

Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #106

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Intense bombardment continues across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in additional casualties, displacement, and devastation. The destruction of homes is estimated to have generated over 8 million metric tons of debris, which could take years to remove. Devastation in Khan Younis. Photo by OCHA/Olga Cherevko, 29 January 2024

30 Jan 2024

Key points

- Intense Israeli bombardment from air, land, and sea continued across much of the Gaza Strip on 30 January, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction. Hostilities were particularly intense in Khan Younis, with heavy fighting reported near Nasser and Al Amal hospitals, and reports of Palestinians fleeing to the southern town of Rafah, which is already overcrowded, despite the lack of a safe passage. Ground operations and fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups were also reported across much of Gaza.
- Between the afternoons of 29 and 30 January, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 114 Palestinians were reportedly killed, and 249 Palestinians were injured. Between 7 October 2023 and 12:00 on 30 January 2024, at least 26,751 Palestinians were killed in Gaza and 65,636 Palestinians were injured, according to the MoH.
- Between the afternoons of 29 January and 30 January, the Israeli military did not report on any fatalities among Israeli soldiers in Gaza. As of 30 January, 218 soldiers were killed, and 1,283 soldiers injured in Gaza, according to the Israeli military.

- On 29 January, the Israeli military ordered residents of the neighbourhoods of An Nassar, Ash Sheikh Radwan, Ash Shati Refugee camp, Rimal Ash Shamali and Al Janubi, Sabra, Ash Sheikh 'Ajlin, and Tel Al Hawa in western Gaza city to evacuate towards the south. The new order covered an area of 12.43 square kilometres, which amounts to 3.4 per cent of the total area of the Gaza Strip. This area was home to almost 300,000 Palestinians before 7 October and, subsequently, 59 shelters with an estimated 88,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) seeking refuge there. The Israeli repeated these evacuation orders on 30 January. Since 1 December, when the Israeli military started ordering people to evacuate from specific areas, 158 square kilometres, which amount to 41 per cent of the Gaza Strip, have been placed under such orders. This area was home to 1.38 million Palestinians before 7 October and, subsequently, it contained 161 shelters hosting an estimated 700,750 IDPs.
- During the past week, large numbers of Palestinian men have been observed being detained by the Israeli military at a checkpoint within the city of Khan Younis, with many of them stripped to their underwear, blindfolded and taken away.
- In the second half of January, humanitarian partners continue to observe an increasing trend in denied and restricted access to the northern and central areas of Gaza. The reasons include excessive delays for humanitarian aid convoys before or at Israeli checkpoints and heightened hostilities in central Gaza. Threats to the safety of humanitarian personnel and sites are also frequent, impeding the delivery of time-sensitive and life-saving aid and pose serious risks to those involved in humanitarian efforts.
- On 30 January, the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) reported that shrapnel falling on Al Amal Hospital and the adjacent PRCS headquarters in Khan Younis had resulted in one fatality and nine injuries among IDPs taking refuge there. Later, that day, the PRCS reported that both buildings had been raided by the Israeli military and that PRCS teams and IDPs were asked to evacuate the premises; the Israeli military has denied the claim. On 29 January, at about 14:00, the PRCS reported that the surgical ward at Al Amal Hospital had ceased operations due to the depletion of oxygen supplies. The PRCS stated that the continuing fighting and the siege of the facilities is hindering the movement of ambulances and emergency medical teams in Khan Younis and preventing medical teams from reaching the injured and transporting them to the hospital for necessary medical care.
- On 29 January, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) expressed its alarm at the deteriorating lack of obstetric care in Gaza, caused by the continuous bombings, restrictions on humanitarian aid, and attacks on healthcare facilities. In the Rafah area, the Emirati Maternity Hospital is the main remaining facility for displaced pregnant women but can only respond to the most urgent and life-threatening deliveries, as it struggles to cope with three times the number of deliveries it handled before the war. With so little access to maternal health services, many pregnant women have not received any care since the start of the war, and are unable to check on the health of their children. Displaced women are giving birth in plastic tents and public buildings and those who manage to deliver in a hospital often return to their makeshift shelters just hours after undergoing a caesarean. MSF is supporting the Emirati Hospital with postpartum care by adding 12 beds to the ward, to reach a 20-bed capacity, thus allowing more patients to receive proper monitoring post-delivery. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 50,000 women are pregnant, and according to UNICEF an estimated 20,000 babies have been born since the start of the war.
- In a statement issued on 30 January, Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee referred to recent decisions by various Member States to pause funds for UNRWA, warning that such actions would have "catastrophic consequences for the people of Gaza," as "no other entity has the capacity to deliver the scale and breadth of assistance that 2.2 million people in Gaza urgently need." They have called upon donors to reconsider such decisions, which have come in response to Israeli allegations of involvement of several UNRWA staff in the 7 October attacks on Israel. Referring to these attacks as heinous, the Principals recalled the Secretary-General's statement whereby "any UN employee involved in acts of terror will be held accountable."

