

**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
(OCHA)****Situation Report on the Humanitarian Situation in the Gaza Strip – No. 11  
15 January 2009**

The following information is based on reports from member states, the UN Country Team for the occupied Palestinian territory, humanitarian partners and authorities involved in the humanitarian response.

**1. General Overview**

1. On 15 January, heavy shelling and air strikes led to an increased number of casualties. Residential areas, the UNRWA compound, three hospitals, a school and municipal buildings were hit. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) ground operation also advanced deeper into Gaza City (which has a population of 500,000 people), causing a large number of people to flee their homes in search of safety.

2. As at 1500 hrs (1300 hrs GMT) at least 15 rockets had been fired into Israel from Gaza on 15 January. There were no reports of injuries.

	<b>Total # since 27 December</b>	<b>#/% of total that are children since 27 December</b>	<b>#/% of total that are women since 27 December</b>
<b>Palestinian Fatalities*</b>	1,086	346 / 32%	79 / 7%
<b>Palestinians Injured*</b>	4,900	1,709 / 35%	724 / 15%
<b>Israeli Fatalities**</b>	13	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Israelis Injured***</b>	78	Unknown	Unknown

\* According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH), as of 15 January, not including those treated for shock.

\*\*According to Israeli Police Spokesman and Magen David Adom.

\*\*\* According to Magen David Adom, not including those treated for shock.

3. At 1000 hrs (0800 hrs GMT) on 15 January, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Gaza Training Centre, which is part of UNRWA's main compound in Gaza City, was hit by artillery shells. Shortly afterwards, the UNRWA Field Office, located in the same compound, was hit three times. These hits resulted in a high-intensity fire affecting UNRWA's workshop and warehouses, and destroying most of the Gaza Training Centre and part of the Field Office. UNRWA's fuel stocks in the compound were also burned as a result of the fire. Three people, at least one of whom was a staff member, were injured by shrapnel. Seven hundred Palestinians who had sought shelter in the compound were being evacuated to a nearby emergency shelter. UNRWA has suspended some of its operations in Gaza due to the incident.

<b>UN Casualties in Gaza since 27 December</b>	<b>Fatalities</b>	<b>Injured</b>
UNRWA Staff	5	5
UNRWA Contractors	3	4
WFP Contractors	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>

<b>Humanitarian Installations/Convoys</b>	<b># hit in Gaza since 27 December</b>
UN Buildings	49
UN Compounds	1
NGO Installations	1
NGO Compounds	Several
Convoys	4

4. Following a meeting with the Israeli Foreign Minister, the UN Secretary General re-emphasized that he believes from the talks in Egypt, “that the elements are in place for this violence to end now. The time has come for the violence to stop and for us to change fundamentally the dynamics in Gaza, and to pursue again the peace talks for a two state solution, which is the only road to lasting security for Israel”.

5. On 15 January, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs briefed the Security Council on the situation and latest developments in Gaza. The President of the Security Council informed that all Council members expressed grave concern at the situation of civilians on the ground and called for the full respect of international law, especially the protection of civilians. He also said that Council members believed that recent events in Gaza emphasized the need for the implementation of Resolution 1860. They also reiterated their support for the UN Secretary General's efforts to ensure that the Resolution is implemented.

6. ON 15 January, the Emergency Relief Coordinator briefed the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) on the latest developments and current situation in Gaza. UNICEF highlighted that children continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. ECHA members also highlighted the need for the inter-agency coordination of surge capacity so as to ensure an effective response to needs in Gaza. There was agreement that a common framework on early recovery should be defined.

**2.1 Coordination and Humanitarian Response**

**Gaza Crossings**

Crossing	Total crossings on 14 January	No. of total with humanitarian goods	Type of humanitarian goods
Kerem Shalom	105 trucks	40 trucks	Food items
Karni conveyor belt	closed	-	-
Nahal Oz pipeline	closed	-	-

**2.1. Protection**

7. On 15 January, the unilateral cessation of military activities by Israel was extended to four hours and took place between 1100-1500 hrs (0900-1300 hrs GMT).

8. At approximately 0900 hrs (0700 hrs GMT) journalists in Gaza City took refuge in the Al Shurouq tower, which houses the main local and international media outlets. The 13<sup>th</sup> story of the building was struck by a shell at approximately 1115 hrs (0915 hrs GMT); two journalists from Abu Dhabi TV were injured and fires damaged transmission facilities.

