized by UNDP. “Recovery needs will be enormous”, according to WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, Dr. Ala Alwan on August 3.

WHO is working with health partners including the MoH, ICRC, MAP-UK and PRCS on improving the process of referrals, access and treatment destinations for casualties and other patients.

WHO procurements of medical aid and donations from Bahrain are being transferred to the MoH in Gaza in the coming days.

## Resource mobilization

The Ministry of Health reported donations from more than 30 UN agencies, international humanitarian organizations, governments, charities and businesses totalling US\$ 15 million.

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## ANNEX

**Table 1. Hospitals in Gaza closed and/or damaged since July 7**

	Hospital	Provider	Bed	Type	District	Location	Closed	Damaged
1	Kamal Adwan	MOH	108	general	North Gaza	North Gaza		
2	Beit Hanoun	MOH	66	general	North Gaza	Beit Hanoun	xx	oo
3	Alawdeh	NGO	85	general	North Gaza	Tel al Zaatar		
4	Al Shawa specialized	NGO	15	maternity	North Gaza	Beit Hanoun	xx	
5	Balsam military	PMMS	68	general	North Gaza	north Beit Lahiya	xx	oo
6	Al Karameh specialized	NGO	25	general	North Gaza	Ard a-Shanti		oo
7	Psychiatric	MOH	28	psychiatry	Gaza	Nasser		
8	Ophthalmic	MOH	42	ophthalmic	Gaza	Nasser		
9	Rantisi Specialised Pediatric	MOH	54	pediatric	Gaza	Nasser		
10	El Durra Pediatric	MOH	91	pediatric	Gaza	Tuffah	xx	oo
11	Al Nasser Pediatric	MOH	120	pediatric	Gaza	Nasser		
12	Shifa	MOH	890	general	Gaza	North Rimal		oo
13	Harazeen Obstetrics	MOH	6	obstetrics	Gaza	Shajieyah	xx	
14	Al Wafa Medical Rehabilitaion	NGO	50	rehab	Gaza	Shajieyah	xx	oo
15	Asahaba Medical	NGO	36	surgical	Gaza	Al Daraj		
16	Cardiac	NGO	37	cardiac surg	Gaza	Al Samer		oo
17	Ophthalmic Specialized	NGO	2	ophthalmic	Gaza	Al Rimal	xx	
18	Al Ahli Arab	NGO	80	general	Gaza	Palestine Sq.		oo
19	Al Quds	NGO	49	general+ diagnos	Gaza	Tel al Hawa		oo
20	Public Aid Hospital	NGO	26	general	Gaza	Sabra		oo
21	Patients' Friends	NGO	49	general	Gaza	Gaza strip		
22	Jordanian Field	JMS	44	general	Gaza	Tel Al Hawa		
23	Al Aqsa Martyrs	MOH	164	general	Middle area	Deir Al Balah		oo
24	Jaffa	NGO	20	general	Middle area	Deir Al Balah	xx	
25	Gaza European	MOH	249	general	Khan Younis	E. Khan Younis		oo
26	Al Amal	NGO	100	general+ rehabili	Khan Younis	Amal		oo
27	Dar al Salam	NGO	16	general	Khan Younis	Al Sater Al Sharqi		
28	Algerian Specialized	PMMS	30	general	Khan Younis	Abasan alKabira	xx	oo
29	Nasser	MOH	322	general	Khan Younis	West Khan Younis		
30	Al Helal al Emirati Maternity	MOH	62	maternity	Rafah	Tel El Sultan		
31	Kuwaiti Specialized	NGO	22	surgical	Rafah	Rafah		
32	Yousef Najjar	MOH	80	general	Rafah	Rafah	reopened	oo

**PMMS = Palestinian Medical Military Services**

**JMS = Jordanian Military Services**

**Source: Ministry of Health, Gaza.**