- In the early morning hours of 30 January, Israeli undercover forces, disguised as medical staff and civilians, killed three Palestinian men inside Ibn Sina hospital in Jenin city. Among the fatalities were two brothers, one of whom was receiving treatment for wounds he sustained in an Israeli airstrike in Jenin on 25 January. According to Israeli military, the men were planning attacks in Israel and hiding in the hospital. The Israeli army also claimed that one of the fatalities had a gun, a claim denied by hospital staff. Describing the incident as ‘a seemingly planned extrajudicial execution,’ the UN Human Rights Office called on the Israeli authorities ‘to immediately end the unlawful killing of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, which the office has increasingly documented after 7 October, and to provide accountability for all unlawful use of force. Subsequently, Israeli forces raided Jenin city and exchanged fire with Palestinians and arrested three.

Hostilities and casualties (Gaza Strip)

The following are among the deadliest incidents reported on 28 and 29 January:

- On 28 January, at about 17:30, four Palestinians were reportedly killed, and others injured, after a residential building in An Nuseirat Refugee Camp, Middle Area, was struck.
- On 28 January, at about 19:00, at least 10 Palestinians were reportedly killed, after a residential building in Ash Shati’ Refugee Camp, Gaza city, was struck.
- On 28 January, at about 21:40, 23 Palestinians were reportedly killed, after a residential building in An Nuseirat Refugee Camp, Middle Area, was struck.
- On 29 January at about 18:00, six Palestinians, including four children, were reportedly shot and killed while driving in their vehicle in Gaza city, according to PRCs.
- On 29 January, at about 15:00, 25 Palestinians were reportedly killed, and tens of others were injured, after a residential building in At Tuffah neighbourhood, Gaza city, was struck.
- On 29 January, at about 19:30, 20 Palestinians were reportedly killed, and tens of others were injured, after a residential building in As Sabra neighbourhood, Gaza city, was struck.

Displacement (Gaza Strip)

- As of 26 January, according to UNRWA, there are an estimated 1.7 million IDPs in Gaza. Many of them have been displaced multiple times, as families have been forced to move repeatedly in search of safety. Due to continued fighting and evacuation orders, some households have moved away from the shelters where they were initially registered. Rafah governorate is where over one million people are squeezed into an extremely overcrowded space. Following intense Israeli bombardment and fighting in Khan Younis and Deir al Balah in recent days, as well as new Israeli military evacuation orders, a significant number of displaced people have moved further south.
- On 29 January, according to UNRWA, 10 IDPs were killed and several more injured as a result of Israeli missile strike inside a classroom in a school in Gaza city. At least 372 IDPs sheltering in UNRWA shelters have been killed and 1,335 injured since 7 October.

Electricity

Since 11 October 2023, the Gaza Strip has been under an electricity blackout, after the Israeli authorities cut off the electricity supply, and fuel reserves for Gaza’s sole power plant were depleted. The communications and industrial fuel shutdown continue to significantly hinder the aid community’s efforts to assess and to adequately respond to the deepening humanitarian crisis. For more information on electricity supply to the Gaza Strip, please see this dashboard.

Health care, including attacks (Gaza Strip)

- According to WHO, health care in Gaza remains extremely fragile. The seven partially functional hospitals in the north have been offering limited maternity, trauma, and emergency care services. However, they face challenges such as a shortage of medical staff, including specialized surgeons, neurosurgeons, and intensive care staff, as well as a lack of medical supplies, and have an urgent need for fuel, food, and drinking water. The seven partially functional hospitals in the south are operating at three times their capacity, while facing critical shortages of basic supplies and fuel. Hospitals in Khan Younis are at risk of closure due to intense hostilities and the issuance of evacuation orders in adjacent areas. Over 90 health facilities and over 80 ambulances have been impacted since the escalation of hostilities. Other factors include power supply disruptions and fuel shortages. According to the MoH in Gaza, on average, occupancy rates are reaching 206 per cent in inpatient departments and 250 per cent in intensive care units.
- As of 25 January, according to the WHO, only 14 of 36 hospitals in Gaza are partially functional; seven in the north and seven in the south. 'Partial functionality' indicates that a hospital is accessible to people in need of health care; it can admit some new patients and can undertake some level of surgery. In addition, Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis is 'minimally functioning,' providing available services to patients in its care, but no longer receiving patients or supplies, as it is surrounded by the Israeli military and experiencing intense fighting. Al Kheir Hospital in Khan Younis, which was previously designated as 'minimally functioning,' and one of only three in the Gaza Strip that provides maternity services, is no longer operational, with reports of patients, who had just undergone critical operations, having to flee the facility.