9. Given the level of shelling, UNICEF has raised concerns about the dangers posed, particularly to children, by explosive remnants of war (ERW) and unexploded ordnance (UXO). UNICEF is currently distributing a leaflet in Gaza on the prevention of injuries by ERW and UXO. UNICEF is also supporting two radio announcements in Gaza for parents: one on how to protect children during bombardment and shelling and one on how to provide emotional support to children during conflict.

**2.2. Food**

10. WFP updated that as of 14 January they had 3,400 MTs of food in stores inside Gaza (which is 75% of their storage capacity). However, it was noted that WFP can only access 66% of their food stores due to insecurity. A further 2,550 MTs of food is in Israel pending clearance for delivery into Gaza.

**2.3. Health**

11. The ICRC reported that, “medical and humanitarian facilities are becoming more and more exposed to the effects of the fighting”. The ICRC reported on 15 January that the Al-Quds Hospital, run by the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in Gaza city, “suffered at least one direct hit this morning,” causing a fire to break out and seriously damaging the facility. Before it was hit, 500 people had sought refuge in the hospital on 15 January; by 1800 hrs (1600 hrs GMT) the displaced people had been evacuated to an UNRWA emergency shelter. Al Wafa

Hospital, east of Gaza City, and Al Fata Hospital, west Gaza City, were also directly hit as well as three ambulances. One of two PRCS warehouses containing relief items was also hit on 15 January.

12. The ICRC reported that because Shifa Hospital in Gaza city receives most of the severely wounded patients from other hospitals in Gaza, its intensive care unit is overstretched. The hospital aims to transfer approximately 15 seriously wounded patients every day through the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

#### 2.4. Water and Sanitation

13. Critical water and sanitation infrastructure has not been repaired, leaving at least 500,000 people without running water and raising serious public health concerns related to exposure to sewage.

#### 2.5. Shelter and Non-Food Items

No. of people seeking refuge in UNRWA Emergency Shelters*	No. of UNRWA Emergency Shelters	Increase in number of people from 13 January
39,669	41	1,732

\*As of the evening of 14 January

14. There is a need for non-food items (NFIs) for the increasing number of displaced people within Gaza.

#### 2.6. Infrastructure, Fuel & Electricity

15. The ICRC reported that two of the three power lines bringing electricity from Israel into Gaza, which had recently been repaired, were damaged during fighting on 12 January.

### 3.0 International Assistance and Priority needs

#### 3.1. Funding

16. On 13 January, as part of the United Nations efforts to meet the rapidly growing humanitarian needs of civilians caught in the fighting, the Emergency Relief Coordinator allocated some seven million USD in funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to help jump-start life-saving humanitarian programmes in Gaza. The funding will be used to support UNICEF, UNRWA, and WFP, respectively, to provide: safe drinking water to as many as 200,000 people, including displaced civilians; fuel for the generators that power water pumping stations, hospitals and other municipal services in Gaza, and cash assistance to help civilians to rent alternative shelters, defray the costs of necessary services and purchase essentials such as food and basic household materials; and provide ready-made meals to 16,000 IDPs staying in UNRWA shelters.

17. The Humanitarian Country Team has re-visited projects proposed for the 2009 CAP (which appealed for over USD 462 million) to ensure that the projects, activities and priorities remained relevant to the ongoing emergency and increased the budget to USD 529 million.

18. To respond to the current urgent needs in Gaza, priority projects were identified in the following sectors: protection; shelter; food aid and food security; water and sanitation; agriculture; cash for work/assistance; education; health; and coordination and support services. Funding needs for the priority projects amounted to USD 117, of which USD 54 million has been committed or pledged as of 15 January. For the initial response plan and list of immediate funding needs, see:

[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_gaza\\_crisis\\_cap\\_funding\\_2009\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_gaza_crisis_cap_funding_2009_english.pdf)

19. In total, as of 15 January, donors have already committed or pledged over USD 60 million (in funding or in-kind contributions) for projects in the Consolidated Appeal and approximately USD 50 million to projects outside of the appeal (<http://ocha.unog.ch/fts/pageloader.aspx?page=emergencyDetails&appealID=834>). This information was compiled by OCHA, based on the information provided by donors and appealing organisations. All humanitarian partners including donors and recipient agencies are encouraged to inform FTS of cash and in-kind contributions to: [fts@reliefweb.int](mailto:fts@reliefweb.int).

