



A boy walking next to scattered solid waste in a heavily damaged area of Gaza city. Photo by OCHA/Olga Cherevko, 25 April 2024

Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #158

26 Apr 2024

The OCHA oPt Flash Update is published every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, with an update on the West Bank included every Wednesday. The next update will be issued on 29 April.

Key Highlights

- The World Food Programme warns that without massive and consistent food assistance that can be delivered freely and safely, famine thresholds in Gaza will be breached within the next six weeks; this is the only way to halt famine.
- Sixty-five per cent of school buildings used as shelters for displaced people have been directly hit or damaged, highlights a new assessment by the Education Cluster.
- Rising temperatures are exacerbating the sanitation crisis and affecting more than 1.7 million internally displaced people who lack adequate shelter and the essentials for survival; one infant girl has reportedly died in Rafah from extreme heat.

Gaza Strip Updates

- Israeli bombardment from the air, land, and sea continues to be reported across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure.
- Between the afternoons of 24 and 26 April, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 94 Palestinians were killed and 139 injured, including 51 killed and 75 injured in the last 24 hours. Between 7 October 2023 and 14:00 on 26 April 2024, at least 34,356 Palestinians were killed in Gaza and 77,368 Palestinians were injured, according to MoH in Gaza.
- The following are among the deadliest incidents between 23 and 25 April:
 - On 23 April, at about 13:00, five Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when three houses were hit in western An Nuseirat Refugee Camp in Deir al Balah.
 - On 23 April, at about 23:00, three Palestinians, including a boy and two men, were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit in As Salam neighbourhood in eastern Rafah.
 - On 24 April, four Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when a group of people were hit near Abu Ureiban School in western An Nuseirat Refugee Camp.
 - On 24 April, at about 17:50, a woman and her two children were reportedly killed when a house was hit in Ash Shati' (Beach) Camp, west of Gaza city. The woman was a writer and poet.
 - On 25 April, at about 8:30, four Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when a group of Palestinians were hit near Wadi Gaza.
 - On 25 April, at about 0:10, six Palestinians, including a journalist, were reportedly killed and ten others injured when a house was hit near Deir Yassin school, in Al Junaina neighbourhood in eastern Rafah.