Humanitarian Access

- Between 1 and 25 January, 51 missions to deliver humanitarian aid were planned for the north of Wadi Gaza; however, only eight were facilitated by the Israeli military while 29 were denied access. Most of the missions that were facilitated access were related to food distribution, while those intended to support critical hospitals and Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) facilitates were largely denied access. The access of two missions was partially facilitated (e.g., only the assessment components were facilitated, without a planned delivery of aid supplies) and another four were postponed (due to security and other requirements). In an emerging pattern, the access of an additional eight planned missions was initially facilitated, but subsequently impeded as routes designated by the Israeli military proved to be unpassable, or the imposition of excessive delays prior to the departure of the missions or at checkpoints en route.
- Between 1 and 25 January, humanitarian partners coordinated 87 humanitarian missions to the Deir al Balah governorate of Gaza, of which 63 per cent (55 missions) were facilitated and 25 per cent (22 missions) were denied access. Due to increasing military activity, ten missions were postponed. Postponement of humanitarian movements to and from hospitals and humanitarian sites has been an emerging trend since 12 January due to increased military activity. The need to coordinate movement to areas south of Wadi Gaza has only been a requirement by the Israeli authorities since December.
- None of the 22 requests by the United Nations to the Israeli military to open checkpoints early to access areas north of Wadi Gaza were facilitated. Given the heavy congestion around UN warehouses and the high levels of needs, early movement is essential for security, programmatic and protection reasons. The humanitarian community has consistently called for both main supply routes to be open in Gaza, and for checkpoints to open at 6:00 every day. Only one of the two main supply routes has been made available for aid missions so far.

- In addition to widespread attacks on health care facilities and workers, 12 incidents of attacks against, and access constraints on, Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) were recorded between 7 November 2023 and 24 January 2024. These included ten instances of direct and indirect fire resulting in seven deaths and 12 injuries (including to members of EMTs, patients and other people within the vicinity) and two entry blockages. These teams have been undertaking life-saving surgeries in partially functioning over-congested hospitals across Gaza.

Hostilities and casualties (Israel)

- Over 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed in Israel, including 36 children, according to the Israeli authorities, the vast majority on 7 October.
- The Israeli authorities estimated that about 136 Israelis and foreign nationals remained captive in Gaza. During the humanitarian pause (24-30 November), 86 Israeli and 24 foreign national hostages were released.

Violence and casualties (West Bank)

- Since 7 October 2023 and as of 30 January 2024, 370 Palestinians have been killed, including 94 children, across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Additionally, two Palestinians from the West Bank were killed while carrying out an attack in Israel on 30 November. Of these 370 fatalities, 360 were killed by Israeli forces, eight by Israeli settlers and two by either Israeli forces or settlers. The number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 2023 (507) marks the highest number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank since OCHA started recording casualties in 2005. So far in 2024 (as of 30 January), 61 Palestinians, including at least 13 children, have been killed by Israeli forces, settlers or either Israeli forces or settlers. Another Palestinian man was killed by Palestinians on 7 January 2024, reportedly in the belief that he was a settler.
- Since 7 October 2023 and as of 30 January 2024, six Israelis, including four members of Israeli forces, have been killed in Palestinian-perpetrated attacks in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This includes a Palestinian woman with Israeli citizenship, residing in the West Bank, who died on 24 January from wounds she received in an attack by Palestinians on 7 January. In addition, four Israelis were killed in an attack carried out by Palestinians from the West Bank in West Jerusalem (one of the four was killed by Israeli forces who misidentified him) on 30 November 2023. Another Israeli woman was killed in another attack perpetrated by Palestinians in Israel on 15 January 2024. The number of Israelis killed in the West Bank and Israel in 2023 in attacks perpetrated by Palestinians from the West Bank (36) was the highest since OCHA started recording casualties in 2005.
- Since 7 October 2023 and as of 30 January 2024, 4,386 Palestinians, including 660 children, have been injured in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Of them, 4,250 have been injured by Israeli forces, 115 by settlers and 21 by either Israeli forces or settlers. Of the total injuries, 54 per cent were reported in the context of search-and-arrest and other operations, 34 per cent in demonstrations and 8 per cent during settler attacks against Palestinians. Some 33 per cent of those injuries have been caused by live ammunition, compared with 9 per cent in the first nine months of 2023.

Settler Violence

- Since 7 October 2023 and as of 30 January 2024, OCHA has recorded 477 Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians, resulting in Palestinian casualties (48 incidents), damage to Palestinian-owned property (372 incidents), or both casualties and damage to property (57 incidents).