### 3.2. Priority Needs

20. **Ceasefire:** Only an immediate ceasefire will be able to address the severe humanitarian and protection crisis that the population of Gaza is faced with.

21. **Protection:** Compliance with international humanitarian law is essential to enhance security for civilians within Gaza, allow civilians freedom of movement to reach lifesaving services, and for humanitarian actors to distribute assistance.

22. **Access:** A sustained re-opening of all crossings into Gaza is required to meet assistance needs. Improved humanitarian access into Gaza is also required for humanitarian staff, particularly for NGO staff. Increased security and improved access within Gaza is essential for civilians to reach lifesaving services, and for humanitarian actors to distribute assistance.

23. **Electricity & Fuel:** Much of the population of Gaza continues to live without electricity. Hospitals require fuel to run generators on which they rely; water and sanitation facilities require fuel to operate; and households and bakeries require cooking gas.

24. **Wheat grain:** Wheat grain is urgently needed for local bakeries and for humanitarian food distributions.

25. **Cash:** Cash has still not entered the Gaza Strip and is urgently needed, including for the Palestinian authority to pay civil servants, for the UNRWA cash distribution program to some 94,000 dependent beneficiaries, as well as its “cash for work” program, salaries for staff and payments to suppliers. The Palestinian Monetary Authority requested approval from Israel for a cash transfer of NIS 243 million (USD 62.9 million) and another USD 16 million from Palestinian banks in the West Bank to their branches in Gaza.

26. This situation report, together with further information on ongoing emergencies, is also available on the OCHA Internet website at <http://reliefweb.int>. A copy of the Field Update from the Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt can be found at:

[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_gaza\\_humanitarian\\_situation\\_report\\_2009\\_01\\_08\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_gaza_humanitarian_situation_report_2009_01_08_english.pdf)

### 4.0 Contacts

**OCHA Geneva - Humanitarian Affairs Officer**

Mr. Peter Neussl  
Tel: +41 (0) 22 917 15 11  
Email: [neussl@un.org](mailto:neussl@un.org)

**OCHA New York - Desk Officer**

Mr. Aurelien Buffler  
Tel: +1 347 515 4801  
Email: [buffler@un.org](mailto:buffler@un.org)

Ms. Olivia Tecosky  
Tel: +1 212 963 0363  
Email: [tecosky@un.org](mailto:tecosky@un.org)

**OCHA Geneva - Press Contact**

Ms. Elizabeth Byrs  
Tel: +41 (0) 22 917 26 53  
Email: [byrs@un.org](mailto:byrs@un.org)

**OCHA New York - Press Contact**

Ms. Stephanie Bunker  
Tel: +1 917 367 2549  
Email: [bunker@un.org](mailto:bunker@un.org)

**OCHA Office in the occupied Palestinian territory**

Mr. Philippe Lazzarini  
Tel: +972-2-582-996/ 5853  
Email: [Lazzarini@un.org](mailto:Lazzarini@un.org)

Ms. Allegra Pacheco  
Tel: + 972-2-582-996/ 5853  
Email: [Pacheco6@un.org](mailto:Pacheco6@un.org)

