



UNRWA Situation Report #66 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

All information from 16-17 January 2024, is valid as of 17 January 2024 at 22:30 (local time)

Day 102-103 of Hostilities

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UNRWA staff entering an UNRWA clinic in the middle areas in the Gaza Strip, January 2024. © 2024 UNRWA Photo by Ashraf Amra

1. Key points

The Gaza Strip

- As of 17 January 2024, the total number of UNRWA colleagues killed since the beginning of hostilities is **151**.
- According to OCHA, telecommunication services in Gaza remain shut down for a fifth consecutive day. Significant disruption of telecommunication services prevents people in Gaza from accessing life-saving information or calling for first responders, and continues to impede humanitarian response.
- The Ministry of Health has announced that hepatitis A infection is spreading across informal camps due to overcrowding and lack of clean water and proper sanitation. UNRWA continues to monitor the situation, with suspected cases almost 16 times higher in January so far compared to the whole of November 2023. The massive increase reflects Gaza's worsening living conditions, particularly shortage of safe water and inadequate sanitation and hygiene. In shelters, there on average only 1.6L drinking water per person is delivered per day and toilets and showers are shared by hundreds and thousands of IDPs.
- As of 18 January, up to 1.7 million* people (over 75 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. Following intense Israeli bombardments and fighting in Khan Younis and the Middle Areas in recent days, a significant number of displaced people have moved again further south.

*This includes 1 million individuals residing in or near emergency shelters or informal shelters. As of October 12, approximately 160,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were recorded in north Gaza and Gaza governorates. The ability of UNRWA to provide humanitarian support and updated data in these areas has been severely restricted. The ongoing hostilities, evacuation orders issued by Israeli Forces, and the constant need for safer locations have resulted in people being displaced multiple times.

**UNRWA has reported in Situation Report 64 that up to 1.9 million IDPs are either residing in 154 UNRWA shelters or near these shelters. Due to the continued escalation of fighting and evacuation orders, some households have moved away from the shelters where they were initially registered.

*** There are instances where the same IDPs are registered in multiple shelters due to the fluid movement of populations; hereafter, estimates are used for these shelters. UNRWA plans to conduct a more accurate count of IDPs in shelters, including informal shelters, as soon as the security situation allows.

The West Bank, including East Jerusalem

On 16 and 17 January the following Israeli Security Forces (ISF) search and arrest operations occurred:

- Continuation of search and arrest operations in Tulkarm city, Tulkarm camp and Nur Shams refugee camp, northern West Bank. Early morning on 17 January in Tulkarm refugee camp, four Palestinians were killed and two were injured with live ammunition during an exchange of fire. At the northern entrance of the camp, infrastructure and property within the camp was damaged by exchanges of fire and use of ISF bulldozers. Five Palestinians were detained and one ISF soldier was reported injured during the clashes. In the late afternoon, ISF reportedly fired a missile towards Palestinian houses in the camp, resulting in property damage. One Palestinian woman was injured. ISF also detained five paramedics from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.
- On the same day in the late evening ISF closed all entrances to the camp with earth mounds. Exchanges of fire were also reported in Tulkarm city and Nur Shams refugee camp. On the morning of 16 January, ISF reportedly rammed a Palestinian vehicle on Nablus Street in Tulkarm city, and then detained the four Palestinians who were inside following an interrogation. In the evening, ISF reportedly opened fire at another Palestinian vehicle in Izbet Al Jarad, killing one Palestinian and injuring two, including a child.
- Both Tulkarm and Nur Sams refugee camps have been undergoing heavy destruction and dozens of Palestinians have been arrested.
- UNRWA operations have been severely impacted and are currently suspended. Due to the security situation, the Palestinian Education Directorate suspended operations in the city switching all schools to e-learning.
- Overnight between 15 and 16 January, 14 Palestinians were detained in Idha, southern West Bank. On 16 January, ISF reportedly demolished several commercial structures and barracks, and confiscated Palestinian vehicles.
- Clashes between ISF and Palestinians were also reported during search and arrests operations in Nablus, Balata Camp and Askar Camp, northern West Bank. On 16 January, ISF conducted a search and arrest operation in Nablus, injuring one Palestinian and detaining another.
- Early morning on 17 January, ISF conducted search and arrest operations in Balata and Askar Camps, through these exchanges, ISF reportedly fired a rocket towards a vehicle near Balata Camp killing three Palestinians.
- On 16 January, ISF injured six Palestinians and detained 40 Palestinians workers originally from the Gaza Strip during a search and arrest operation in Qalqilya, northern West Bank.
- On 16 January, clashes between ISF and Palestinians were reported in Hussan, southern West Bank. ISF reportedly fired live ammunition in Al Martina area at the easter entrance of the city, and completely closed the area, as well as the center of the village, forcing Palestinians to close their shops.