- One-third of the settler attacks against Palestinians after 7 October 2023 have involved firearms, including shootings and threats of shootings. In nearly half of all recorded incidents after 7 October, Israeli forces were either accompanying or reported to be supporting the attackers.
- In 2023, 1,229 incidents involving Israeli settlers in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (with or without Israeli forces), resulted in Palestinian casualties, property damage or both. Some 913 of these incidents resulted in damage, 163 resulted in casualties and 153 resulted in both. This is the highest number of settler attacks against Palestinians in any given year since OCHA started recording incidents involving settlers in 2006.

Displacement (West Bank)

- Since 7 October 2023 and as of 29 January 2024, at least 198 Palestinian households comprising 1,208 people, including 586 children, have been displaced amid settler violence and access restrictions. The displaced households are from at least 15 herding/Bedouin communities. More than half of the displacement occurred on 12, 15, and 28 October, affecting seven communities. The displacement toll since 7 October 2023, represents 78 per cent of all displacement reported due to settler violence and access restrictions since 1 January 2023 (1,539 people, including 756 children).
- Since 7 October 2023 and as of 30 January 2024, 495 Palestinians, including 246 children, have been displaced following the demolition of their homes due to lack of Israeli-issued building permits in Area C and East Jerusalem, which are almost impossible to obtain. About 100 Palestinian homes have been demolished on the same grounds between 7 October 2023 and 30 January 2024.
- A total of 22 homes have been demolished and 105 Palestinians, including 45 children, displaced due to punitive demolitions from 7 October 2023 and as of 30 January 2024. The numbers exceed those reported in the first nine months of 2023, during which 16 homes were punitively demolished and 78 people displaced.
- As a result of an Israeli raid on 29 January in Tulkarm and its refugee camps of Nur Shams and Tulkarm, significant damage to infrastructure and residential houses was reported. Since 7 October 2023 and as of 30 January 2024, 744 Palestinians, including 311 children, have been displaced, following the destruction of 117 homes during other operations carried out by Israeli forces across the West Bank. About 95 per cent of the displacement was reported in the refugee camps of Jenin, Nur Shams and Tulkarm. This represents 82 per cent of all displacement reported due to the destruction of homes during Israeli military operations since January 2023 (908 people).

Funding

- As of 30 January, Member States have disbursed \$700.3 million against the updated Flash Appeal launched by the UN and its partners to implement its response plan in support of 2.2 million people in the Gaza Strip and 500,000 people in the West Bank. This constitutes 57 per cent of the \$1.2 billion requested.
- Private donations are collected through the Humanitarian Fund. A private foundation in Australia has donated \$2.2 million. Since 7 October, the Humanitarian Fund has disbursed about \$55 million.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND RESPONSES: 21-28 January

Health

Needs

- Primary health services are critically needed in informal shelters across the Gaza Strip. In addition, routine immunization, sexual and reproductive care, and medication for non-communicable diseases and psychotropics are essential to address the population's medical needs. Establishing field hospitals in different areas of the Gaza Strip will be a crucial enabler to accommodate the local population's medical needs.
- Some 6,000 patients are still on the waiting list to be evacuated outside of Gaza for tertiary medical care.
- There is an urgent need for laboratory equipment and reagents to enable accurate diagnosis and testing; blood products to support medical procedures and surgeries; and a humanitarian corridor for referral of critical patients from Nasser Hospital to the Jordanian field hospital in Khan Younis.
- Health facilities, including hospitals, urgently need fuel, medical supplies, and food to continue to provide medical services across the Gaza Strip.

Response

- Since the start of hostilities, in Gaza, 25 partners have established presence and have provided health services to over 500,000 people.
- Some 12 Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) are currently operational, with two additional teams scheduled to arrive next week. As of end of January 2024, these EMTs have treated some 12,410 patients requiring emergency surgeries and treatment for non-communicable diseases and severe acute malnutrition.
- During the reporting period, 53 patients, including 15 critical cases, were successfully evacuated from UNRWA's Khan Younis Training Centre.
- The International Medical Corps (IMC) Field Hospital has now expanded its health services to include a maternity ward and pediatrics unit.
- In the West Bank, mobile clinics have provided healthcare services to about 83,000 Palestinians in 86 communities. Health partners are planning to provide primary healthcare via mobile clinics to more than 25,000 Palestinians across 36 communities in early February.

Challenges and Gaps

- In Gaza, the escalation of hostilities in Khan Younis has resulted in a significant increase in attacks against the few remaining partially and minimally functional health facilities and an increase in the number of IDPs seeking refuge in Rafah.
- Ongoing fighting in the vicinity of Al Amal and Al Kheir hospitals have severely affected their functionality and accessibility. Al-Kheir hospital, a critical facility for maternal and newborn care, is currently non-operational due to extensive damage.