- Between the afternoons of 24 and 26 April, no Israeli soldiers were reported killed in Gaza. As of 26 April, 260 soldiers have been killed and 1,584 soldiers have been injured in Gaza since the beginning of the ground operation, according to the Israeli military. In addition, over 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, including 33 children, have been killed in Israel, the vast majority on 7 October. As of 26 April, Israeli authorities estimate that 133 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including fatalities whose bodies are withheld.
- Only 165 out of 392 dead bodies (42 per cent) recovered from Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis have been identified, the Palestinian Civil Defense (PCD) [reported](#) on 25 April. The remaining 227 bodies could not be identified, according to PCD, including due to changed body markings, mutilation, or significant decomposition exacerbated by the placement of some corpses in plastic bags at a depth of three metres. PCD called for an independent investigation, including the forensic examination of about 20 bodies reportedly believed to have been buried alive, adding that it has found three mass graves: one in front of the morgue, a second behind the morgue, and a third near the haemodialysis building. Referencing the reported discovery of mass graves at both Nasser and Al Shifa hospitals, the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) [called](#) for immediate action and expressed readiness to “support all efforts to protect and investigate mass graves and reliably identify human remains.”
- “There is reasonable evidence that all three famine thresholds – food insecurity, malnutrition, mortality – will be passed in the next six weeks” in Gaza, and some people are already dying of hunger, [warned](#) the Director of the WFP Geneva Office, Gian Carlo Cirri, in a press briefing on 24 April at the launch of the 2024 Global Report on Food Crises by the Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC). According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) system, famine occurs when: at least 20 per cent of the population in a given area have an extreme lack of food; at least 30 per cent of children suffer from acute malnutrition; and mortality due to outright starvation or the interaction of malnutrition and disease exceeds two people per 10,000 per day. After nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment, people in Gaza have exhausted all coping strategies to meet even their most basic food needs, stated Cirri; this includes eating animal fodder, begging, or selling their belongings to buy food. The famine threshold for acute malnutrition among children has already likely been surpassed in northern Gaza by mid-March and is projected to be breached in other areas of the Strip by May 2024, the GNAFC report [underscores](#). According to the Nutrition Cluster, 31 per cent of children under the age of two in northern Gaza suffer from severe wasting and more than 346,000 children under the age of five are at the greatest risk of malnutrition and preventable mortality. The only way to halt famine in Gaza is by “rolling out massive and consistent food assistance in conditions that allow humanitarian staff and supplies to move freely and people to access the assistance safely,” [stressed](#) WFP senior spokesperson Abeer Etefa in a briefing to the European Parliament on 24 April.
- Living conditions in Gaza are “already atrocious” and will only be exacerbated by rising temperatures, as access to fresh water remains scarce and the whole system of solid waste treatment has crumbled, [reported](#) the Spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General, Stéphane Dujarric, on 25 April. On 25 April, a five-month-old girl reportedly died in a tent in Rafah due to the extreme heat. Temperatures have reached 40 degrees Celsius and are expected to further increase as the summer advances, worsening an already critical sanitation crisis. “It is like living in a greenhouse,” a displaced man in Rafah told [UNRWA](#), describing conditions in the tent he shares with eight family members. Highlighting the enormity of the humanitarian crisis, UNRWA Communications Officer Louise Wateridge [explained](#) that makeshift shelters are everywhere in Rafah and “most families do not even have tents and are living under sheets of scrap plastic, doing everything they can to survive.” Beyond the daily struggle to find clean water and food, “there is a constant fear looming of what may or may not happen tomorrow,” Wateridge noted.
- Concerning the potential for an Israeli ground operation in Rafah, UN Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator (SHRC) for Gaza, Sigrid Kaag, [warned](#) the Security Council on 24 April that “such action would compound an ongoing humanitarian catastrophe, with consequences for people already displaced and enduring severe hardships and suffering” and that the UN’s ability to deliver would be “constrained.” All parties to the conflict must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including by taking constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects. This includes allowing civilians to leave for safer areas. Displaced civilians must also be allowed to return as soon as circumstances allow. Civilians must be protected regardless of whether they move or stay, and they must receive the essentials they need to survive – including food, shelter and health services.
- On 25 April, the Municipality of Gaza informed OCHA that it has recently received about 18,000 litres of fuel, enabling it to partially operate 20 water wells out of 75 wells in Gaza city for eight hours a day for a week. Earlier this month, the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) had reported that some 27,000 litres of fuel entered northern Gaza to operate 37 water wells serving some 320,000 people. Forty wells and 42,000 metres of water lines had been damaged since the onset of the hostilities, according to the municipality, and the remaining wells were forced to shut down due to the complete depletion of fuel, after the Israeli authorities cut off the electricity supply. This, coupled with the shutdown of the water line from Israel, which previously provided about a quarter of the city’s water needs, and the destruction of the city’s water desalination plant, has resulted in severe water shortages. In mid-April, PWA and the Municipality of Gaza [completed](#) the first phase of repairs to the water line from Israel and reported that additional network inspections and repairs need to be completed before water can be pumped. The municipality has issued an urgent call for the provision of fuel to restore the water supply, to avert health and environmental consequences of water cuts.
- Despite rising humanitarian needs, access constraints continue to significantly hinder the ability of humanitarian actors to reach people in need, particularly in northern Gaza. Between 20 and 26 April, 14 out of 23 humanitarian aid missions to northern Gaza were facilitated by Israeli authorities, one was denied, five were impeded (of which four were not fully completed), one was cancelled due to logistical constraints, and two remain pending as of the time of reporting. During the same period, out of 44 humanitarian aid missions to areas in southern Gaza that require coordination, 34 were facilitated by Israeli authorities, five were denied, two were impeded, two were cancelled due to logistical constraints, and one remains pending as of the time of reporting.
- A new [assessment](#) by the Education Cluster, based on satellite imagery collected on 31 March and 1 April, reveals a notable increase in the scale of damage and destruction of schools in the Gaza Strip compared with the 29 February analysis. Nearly 73

