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for every child

**UNICEF in the State of
Palestine
Humanitarian Situation
Report No. 1 on the recent
escalation**

Mohammed, 14-years old, carries mattresses and blankets while his family follows to an emergency shelter in the Gaza Strip.

Reporting Period: 7 to 12 October 2023 – at 14:00

Highlights

- Since the start of the escalation between Israel and the armed groups in the Gaza Strip on 7 October, at least 1,417 Palestinians, including 447 children, and over 1,300 Israelis, including children, are reported killed, and 6,268 Palestinians, including 1,531 children and 3,297 Israelis reported injured, including children.^{1 2 3}
- Large-scale grave violations against children have been reported in Israel and in the State of Palestine, including the killing and maiming of children, abductions, and attacks on civilian infrastructure and essential public services such as schools and health facilities.
- While the main humanitarian focus is on the Gaza Strip, currently under heavy bombardment, the situation in the West Bank remains tense, with confrontations between Israeli Forces and Palestinians continuing for a fifth consecutive day in multiple locations, leaving many killed and injured.
- UNICEF, to respond to urgent needs for safe drinking water in Gaza, has provided 5m³ of water treatment reagent to sustain the UNICEF-supported desalination plant providing water for 75,000 persons. UNICEF has further released medical supplies prepositioned in the Gaza Strip to hospitals, including medicines for at least 1,600 people. UNICEF response will continue to focus on responding to the needs of around one million children currently facing an urgent and pressing need for protection and humanitarian assistance.
- Despite the challenging humanitarian and security situation, UNICEF and its partners are actively present in the Gaza Strip to provide immediate live saving humanitarian support, including delivering medical supplies, fuel for the operation of critical Water, Hygiene, and Sanitation (WASH) facilities, water treatment essentials, and essential mental health and psychosocial support. UNICEF efforts also encompass closely monitoring grave child rights violations and providing child-sensitive humanitarian cash assistance.

Situation Overview

Since the start of the escalation on 7 October, large-scale grave violations against children have been reported in Israel and in the State of Palestine, including the killing and maiming of children, abductions, and attacks on civilian infrastructure and essential public services such as schools and health facilities. The hostilities have led to grave humanitarian consequences, with lives, homes, schools, medical facilities, and infrastructure damaged and destroyed.⁴

¹ Palestinian casualties are as of 14:00, 12th October (MoH Gaza).

² As cited in Israeli media 12th Oct. No official disaggregation of children. Some reported figures include both soldiers and civilians. As of 11th Oct, IF has identified 222 soldiers killed.

³ No disaggregated data is yet available on Israeli children killed and injured, but initial reports indicate many casualties among children.

⁴ Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lynn Hastings, on the hostilities between Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip and Israel.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, at least 1,417 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been killed⁵, including at least 447 children⁶, with 6,268 injured⁷, including 1,531 children.⁸ Almost 339,000 people are internally displaced within the Gaza Strip, sheltering in schools or with relatives. UNRWA has reported that 92 UNRWA schools are used as designated shelters, hosting more than 218,519 people⁹, while another 18 public schools run by the Palestinian authorities are sheltering more than 14,837 internally displaced people.¹⁰

Israeli sources reports that at least 1,300 Israelis have been killed and 3,297 injured. No disaggregated data is yet available on Israeli children killed and injured, but initial reports indicate many casualties among children. According to Israeli sources, between 100 and 150 Israelis, among them children,¹¹ have been captured and forcibly taken into the Gaza Strip.¹²

Attacks on education and health facilities are reported both in the Gaza Strip and Israel. Since 7 October, the World Health Organization (WHO) has documented 33 attacks that resulted in 11 fatalities and 16 injuries among healthcare staff and have affected 18 healthcare facilities and 20 ambulances.¹³ Additionally, at least 15 schools reportedly sustained direct or collateral damage in the Gaza Strip, and at least six health facilities in Israel sustained damage. The situation has reached dramatic levels. Fuel has run out, and the Gaza Power Plant is reportedly out of service as of the afternoon of 11 October 2023.

Additionally, the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remains tense. At least 27 Palestinians, including six children, were killed in various areas across the West Bank since 7 October 2023, and more than 130 are reported injured.¹⁴ Most of the checkpoints in the West Bank remained closed, further exacerbating movement restrictions on the population.

Humanitarian Needs in the State of Palestine

Before this renewed violence, 1 million children were in need of humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem – almost half the child population. In the Gaza Strip, more than 816,000 children were identified in need of mental health and psychosocial support following six rounds of armed conflict since 2008 and daily protection issues. This is compounded by the dire socio-economic and humanitarian situation, particularly that for children – resulting in increased vulnerabilities and a noticeable deterioration in the quality of people’s lives, including children.

The magnitude of the ongoing hostilities has led to grave humanitarian consequences¹⁵ and is further putting children in the Gaza Strip and their families at risk, as well as their access to essential basic services. Delivery of social services, including WASH and health, is impacted. The entry of food and fuel are also restricted.

The electricity cuts are affecting health services, in particular hospitals that now rely on backup generators. Some hospitals have enough fuel to last only four days. All health facilities struggle to provide adequate medical care without electricity, power medical equipment, and refrigeration for medicines. Additionally, the water supply to the Gaza Strip has been cut, affecting over 610,000 people, more than half of them children, and causing a severe shortage of drinkable water. The lack of safe water and the spread/overflow of wastewater can potentially lead to water-related diseases, also affecting the physical well-being of women and children.