WASH

Needs

- People in Gaza do not have access to adequate quantity and quality of water and lack hygiene materials, which has consequences on their wellbeing, including physical health.
- The accumulation of solid waste on the streets, around hospitals, IDP shelters, and various sites remains a priority concern, as tens of thousands of tons of uncollected public waste are intensifying public health risks. The Municipality of Gaza city estimates that approximately 50,000 tons of solid waste remain unmanaged, exacerbating environmental and health concerns.

Response

- About 23,000 cubic metres of water per day were accessible through water lines, municipal wells, as well as trucking and bottled water (estimated 10,000 cubic metres) between 22 and 28 January.
- Some 6,000 cubic metres of water per day were accessible through the only functional Israeli water pipeline, in contrast to close to 53,000 cubic metres that used to be available through all pipelines prior to the current hostilities.
- Some 3,200 cubic metres were accessible through the short-term desalination plants each day, in contrast to the pre-hostilities period when 22,000 cubic metres were available daily.
- Some 2,500 cubic metres of water is accessible through the municipal wells daily, while the production capacity was up to 255,000 cubic metres each day.
- The UAE's small desalination plant located on the Egyptian side of Rafah continues to operate below capacity, providing 1,140 cubic metres per day out of a possible 2,400. All desalinated water from this plant is distributed via tankers.
- The construction of a 3-kilometre transmission line extending to the Saudi Water Reservoir within the Philadelphia corridor is underway and expected to be completed in early February.

Challenges and Gaps

- In Gaza, due to access restrictions, humanitarian partners have been unable to assess or resupply fuel to the Jabalya area, where sewage flooding was reported in the refugee camp on 5 January. At least 100,000 IDPs are estimated to reside in the UN and public shelters in this area.
- Markets are not functioning and construction materials for latrines, desludging services and other essential supplies for sanitation are not available for purchase.
- Import restrictions, as well as complex and unpredictable clearance procedures for critical items considered by Israel as dual use, such as generators, pumps, and pipes are preventing a scale up of the WASH response.
- Most partners face resource shortfalls, with no commitment to new funding, particularly in camps and other areas where many IDPs are settled. As of 29 January, only 27 per cent of WASH's requirement (\$148.6M) is funded, according to the FTS.

Protection

Needs

- Unaccompanied and separated children require urgent protection, including family tracing and provision of shelter, winter clothing, blankets, water, and food.
- Protection partners report having observed increased risk-taking behaviour during a food distribution in Gaza city, with displaced people hastening towards aid trucks, amid attacks.
- Released detainees urgently need winter clothes and shoes, and tents, in addition to cash assistance. Released detainees asked for assistance in retrieving their personal belongings, that were confiscated while detained by the Israeli military.
- Reports indicated that pregnant women have been unable to reach health facilities or call ambulances to be transferred to health facilities, and thus have been forced to give birth in UNRWA shelters, which are not equipped with the necessary medical and sanitation facilities to ensure safe births. Protection focal points have provided hygiene and dignity kits, amid scarcity of kits; however, women's specific needs after childbirth remain unmet.
- UNRWA reports increased levels of domestic violence, against women, in instances where they were unable to obtain food and NFIs from partners.

- Due to constant hostilities, the scale of explosive contamination will require, at a minimum:
 - Explosive Ordnance Disposal.
 - Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) and Conflict Preparedness and Protection (CPP) messages among the population affected by shelling and/or explosive contamination, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), in the event they will return to potentially contaminated areas, after the hostilities.
 - EORE and CPP training for humanitarian actors.
 - Victim Assistance services for survivors of shelling and explosive ordnance related accidents.

Response

- During the reporting period, UNRWA documented the release of 60 detainees (all males) from Gaza at Kerem Shalom, including an unaccompanied minor and one injured person; the Agency provided non-food items and coordinated with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to support the released detainees with cash assistance and clothing. Some 28 released detainees were released in two UNRWA schools in Rafah and were assisted with medical care and psychological first aid. Six were transferred to a health facility, while the remaining 27 were reconnected with their families.
- The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) continued providing explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) support to ensure the safe passage of convoys; in particular, UNMAS EOD Operators supported three convoys to the north, including two food convoys and one fuel delivery to Shifa Hospital. Two explosive threat assessments were conducted in Khan Younis, including one at the Khan Younis Training Centre.
- Humanity and Inclusion (HI) coordinated and prepared to mobilize staff for future EORE/CPP sessions – some sessions were already held in Rafah and Dir Elbalah. HI is also working on a mass media EORE/CPP campaign.