per cent of school buildings are now assessed to require full reconstruction or major rehabilitation to be functional again, up from 67 per cent previously identified as directly hit or damaged. In total, out of 563 school buildings, nearly 49 per cent (274) have been “directly hit” and 24 per cent (134) have been “damaged,” the majority in North Gaza and Gaza governorates and 29 per cent are UNRWA schools. An additional 17 per cent (96) of school buildings are classified as “likely or possibly damaged.” Among damaged schools, at least 59 have been destroyed, six of them in March 2024, and 39 have lost at least half of their structures. Schools have been affected multiple times, according to the assessment, with 33 facilities classified as “damaged” at the end of February being directly hit in March. Moreover, of the nearly 60 per cent of school buildings used as IDP shelters, some 65 per cent have been directly hit or damaged, with a marked increase in the number of such schools that have been directly hit as of 1 April compared with 29 February (130 vs. 90). The analysis also corroborates previous evidence gathered by the Cluster that “schools are being used for military operations by the Israeli Security forces including use as detention, interrogation centers and military bases.”

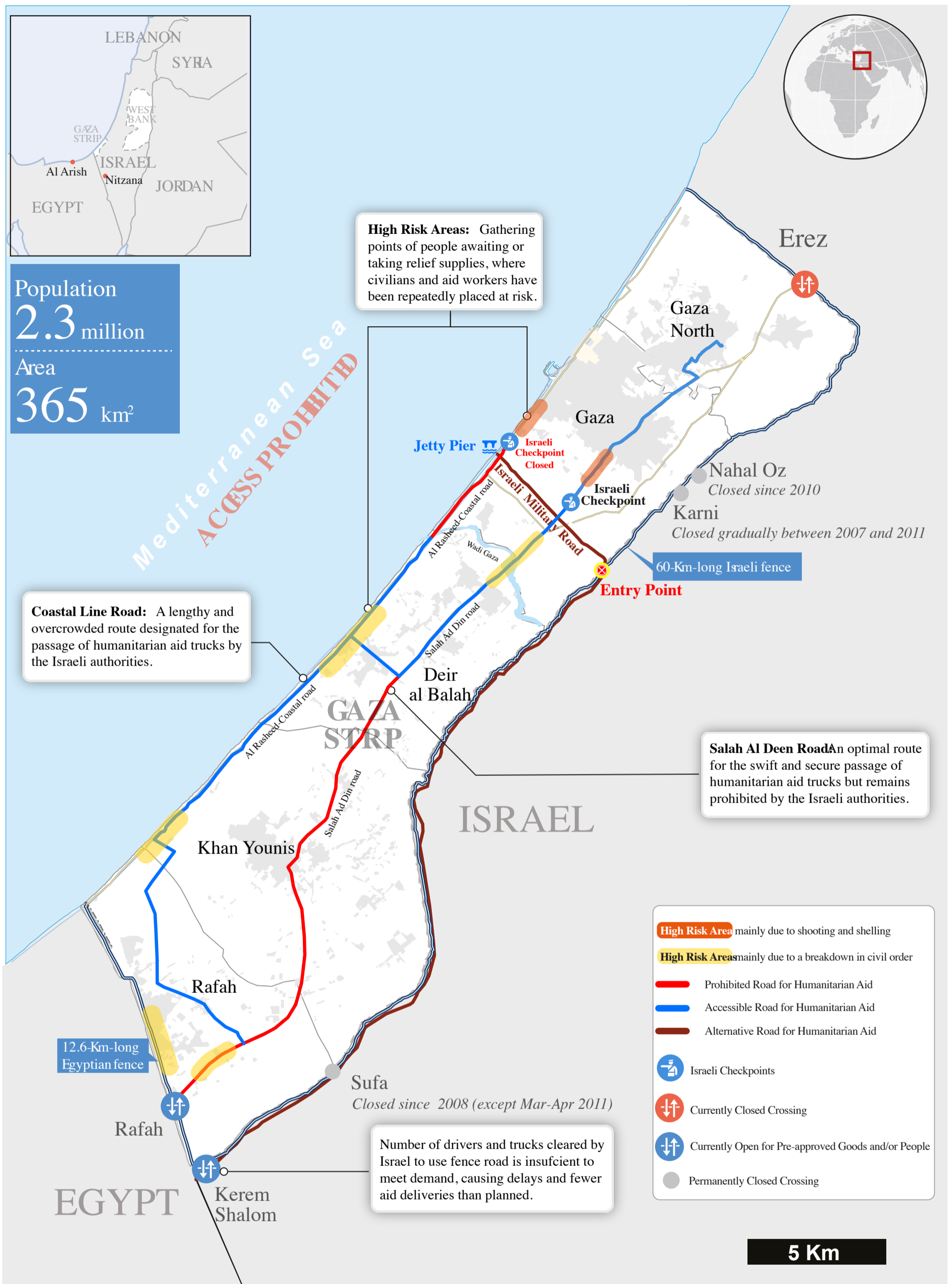
West Bank

- On 25 April, Israeli forces shot and killed a 16-year-old Palestinian boy with live ammunition in Ramallah city, later stating that this was in response to stone-throwing by Palestinians at them. During the operation, Israeli forces delivered at least one punitive demolition order against the house of a Palestinian accused of shooting toward vehicles travelling on Old Road 60, killing a Palestinian from East Jerusalem and a Palestinian citizen of Israel. Referring to this incident, Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCIP) stressed: “Under international law, intentional lethal force is only justified in circumstances where a direct threat to life or of serious injury is present. However, investigations and evidence collected by DCIP regularly suggest that Israeli forces use lethal force against Palestinian children in circumstances that may amount to extrajudicial or wilful killings.”