2. Overall situation

The Gaza Strip

- According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza as of 17 January, at least 24,448 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip since 7 October. About 70 per cent of those killed are reported to be women and children. Another 61,504 Palestinians have been reportedly injured.

The West Bank, including East Jerusalem

- According to OCHA, between 7 October 2023 – 17 January 2024, 355 Palestinians, including 90 children, have been killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- Last year (2023), was the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem since the UN began recording casualties in 2005.

3. Humanitarian access & protection of civilians

The Gaza Strip

Please see below the inputs for the period 16-17 January 2024.

- UNRWA is working to verify the details of incidents reportedly affecting UNRWA premises. Further information will be provided once it becomes available.
- On 16 January, a Health Centre in Gaza City was reportedly directly struck whereby at least two rooms were reportedly hit. Three IDPs sheltering at the health centre were reportedly killed and many others were injured. UNRWA is working to determine the number of IDPs inside the health centre at the time of the incident and the number of injuries.
- On 16 January, due to a strike near a school in Khan Younis, shrapnel fell inside the school and caused an injury to a displaced man who received treatment at the medical point inside the school. Thousands of IDPs were sheltering in the school at the time.
- On 17 January, a school in Khan Younis was reportedly used by ISF for military operations, including for dropping supplies for the military. Damages to the school building were reported in a number of locations, including severe damage to walls.
- **238** incidents impacting UNRWA premises and the people inside them have been reported since the beginning of the war (some with multiple incidents impacting the same location), including at least 24 incidents of military use and/or interference at UNRWA premises. 68 different UNRWA installations were directly hit and 69 different installations sustained collateral damage.
- UNRWA estimates that in total at least **334** internally displaced people (IDPs) sheltering in UNRWA shelters have been killed and at least another **1,159*** injured since the start of the war. 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.

* Numbers are subject to change once further verifications have been conducted.

4. UNRWA response

The Gaza Strip

UNRWA Shelters

- As of 17 January, in total, nearly **1.7 million displaced people are now sheltering across emergency shelters (UNRWA and public shelters), informal sites or in close vicinity to UNRWA shelters and distribution sites and within host communities.**
- **Due to the security situation and ISF evacuation orders between 150-155 UNRWA installations continue to shelter IDPs. Shelters remain very congested.**

Health

Due to the security situation in combination with internet connectivity we are unable to update our results for health.

- On 11 January 2024, only six (out of 22) UNRWA health centres were operational in the middle and southern areas with **9,875 patient visits recorded.**
- Midwives are providing care for post-natal and high-risk pregnant women at health centres. On 11 January, a total of 165 post-natal and high-risk pregnancy cases were attended to at the health centres.
- On 11 January, UNRWA continued to provide health care at UNRWA health centres and shelters with 690 staff maintaining health services.
- On 11 January, UNRWA attended to 20,952 patients in UNRWA shelters and health centres.
- Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services continued in the Middle Areas and Khan Younis (south) with a team of two psychiatrists and 20 counsellors and supervisors to assist special cases referred from health centres and shelters. On 11 January, the team responded to 1,962 cases through individual consultations, awareness sessions and support for gender-based violence cases.
- UNRWA received vaccines from UNICEF for its health centres. Eight different types of vaccines were received (refrigerated and freezer storage). This allowed for vaccinations to restart. On 11 January, a total of 768 children were vaccinated against diseases such as measles, mumps and rubella, and others.