Challenges and Gaps

- The communications blackout and the continued restrictions on access and safe movement directly affected the delivery of planned child protection interventions, and the reporting of ongoing interventions.
- Mine Action partners report challenges in obtaining authorization to deploy personnel, especially EOD specialists, to carry out contamination assessments; further challenges include access restrictions on equipment, movement concerns due to insecurity and communications challenged.

Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

Needs

- It is estimated that over 650,000 people will have no home to return to, and that many more will be unable to return immediately, due to the level of damage to surrounding infrastructure, as well as the risk posed by explosive remnants of war.
- Partners estimate that the amount of debris generated by the destruction of residential housing units will exceed 8,000,000 metric tons and will take over three years to remove it, given Gaza's current capabilities.
- Displaced people residing in both formal and informal emergency shelters still lack basic NFIs, and hundreds of thousands lack proper and adequate shelter.
- Tents, timber sections, and tarpaulin sheets are highly needed to allow the displaced communities to protect themselves and their children from harsh weather conditions and to minimize overcrowded and unhygienic conditions in the current makeshift shelters.
- The lack of proper informal settlement planning has led to makeshift shelters and tents flooding on rainy days, further exacerbating the suffering of the people displaced.

- Urgent funding is needed to address the key gaps in the supply of shelter and NFIs. As of 29 January, only 24 per cent of the Shelter Cluster funding requirement (209.2M) has been funded.

Response

- During the reporting period, cluster partners distributed about 1,040 family tents in Mawasi (Khan Younis) and Mawasi (Rafah) for unsheltered IDPs. Some 1,450 bedding items, including blankets, mattresses, and mats, and 1,100 clothing kits were distributed to IDPs in Rafah.
- Shelter partners indicate that the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) and the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) have established tented camps near Khan Younis, with 600 tents. They intend to increase the size of the camp to some 1,000 tents to accommodate about 5,000 people displaced.

Challenges and Gaps

- There is a high shortage of all essential NFIs for IDPs inside and outside shelters. This includes 50,000 family winterized tents, 200,000 bedding sets (1,200,000 mattresses and blankets), 200,000 sealing-off kits, 200,000 winter clothes kits, and wooden timber to support IDPs in establishing self-built shelters.
- One of the challenges that displaced people face is the lack of hand tools to prepare the location of their tents and to protect them from rain and floods – as hand tools are currently not permitted to enter Gaza.
- Due to security concerns and limited access, partners had to restrict the delivery of the assistance to Rafah and Khan Younis.
- Cluster partners indicate that pricing for SNFIs has risen in regional markets, including high freight rates and shipping costs. Further, partners face persistent challenges in the supply chain, keeping up with regulations and registration in regional countries.

Food security

Needs

- Uninterrupted and secure humanitarian corridors for delivering critical aid across Gaza is critically needed to allow more trucks from the private sector to enter Gaza. Access to the north is imperative to address the catastrophic food insecurity conditions of the population there.
- Immediate provision of fuel and cooking gas is critical to sustain humanitarian efforts and maintaining the operation of essential services, such as mills and bakeries. Without them, communities will be unable to prepare the limited food available to them.
- According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC):
 - 2.2 million people are at imminent risk of famine.
 - Some 378,000 people are at Phase 5 (catastrophic levels). Phase 5 refers to extreme lack of food, starvation, and exhaustion of coping capacities.
 - Some 939,000 people at Phase 4 (emergency levels).

Response

- Between 22 and 28 January, 12 Food Security Sector (FSS) partners provided food assistance across the Gaza Strip and reached about 1.7 million people with at least one type of food assistance. Rafah Governorate received about 50 per cent of the total food assistance; Deir al Balah received about 25 per cent; Khan Younis about 15 per cent; 10 per cent of the food assistance reached the northern governorates. In particular:
 - In north Gaza, 11,832 people sheltering in host families received food parcels. Hot meals were provided to 36,000 people, sheltering in makeshift camps.
 - In the Middle Area, food parcels were distributed to a total of 24,000 people, including 2,000 people non-displaced and 22,000 staying with host families. Ready-To-Eat (RTE) food was provided to 14,272 people, including 563 in host families and 13,709 people sheltering in makeshift camps. Hot meals were also distributed to 78,600 people sheltering in host families. A total of 305,000 people in host families were reached with bread distribution.
- In the south, FSS partners reached 916,576 IDPs, including in public shelters, host families and makeshift camps in Rafah, Khan Younis, and Deir al Balah governorates through food parcels, ready-to-eat (RTE) packages and hot meals.
- Some 362,465 people in host families in Al Bayuk, Al Jneineh and As Salam (Rafah) were reached with bread distribution, between 22 and 28 January.

