



## UNRWA Situation Report #56 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

Information is valid as of 21-23 December 2023 at 22:30 (local time)

Day 75-77 of Hostilities

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A Palestinian child, born amid war, is cradled in her mother's arms in an UNRWA shelter in Deir al-Balah, December 2023. © UNRWA Photo by Mohammad Mikkawi

### 1. Key points

#### The Gaza Strip

- Following a shutdown of telecommunications and internet services in Gaza on 20 December, a partial restoration of services was achieved in the southern and central parts of the Gaza Strip on the evening of 21 December.
- On 22 December, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2722 on expanding the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale into Gaza.
- As of 23 December, UNRWA was able to confirm that additional six colleagues have been killed since the beginning of the hostilities, **bringing the total number of UNRWA colleagues killed to 142.**
- Since 7 October, **up to 1.9 million people** (or over 85 per cent of the population) have been displaced across the Gaza Strip, some multiple times. Families are forced to move repeatedly in search of safety.

- As of 19 December, UNRWA estimates that approximately 1.77<sup>1</sup> million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are sheltering or accessing services in UNRWA shelters. **Nearly 1.4 million IDPs are sheltering in 156 UNRWA facilities, across all five governorates of the Gaza Strip, including in the north and in Gaza City and approximately 400,000 are in close vicinity of these installations and receiving assistance from UNRWA.** UNRWA shelter information is updated daily to the extent possible. The information for north Gaza and Gaza City was last updated on 12 October due to access constraints and security situation.

## 2. Overall situation

### The Gaza Strip

- According to the MoH in Gaza, between 7 October and the morning of 22 December, at least 20,057 Palestinians were killed in Gaza. About 70 per cent of those killed are said to be women and children. As of then, 53,320 Palestinians have been injured.

### The West Bank, including East Jerusalem

- According to OCHA, Since 7 October, 293 Palestinians, including 76 children, have been killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- This year (2023) has been the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since the UN began recording casualties in 2005.

## 3. Humanitarian access & protection of civilians

### The Gaza Strip

- UNRWA is working to verify the details of incidents reportedly affecting UNRWA premises. Further information will be provided once it becomes available.
- Different incidents have been reported impacting UNRWA installations and internal displaced people (IDPs) sheltering there. While verification of details and casualty figures remain ongoing, initial reports indicate:
  - On 20 December 2023, due to airstrikes near Rafah Elem School, **one IDP** and **two UNRWA** staff were killed and at least **20 other** IDPS were injured.
  - On 21 December 2023, **one IDP** child sheltering in the KYTC was injured as result of stray bullets that directly impacted the installation; collateral damage to two different schools, Tel El Hawa Elementary Girls School and Mamounia Elementary School, were also reported.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes nearly 160,000 IDPs in north Gaza and Gaza City governorates as of 12 October. UNRWA's ability to provide humanitarian support and update data in the above areas is severely restricted. The hostilities, Israeli Forces' evacuation orders and the constant search for safer places meant that people are displaced multiple times. UNRWA shelters often provide assistance to registered Palestine Refugees and other members of the community. There are instances where total numbers could be duplicated due to overlapping registrations, this is why we use "estimates" for these figures.

- On 23 December 2023, as result of a direct strike **eight IDPS** sheltering in the Nuseirat Elementary School were injured and classrooms damaged; also due to direct strikes **two IDPs** sheltering in Nuseirat Prep. Boys school were killed.
- **188** incidents impacting UNRWA premises and the people inside them have been reported since the beginning of the hostilities (some with multiple incidents impacting the same location), including at least **18** incidents of military use and/or interference at UNRWA premises. **58** different UNRWA installations were directly hit, and **65** different UNRWA installations sustained collateral damage.
- UNRWA estimates that in total at least **301** internally displaced people (IDPs) sheltering in UNRWA shelters have been killed and at least a further **1,051** injured since the start of the hostilities. UNRWA is still verifying the number of casualties caused by incidents that impacted its installations, and notes that these figures do not include some reported casualties where the number of injuries could not be determined.

