

The situation of children in Gaza

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Since the fighting began in Gaza in late December, nearly one-third of those killed have been children.

More than 1,600 children have sustained moderate to severe injuries, while many more are living in high stress and trauma-inducing conditions.

As children form the majority of the population of Gaza, they are heavily affected by the conflict. The normalcy of their lives has been disrupted as a result of the destruction of schools, homes, play areas and hospitals.

As an organisation for children with a permanent presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, UNICEF has been dedicated to delivering life-saving supplies of food, water and medicines to protect children's physical health. With six truckloads of emergency equipment waiting at the border and scheduled to cross into Gaza today, we are ready to respond to the urgent needs of children and their families. The distribution of bottled water, as well as emergency water and sanitation supplies, are also a priority to prevent epidemic outbreaks.

UNICEF is committed to helping the children of Gaza regain some sense of normalcy, including an eventual return to school. Education is a proven coping mechanism for children, and UNICEF will move as quickly as it can to rehabilitate school facilities in order for children to resume learning.

In addition to health and educational needs, UNICEF is also concerned about the mental well-being of children in Gaza, who may have deeper psychological wounds. UNICEF is preparing to send in teams of counsellors and mental health experts, in order to help children deal with the violence they have witnessed in the past few weeks.

But more needs to be done.

UNICEF is appealing for US\$ 20,000,000 to carry out a pre-planned program to aid children's recovery, in the areas of education; child protection and adolescent development; health and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene; and monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the conflict on children.

The needs of the children of Gaza cannot wait. Your support will make it possible for UNICEF to rebuild these children's lives and give them the childhood they deserve.