Challenges and gaps

- FSS partners' operational space and delivery access are greatly hindered across the Gaza Strip.
- Continued hostilities, disruptions in healthcare services, lack of access to nutritious food, lack of access to clean water and poor sanitation conditions remain major challenges and contribute to the risk of famine in Gaza.
- Despite partners' efforts, food distribution in northern Gaza falls far below needs. The challenges faced in Gaza underscore the importance of continued coordination and support to address the pressing food security needs of the affected people.

Nutrition

Needs

- Provision of nutrition interventions, including lifesaving supplies in Gaza, is critically needed across the Strip.
- Malnutrition among children and pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBW) remains a significant concern, amid lack of functioning health and WASH systems and deterioration of the food security situation.

Response

- In response to exceptional circumstances in Gaza, a specific protocol has been developed for the use of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF). Due to the vulnerability of young children (especially those aged 6-23 months) during crises, the protocol allows for blanket distribution of RUTF beyond its primary intended purpose. Children aged 24 to 59 months will receive high-energy biscuits/LNS-MQ as part of the blanket distribution plan. This expanded use aims to provide both preventive and curative care for acute malnutrition and wasting in this age group.
- On 27 January, UNICEF received 2000 cartons of ready-to-use therapeutic food supplies which will support 10,000 children for 1 month.
- The nutrition sub-cluster in Gaza will prioritize conducting -upper arm circumference (MUAC) screenings for acute malnutrition in children and provide training to partners on this matter.

- The Nutrition Cluster is collaborating with partners to identify their training needs and enhance their capacity to effectively respond to nutrition activities.

Challenges and gaps

- Ongoing hostilities in Gaza have led to severe food shortages, inadequate WASH facilities, and a breakdown in health services, placing children under-five and Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women (PBW) in a state of nutritional vulnerability. In the absence of proper anthropometric and mortality data to feed in the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, an alternative approach is proposed to monitor the nutritional status of children under-five and PBW through an ongoing assessment of nutritional vulnerability. The ongoing analysis is conducted through a Global Nutrition Information in Emergencies Task Force that is co-chaired by UNICEF and WFP, and involves various partners such as Action Against Hunger, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the Global Nutrition Cluster, the IPC, Save the Children and WHO.
- Given stock and funding, nutrition partners can meet only 25 per cent of the nutritional needs of malnourished children and vulnerable mothers in the next two months. Without immediate funding and an expanded response, 375,000 individuals are at risk of severe undernourishment. Urgent action is crucial to prevent this life-threatening situation.

Education

Needs

- More than 625,000 students and close to 23,000 teachers in the Gaza Strip have been affected by school closures and attacks on education since 7 October 2023. The students need to access education safely.
- Some 92 per cent of all school buildings in Gaza are being used as shelters for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and/or have sustained varying levels of damage. 386 schools (78 per cent of the total school buildings in Gaza) sustained damage, including 138 schools that sustained major damage or were fully destroyed. Combined, these schools previously served some 433,000 children and more than 16,200 teachers. The Khan Younis, North and Gaza governorates have the highest proportion (three quarters) of all damaged schools. The schools will need not be rebuilt or repaired and the needs of IDPs met. For more information, visit the Education Cluster Damaged School Dashboard.
- Education partners highlight the need for the protection of schools and education facilities from attacks, and to scale up advocacy, as well as prioritizing education as an essential programme, for the protection and well-being of children.
- Key priorities include the provision of Education in Emergencies (EiE) recreational activities and psychological support, including Social Emotional Learning (SEL) activities to children in shelters and designated emergency shelters (DESS); establishing Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) in shelters/DESS to start non-formal learning for children; provision of emergency supplies and learning kits. In addition, a key need is the identification and support of children with disabilities and other needs, with assistive devices for continuity of learning.

Response:

- UNICEF with three of its partners and Teacher Creativity Centre are working on establishing Temporary Learning Centres (TLS) to start non-formal education activities with displaced children in shelters/DESSs. The Cluster's response is guided by a three-phased response plan – supporting conflict-affected children, teachers, and caregivers in shelters and in host communities; preparing a safe learning environment and re-establishing a sense of normalcy as soon as hostilities stop; and preparing to restore the formal education system through the reconstruction of education infrastructure after a reduction in hostilities.
- Since October 2023, eleven partners have reached more than 125,556 students and teachers (more information in the Education Cluster 5W dashboard) with psychosocial support, emergency learning, recreational supplies and activities, and awareness sessions in the Deir Al Balah, Khan Younis, and Rafah governorates. Most of the cluster responses are delivered by local partners.
- The Education and the Shelter clusters are carrying out advocacy activities to highlight the devastating impacts of the current situation in Gaza on children and the inextricable links between shelter and schooling. On 24 January, on the occasion of World Education Day, the two clusters published a joint advocacy note and urged all actors to ensure that barriers to education are addressed, especially through the provision of adequate shelter that facilitates recovery and enables the right to learn.