# Situation in Gaza Strip (as of 15 Jan 2009)

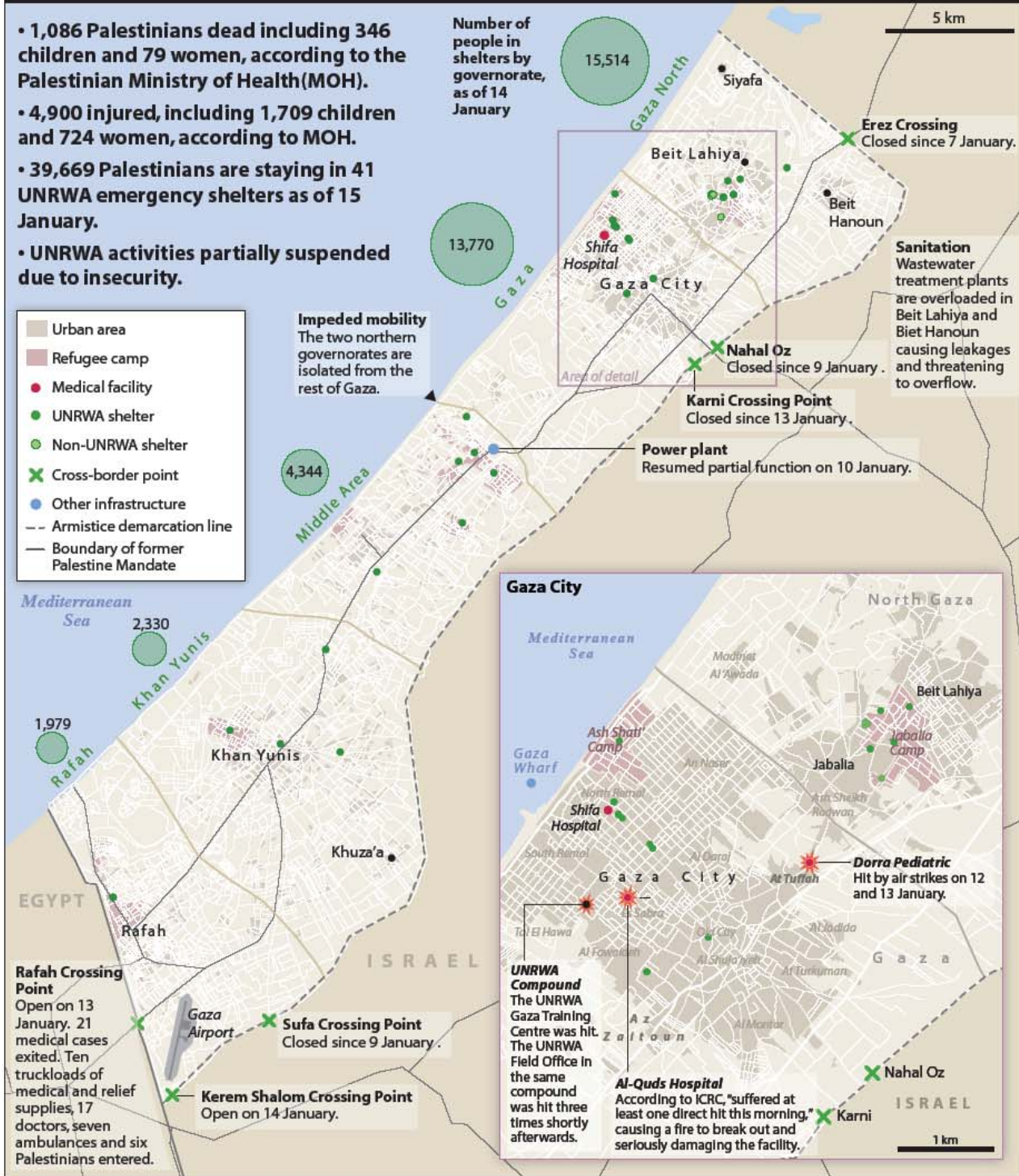
- 1,086 Palestinians dead including 346 children and 79 women, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health(MOH).
- 4,900 injured, including 1,709 children and 724 women, according to MOH.
- 39,669 Palestinians are staying in 41 UNRWA emergency shelters as of 15 January.
- UNRWA activities partially suspended due to insecurity.

Number of people in shelters by governorate, as of 14 January

- Urban area
- Refugee camp
- Medical facility
- UNRWA shelter
- Non-UNRWA shelter
- Cross-border point
- Other infrastructure
- Armistice demarcation line
- Boundary of former Palestine Mandate

**Impeded mobility**  
The two northern governorates are isolated from the rest of Gaza.

**Sanitation**  
Wastewater treatment plants are overloaded in Beit Lahiya and Biet Hanoun causing leakages and threatening to overflow.



**OCHA**

**Disclaimer:**

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on all maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

The data and information represented originates from public sources as indicated. OCHA makes every effort to use the latest available data and to ensure that its products are accurate, complete and timely, but no warranties are made to this effect. Comments are welcome to maps@reliefweb.int.

Creation date: 15 Jan 2009

Base map sources: UNCS, OCHA

Narrative and statistical sources:

OCHA, Field Update on Gaza from the Humanitarian Coordinator, 15 January 2009