⁵ As of 14:00, 12th October (MoH Gaza)

⁶ Children figures are as of 14:00, 12th October (MoH Gaza).

⁷ As of 14:00, 12th October (MoH Gaza)

⁸ As of 14:00, 12th October (MoH Gaza).

⁹ OCHA oPt - Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #5

¹⁰ Education Cluster update – 12 October 2023

¹¹ Including members of the Israeli forces, Israeli and foreign civilians, among them women and children.

¹² OCHA oPt - Escalation in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #5

¹³ OCHA oPt - Escalation in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #5

¹⁴ As of 17:30. 11th October (MoH)

¹⁵ Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lynn Hastings, on the hostilities between Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip and Israel.

All the education facilities in the Gaza Strip are closed for the fifth consecutive day, affecting over 600,000 children. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) online service and hotline services are operating at a limited capacity, with outreach services not an option due to the security situation.

Schools in the West Bank, both UNRWA and Palestinian Authorities schools, are open, employing a blended learning approach that combines distance and in-person education.

UNICEF initial humanitarian response

As the situation has intensified, the inter-agency contingency plan for the Gaza Strip was activated to facilitate coordination of the humanitarian response and address emerging needs, including displacement. UNICEF has been working with OCHA, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), and the Clusters on an initial response focusing on the Gaza Strip.

- UNICEF has released medical supplies prepositioned in the Gaza Strip to hospitals, including medicines for at least 1,600 people for one month.
- The UNICEF-supported desalination plant in the Gaza Strip remains the only operational plant at the moment and is providing water for at least 75,000 people. To sustain the operation of the plant and ensure the quality of produced water, UNICEF provided 5m³ of water treatment reagent.
- UNICEF also released 50,000 liters of fuel, previously prepositioned at different locations, to support the operation of desalination plants and wastewater treatment plants.
- Prepositioned WASH spare parts (fittings, pipes, etc.) were also released to support the immediate repair of damaged networks.
- As part of ensuring access to MHPSS and learning, UNICEF is releasing 500 recreational kits and 34,000 stationary kits, targeting children in the Emergency Designated Shelter (EDS).
- UNICEF also started to provide remote Psychosocial First Aid (PFA), MHPSS, and awareness on coping mechanisms to children and their families through existing partnerships.
- UNICEF is continuing to closely monitor the situation of children and grave violations while calling for an immediate ceasefire.
- UNICEF continues to fulfill its commitment and accountability to achieve effective humanitarian coordination through leading the WASH cluster, Child Protection Area of Responsibility, co-leading the education cluster, and the nutrition working group, under the health cluster.

UNICEF immediate planned response for the next 3 months

As part of the Inter-Agency flash appeal to be released soon, UNICEF's immediate response plan focuses on the delivery of life-saving interventions to the vulnerable populations in the Gaza Strip, including those taking shelter in schools. These include the following:

- **Health:** The UNICEF health response will continue to focus on the procurement and delivery of essential medical supplies, provision of fuel for hospitals and health facilities, and evidence-based community awareness raising on risks.
- **Nutrition:** UNICEF will support nutrition sector coordination, as well as screening and procurement of essential therapeutic supplies for malnourished children, alongside awareness-raising sessions with parents and caregivers.
- **WASH:** UNICEF will focus on rapid repairs to WASH infrastructure, provision of disinfectant and consumables for the operation of critical WASH facilities, provision of fuel for key water and sanitation facilities, and the provision of e-vouchers for vulnerable families to purchase hygiene kits.
- **Child Protection:** remote MHPSS assistance, monitoring grave child rights violations, and awareness raising on unexploded ordinance risks.
- **Social Protection:** child-sensitive humanitarian cash transfers, including referrals to health and MHPSS services.
- **Education immediate response:** recreational activities for child wellbeing, cleaning and rehabilitation of damaged schools used as shelters, teaching and learning materials, and remedial education.
- **Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)/ Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA):** UNICEF will continue to support three feedback channels (Inter-Agency hotline run by WFP; PSEA-safe hotline run by an NGO

partner; and a direct email to UNICEF SoP), with appropriate referral pathways for sensitive concerns including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). UNICEF will also scale up awareness-raising efforts and monitor feedback received through all channels to identify gaps and inform sectoral interventions within the response.

Coordination: UNICEF operates as part of the UN Country Team and the HCT and closely coordinates with other organizations and local partners. UNICEF also leads the coordination of the WASH Cluster and co-leads the Education cluster with Save the Children. Within the Protection Cluster, UNICEF leads the Child Protection Area of Responsibility. UNICEF is part of the Inter-cluster Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Technical Working Group. UNICEF also co-leads the Nutrition Working Group within the Health Cluster.

Funding: Before the recent escalation of hostilities, UNICEF Humanitarian Appeal for Children (HAC) for 2023, updated in July 2023, requested US\$ 23.8 million, out of which 47 per cent remains underfunded (US\$ 11.2 million). To respond to the recent crisis, UNICEF estimates an urgent need for an additional US\$ 17 million as part of the Inter-Agency Flash Appeal to be issued shortly¹⁶. Without sufficient funding, thousands of people, including children in desperate need, will not have access to essential social services, psychosocial support, and emergency supplies.

Who to contact for further information:

Lucia Elmi
Special Representative
+972 (0)2 584 0400
lelmi@unicef.org

Laura Bill
Deputy Representative
+972 (0)2 584 0400
lbill@unicef.org

Jonathan Crickx
Chief of Communication
+972 (0)2 584 0419
jcrickx@unicef.org

¹⁶ UNICEF will revise its 2023 HAC appeal to include additional urgent needs.