Challenges and Gaps

- No activities have been undertaken in Gaza City and North Gaza governorates due to ongoing hostilities and access challenges.
- As of 29 January, the education response remains significantly underfunded, receiving only 14 per cent of its requirements (\$114.5M). Education actors and donors are urged to mobilize rapid resources to meet immediate response requirements, as well as supporting the long-run reconstruction of education facilities and structures, when hostilities subside.

Logistics

Response

- The Logistics Cluster has launched convoy coordination services in Jordan for two routes: Amman to Rafah, via King Hussein Bridge, and Amman to Rafah via Aqaba-Nuweiba. Details on the support and services provided by the Logistics Cluster are available in the Standard Operating Procedures. The Logistics Cluster had been engaging with partners in Amman, Jordan regarding discussions on the Jordan Corridor, to further streamline the current processes for the Jordan Corridor, to allow a larger number of convoys per week.
- Partners continue facilitating access to temporary storage, transport, and cargo notification transshipment services. In Gaza, 1,470 metre square of temporary storage is available in Rafah with road transport services from Rafah to the Logistics Cluster warehouses. Additional warehouse capacity can be made available in Khan Yunis and Deir al Balah once access permits. In Egypt, common storage services are available to support partners with cargo consolidation in Port Said.
- On 10 January, Logistics Cluster and WFP conducted a logistics assessment of Al Arish seaport. The port had already received five vessels since the onset of the Gaza response, mostly for government-chartered vessels; the largest one to dock so far had a capacity of about 4,000 MT of space. More information on the assessment can be found [here](#).

Challenges and gaps

- Persisting challenges include storage and transportation across the Gaza Strip, including temperature-controlled storage. The Logistics Cluster is procuring additional Mobile Storage Units (MSUs), which will be available to humanitarian partners to augment their storage capacities. Moreover, the Logistics Cluster plans to send two temperature-controlled units to Gaza to support with cold chain needs.
- Partners are collecting the pipeline for incoming cargo through the Egypt and Jordan corridors for the coming three months; this is a key exercise for operational planning, to understand available resources, and allocate them based on prioritization.

Emergency Telecommunications

Needs

Recurrent telecommunications shutdown in the Gaza Strip continues to restrict people from accessing life-saving information and is impeding other forms of humanitarian response.

Response

- Since 9 January, the ETC has supported 10 humanitarian agencies with ICT assessments, technical advice and information, repairs, and guidance on the use of ICT equipment in Gaza.
- Since its establishment on 3 November 2023, the ETC continues to engage with Israeli authorities towards seeking necessary authorisations to import all essential telecommunications equipment into Gaza and provide independent access to communications for humanitarian responders.

Challenges and Gaps

- Limited access to electricity, fuel, and telecommunications services continues to hamper the humanitarian response in Gaza.
- Import challenges to telecommunications equipment into Gaza is fraught, lengthy, and extremely challenging.

Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)

Response

- Close to 120,000 households are estimated to have received one round of emergency MPCA since the start of the conflict, while another 35,000 people (including people with disabilities and nursing mothers) have received a top-up and close to 1,800 households have received a second round. Even under a normal year where people are expected to have alternative income sources, this package only lasts for a household for up to a month. This also does not consider market collapse and price volatility experienced under the current in-extremis circumstances. Therefore, this assistance falls far below the needs on the ground.
- From the last round of post distribution monitoring data conducted between the third week of December and mid-January, food remains the most purchased with humanitarian cash (98 per cent), followed by medicines (31 per cent), debts repayment (21 per cent), water, hygiene products, and transportation. The percentage of respondents reporting that the assistance helped them accessing needed basic goods and services at that specific time is about 70 per cent.

Challenges

- Challenges of electricity and connectivity is affecting the Financial Service Providers to make cash accessible, people's ability to retrieve even that one round of MPCA package received remains largely compromised, with nearly 2,600 families having never been able to retrieve the assistance.
- While informal markets are the only source of accessible goods, the scant number of trucks that were sporadically reported to have been entering the city (607 trucks until 19 January 2024) have now stopped, exacerbating the complexity of obtaining essential goods.

Protection against sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA) remains a cross-cutting priority for all clusters. The SAWA helpline, reachable at 121 and through WhatsApp at +972 59-4040121 (East Jerusalem at 1-800-500-121), operates 24/7. This toll-free number is widely disseminated across all areas of intervention to report cases of SEA and to facilitate emergency counselling and referrals for affected communities to access life-saving services. The PSEA Network monitors calls daily and will increase the number of counsellors if necessary.

* Asterisks indicate that a figure, sentence, or section has been rectified, added, or retracted after the initial publication of this update.