Funding

- On 17 April, the Humanitarian Country Team released a new [Flash Appeal](#) for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), which requests US\$2.8 billion to meet the most critical needs of 2.3 million people in Gaza and 800,000 people in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between April and December 2024. The figure reflects what is deemed most likely to be implemented over the next nine months, under access constraints and security challenges that limit the rapid scale-up of the humanitarian response, and represents only a part of the requirement that the UN and its partners estimate is needed to meet the scale of humanitarian needs across the oPt. This Flash Appeal replaces the previous appeal launched in October 2023 and extended until March 2024, which sought \$1.23 billion; roughly half of this amount was utilized in the last quarter of 2023 and the remaining half in the first quarter of 2024.
- The [oPt HF](#) has 118 ongoing projects, for a total of \$72.5 million, addressing urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (85 per cent) and West Bank (15 per cent). In light of the updated Flash Appeal, the HF has allocated an additional \$22 million to bolster prioritized HF-funded projects in Gaza to enhance the operational capacity of humanitarian partners as well as ensure the continuity and expansion of essential services amid escalating challenges. In the West Bank, the oPt HF has allocated \$5 million for key partners to enhance system readiness and responsiveness to sudden-onset emergencies. Since 7 October, the oPt HF has mobilized \$90 million from Member States and private donors, designated for programmes throughout Gaza. A summary of the oPt HF activities and challenges in March 2024 is available through this [link](#) and the 2023 Annual report of the oPt HF can be accessed [here](#). Private donations are collected directly through the [Humanitarian Fund](#).

For the Humanitarian Needs and Cluster Response Update for the period between 16 and 22 April, please visit: [Humanitarian Needs and Response Update | 16–22 April 2024](#). It is updated throughout the week to reflect new content.



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