

UNRWA Situation Report #54 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem



Information is valid as of 17-18 December 2023 at 22:30 (local time)

Day 72-73 of Hostilities

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IDPs at an UNRWA school turned shelter, southern Gaza Strip, on 17 December 2023. © 2023 UNRWA Photo by Mohammed Hinnawi

1. Key points

The Gaza Strip

- As of 18 December, the total number of UNRWA colleagues killed since the beginning of hostilities is 136.
- 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 13 December, **nearly 1.4 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)** were sheltering in **155 UNRWA facilities** across all five governorates of the Gaza Strip, including in the north and in Gaza City. 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.
- **More than 1.2 million IDPs are sheltering in 98 UNRWA facilities in the Middle, Khan Younis and Rafah areas.**

The West Bank, including East Jerusalem

- On December 18, Israeli Security Forces (ISF) conducted a search and arrest operation in Far'a refugee camp, northern West Bank. Four Palestine Refugees, including two minors, were killed and three Palestinians were injured with live ammunition.
- On December 17, ISF search and arrest operation continued in Nur Shams refugee camp, northern West Bank until the early morning. ISF reportedly used bulldozers to damage the infrastructure of the camp. UNRWA operations in the camp were suspended.
- On December 17, ISF search and arrest operations in Tulkarm city and Tulkarm refugee camp northern West Bank continued until the early morning. Three Palestinians, including two women, were detained. UNRWA operations in the camp were suspended.

2. Overall situation

The Gaza Strip

- Between 7 October and the afternoon of **18 December** the Ministry of Health in Gaza has reported that **19,453 Palestinians** have been killed in the Gaza Strip, about 70 per cent of them are reported to be women and children, and over **52,286** have reportedly been injured.

The West Bank, including East Jerusalem

- According to OCHA, since 7 October 291 Palestinians, including 75 children, have been killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Of the dead, 281 Palestinians have been killed by ISF eight have been killed by Israeli settlers and a further two killed either by ISF or settlers.
- 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 between December 16–18. Further information will be provided once it becomes available.
- Different incidents have been reported impacting UNRWA installations and IDPs sheltering there. While verification of details and casualty figures are ongoing, initial reports indicate the following:
 - On 16 December **a child** sheltering in the Khan Younis Training Centre (KYTC) was injured as result of a stray bullet that directly impacted the shelter; additionally, a stray bullet directly hit the generator of the shelter's warehouse, and shrapnel fell in the same warehouse.
 - On 17 December, **a school** in Gaza city sheltering around **2,500 IDPs** sustained damage when it reportedly directly struck by a shell; **one IDP** sheltering in KYTC was reportedly injured as result of shrapnel falling; three **children** sheltering in a school at

Khan Younis were injured as a result of a wall directly struck; **two IDPs** sheltering in a school in Khan Younis were killed and several others were injured as result of nearby strikes.

- **183** incidents impacting UNRWA facilities and people inside them have been reported since the beginning of hostilities (some with multiple incidents impacting the same location) **55** different UNRWA installations were directly hit, and **62** different installations sustained collateral damage.

UNRWA estimates that in total at least **299** IDPs sheltering in UNRWA shelters have been killed and at least another **1,037** were injured since the start of the war. UNRWA continues to verify casualty figures due to incidents that impacted its installations.

4. UNRWA response

The Gaza Strip

UNRWA Shelters

- In total, **nearly 1.4 million displaced people are now sheltering in 155 UNRWA installations.**
- The average number of IDPs in UNRWA shelters located in middle and southern areas is **12,387, more than four times their capacity.**

Health

Eight out of 22 health centres are operational, however due to internet outages and what has been the fifth cut in telecommunications since the war began, we are not able to present the full results across the eight health centres. For December 17 cover only six of these health centres.

- Eight (out of 22) UNRWA health centres are still operational in the Middle and Southern areas, recording **8,656 patients visits between December 16-17** including Palestine Refugees and non-refugees.
- Midwives are providing care for post-natal and high-risk pregnant women at the eight operational health centres. There are an estimated 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza, with more than 180 giving birth every day. **A total of 206 post-natal and high-risk pregnancy cases were attended to at health centres.**
- **UNRWA continued to provide health care to IDPs at shelters through 97 medical teams.** Each team is composed of one - two doctors and a nurse. **480 health workers in health centres and shelters provided support to 19,009 patients.**

Psychosocial support (PSS)

Due to internet outages we are unable to provide any updates beyond 12 December.

- **UNRWA teams, including 284 social workers in the shelters, continue to provide psychosocial first aid and other specialized protection services to IDPs. Due to internet outages we are unable to provide updated figures. From October 7–12 December 101,211 IDPs were reached.**

Food security

- UNRWA continued to **distribute flour** outside of shelters in southern governorates. **A total of 112,733 families have been reached so far.**

Water and Sanitation Services (WASH)

- **Between 17 - 18 December, UNRWA operated six water wells pumping about 10,000 cubic metres of water to provide potable and domestic water.**
- Between 17 – 18 December solid waste management has continued in Rafah and Khan Younis, where approximately 130 loadings were transferred to temporary dumping sites. There remains a clear shortage of sanitation trucks.
- Shelters in Rafah and the Middle area continued to receive potable water through tankers from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility.

Quote from Amera Salem, 5-year-old from Gaza

"I dream of going back to my home and twirling around in my favorite dress."

ENDs -



UNRWA situation and response to the escalation in the Gaza Strip

IDPs in UNRWA installations

Confirmed IDP numbers, since 7 October – 13 December



Overcrowding means **486 people per toilet** in UNRWA Shelters in Rafah.

At least **299 IDPs** sheltering in UNRWA premises have been killed and **1,037 injured** since 7 October.

UNRWA fatalities and damage to installations



UNRWA response – Food assistance

112,733 families outside of shelters have received flour in middle areas and southern governorates since 21 Nov.

UNRWA response – Health

Between 17 - 18 Dec:
206 post-natal and high-risk pregnancy cases were attended to at health centres
19,009 patients received healthcare in eight (out of 22) UNRWA health care centres and UNRWA shelters.

UNRWA response – Water, sanitation and hygiene

Between 17 - Dec
6 water continue to operate pumping approximately 10,000 cubic metres of water.
Solid waste management continues in Rafah and Khan Younis, where **approximately 130 truck loadings** were transferred to temporary sites

* IDPs in the North and Gaza areas as of 12 October. UNRWA's ability to provide humanitarian support in the North and Gaza City has since been compromised and access to information including updates on IDPs numbers has since been hindered

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