Psychosocial support (PSS)

- On January 16, UNRWA teams continue to provide psychosocial first aid and other specialized protection services to IDPs.
- **283 school counsellors and assistant counsellors conducted 995 individual and family consultations in Rafah and Khan Younis (south), alongside 722 group sessions.** 13,407 IDPs were reached, with the cumulative total of 74,187 PSS sessions since 7 October.
- During the same period, school counsellors provided psychological support to nearly 275 UNRWA staff, through in-person and remote consultations. **The total number of UNRWA staff who have received psychological support since the beginning of the hostilities is 8,589.**

Food security

- UNRWA continued to **distribute flour** outside of shelters in the southern governorates. **A total of 309,779 families have been reached so far.**

Water and Sanitation Services (WASH)

Due to the security situation in combination with internet connectivity we are unable to update our results for WASH.

- On 16 January, water wells in Jabalia (north), Khan Younis and Rafah (south) were operational. Nearly 3,000 cubic metres have been pumped. Khan Younis and Rafah water wells have operated in two shifts (12 hours) to provide potable/domestic water supply services.
 - Provision of potable water through tankers at Rafah and Middle area ensured availability of water in shelters, with some interruption in the Middle Area due to evacuation orders. Khan Younis shelters are provided with water through UNRWA water wells.
 - Solid waste management services continued in Rafah, Khan Younis and Middle Area camps (partially). The service is suspended in Bureij camp due to the military operations. About 45 loadings were transferred to temporary dumping sites.

Quote from Marwa, displaced in Khan Younis:

"Every day we wonder when the clock will tick again on our lives. I dreamed of becoming a doctor, but my home and my university collapsed, and alongside them collapsed all my dreams and hopes of achieving my dreams."

ENDs -



UNRWA situation and response to the escalation in the Gaza Strip

IDPs in UNRWA installations

Confirmed IDP numbers, since 7 October 2023



1,700,000*
IDPs**



At least **334** IDPs sheltering in UNRWA premises have been killed and **1,159** injured since 7 October.

UNRWA fatalities and damage to installations



151 UNRWA colleagues **killed**



238
incidents



137
UNRWA
installations
damaged

* This includes c.1 million individuals residing in or near emergency shelters or informal shelters. Notably, as of October 12, approximately 160,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were recorded in north Gaza and Gaza governorates. However, the ability of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to provide humanitarian support and updated data in these areas has been severely restricted. The ongoing hostilities, evacuation orders issued by Israeli Forces, and the constant need for safer locations have resulted in people being displaced multiple times.

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** It is important to note that there are instances where the same IDPs are registered in multiple shelters due to the fluid movement of populations; hereafter, estimates are used for these shelters. UNRWA plans to conduct a more accurate count of IDPs in shelters, including informal shelters, as soon as the security situation allows.

UNRWA response – Food assistance



309,779 families outside of shelters have received flour in middle areas and southern governorates since 21 Nov.

UNRWA response – Health



Last updated on 11 Jan due to security and internet connectivity issues

165 post-natal and high-risk pregnancy cases were attended to at health centres

20,952 patients received healthcare in 6 (out of 22) UNRWA health care centres and UNRWA shelters.

UNRWA response – Water, sanitation and hygiene



Updated on 16 Jan:

7 water wells continue to operate pumping approximately 3,000 cubic metres of water.

Solid waste management continues in Rafah and Khan Younis and partially in Middle Areas, where **approximately 45 truck loadings were transferred to temporary sites**

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