#### 4. UNRWA response

##### The Gaza Strip

##### UNRWA Shelters

- In total, **nearly 1.4 million displaced people are now sheltering in 156 UNRWA installations**, with another 400,000 registered and accessing services.
- The average number of IDPs in UNRWA shelters located in the middle and southern areas is over **12,000. This is more than four times their capacity.**

##### Health

- Eight (out of 22) UNRWA health centres are still operational in the middle and southern areas, recording **10,095 patient visits** on 21 December including Palestine Refugees and non-refugees. On 22 December, the health centres were closed.
- Midwives are providing care for post-natal and high-risk pregnant women at the eight operational health centres. On 21 December, **a total of 221 post-natal and high-risk pregnancy cases were attended to at health centres.**
- **UNRWA continues to provide health care to IDPs at shelters through 97 medical teams.** Each team is composed of between 1 to 2 doctors and a nurse. **Between 21 and 22 December, UNRWA medical teams attended to 21,004 IDPs.**
- On 20 and 21 December, mental health, and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services were resumed in the middle and Khan Younis areas with a team of two psychiatrists and 16 counsellors and supervisors to assist special cases referred from health centres and shelters. UNRWA is collecting information on the exact number of cases attended to by UNRWA staff in the reporting period.

### Psychosocial support (PSS)

- UNRWA teams, including 284 social workers in the shelters, continue to provide psychosocial first aid and other specialized protection services to IDPs. **As of 23 December, around 76,176 IDPs were reached by this service.**
- Since 7 October, **over 1,008 Gender Based Violence survivors and Child Protection cases among the IDPs have received PSS support and internal referral services of medication, food and non-food items.** Most of these cases were suffering from physical and psychological violence.
- Since 7 October, **3,470 persons with disabilities and injured persons received assistive devices, with Humanity and Inclusion specialists, in coordination with UNRWA social workers, providing rehabilitative physiotherapy and occupational therapy services.**
- Between 22 and 23 December, **school counsellors addressed 1,390 individual and family consultations in Rafah and Khan Younis, alongside 1,194 group PSS sessions.** These efforts benefited 14,298 IDPs, contributing to a cumulative total of 49,893 PSS sessions provided since the beginning of the hostilities.
- During the same period, school counselors provided psychological support to 202 UNRWA staff through both in-person and remote consultations. **The total number of UNRWA staff provided with psychological support since the beginning of the hostilities is 4,153.**

### Food security

- UNRWA continued to **distribute flour** outside of shelters in the southern governorates. **A total of 145,724 families have been reached so far.**

### Water and Sanitation Services (WASH)

- Between 21 and 23 December, all water wells in Jabalia, Khan Younis and Rafah were operational. About 4,000 cubic metres have been pumped from 5 water wells. Khan Younis and Rafah water wells have operated in two shifts (12 hours) to provide potable/domestic water supply service.
- During the same period, the solid waste management service has been continued at Rafah, Khan Younis and middle area camps. About 45 loadings have been transferred to temporary dumping sites between 21 and 23 December.
- UNRWA has installed mobile toilet and shower units to serve IDPs in spontaneous camps in Khan Younis and middle Area.

### Quote from Israa, 26-years-old, currently displaced in Nuseirat Preparatory Girls' School shelter:

"I didn't feel the joy of my baby's arrival; instead, I feel pity for him and the conditions he was born into."

**ENDs -**



## UNRWA situation and response to the escalation in the Gaza Strip

### IDPs in UNRWA installations

Confirmed IDP numbers, since 7 October – 19 December



**1,777,000\*** sheltering in and in the vicinity of



**156** UNRWA installations



The average number of IDPs in UNRWA shelters in the middle and southern areas is 12,000. This is more than four times their capacity.

At least **301** IDPs sheltering in UNRWA premises have been killed and **1,051** injured since 7 October.

### UNRWA fatalities and damage to installations



**142** UNRWA colleagues killed



**188** incidents



**123** UNRWA installations damaged

\* This includes nearly 160,000 IDPs in north Gaza and Gaza City governorates as of 12 October. UNRWA's ability to provide humanitarian support and update data in the above areas is severely restricted.

\*\* The war, Israeli Forces' evacuation orders and the constant search for safer places meant that people are displaced multiple times. UNRWA shelters often provide assistance to registered Palestine Refugees and other members of the community. There are instances where total numbers could be duplicated due to overlapping registrations, this is why we use "estimates" for these figures.

### UNRWA response – Food assistance



**145,724** families outside of shelters have received flour in middle areas and southern governorates since 21 November.

### UNRWA response – Psychosocial support



**76,176** IDPs in shelters were provided with psychosocial first aid and other specialized protection services as of 23 December.

**1,008** GBV survivors and child protection cases received PSS support and internal referral services of medication, food and NFIs, since 7 October.

**3,470** persons with disabilities and injured persons received assistive devices, in cooperation with Humanity and Inclusion.

### UNRWA response – Health



**97** medical teams attended **21,004** IDPs in shelters between 21 - 22 December.

**221** post-natal and high-risk pregnancy cases were attended to at health centres on 21 December..

**10,095** patients received healthcare in eight (out of 22) UNRWA health centres still operational in the Middle and South areas on 21 December.

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