

**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
(OCHA)****Situation Report on the Humanitarian Situation in the Gaza Strip – No. 12
16 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

- After heavy shelling and air strikes in Gaza on 15 January, a large number of civilians are now trapped in their homes, while thousands more are seeking refuge with host families and in UNRWA emergency shelters. In response to warnings from the Israeli army to evacuate their homes, many Palestinians are also fleeing to urban centres. Supplies of essential commodities such as food, cooking gas, water and fuel are at critically low levels, while water, sanitation and electrical infrastructure have all sustained further damage during the continued fighting.
- As at 1500 hrs (1300 hrs GMT) on 16 January, over ten rockets had been fired into Israel from Palestine. On 15 January, over 24 rockets were fired into Israel.
- Casualty figures:

	Total # since 27 December	# / percent of total that are children since 27 December	# / percent of total that are women since 27 December
Palestinian Fatalities*	1,155	370 / 32 percent	85 / 7 percent
Palestinians Injured*	5,015	1,745 / 35 percent	740 / 15 percent
Israeli Fatalities**	13	Unknown	Unknown
Israelis Injured***	84	Unknown	Unknown

* According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH), as of 1600 hrs (1400 hrs GMT) 16 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.

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

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

4. On the third day of the UN Secretary General's mission to the Middle East, he met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in Ramallah and called on Israel to unilaterally cease hostilities. He said he would exert his utmost efforts to realize that goal and underscored his full support for President Abbas's leadership.

2.1 Coordination and Humanitarian Response

Gaza Crossings

5. On 15 January, the Palestinian Petroleum Corporation reported that its office at Nahal Oz was damaged by Israeli bulldozers, though the fuel depots were not damaged.

6. In December 2005, an average of 631 trucks per day entered Gaza. In May 2007, 475 trucks per day entered. Since 27 December 2008, an average of 73 trucks per day crossed into Gaza at Kerem Shalom.

Crossing	Total crossings on 16 January	No. of total with humanitarian goods	Type of humanitarian goods	Total crossings on 15 January	No. of total with humanitarian goods	Type of humanitarian goods
Kerem Shalom	73 trucks (in)	12 trucks	Food items 150,000 litres of industrial gas for power plant	69 trucks (in)	39 trucks	Food items 150,000 litres of industrial gas for power plant
Rafah	21 doctors (in) 2 ambulances (in) 62 journalists (in) 10 trucks (in) 3 medical cases (out)	10 trucks		15 trucks (in) 5 doctors (in) 18 medical cases (out)	15 trucks	Food Medical Relief supplies
Karni conveyor belt	closed	-	-	closed	-	-
Nahal Oz pipeline	closed	-	-	closed	-	-

2.1. Protection

7. On 15 January, the unilateral cessation of military activities by Israel was instituted between 1000 – 1400 hrs (0800 – 1200 hrs GMT). According to the Israeli Joint Humanitarian Coordination Cell (JHCC), the timing of the lull changes daily for security reasons. The timing on each day will be announced over radio and television in Gaza.

8. For the first time since the Israeli operation in Gaza started, it was reported that a number of journalists crossed into Gaza through the Rafah crossing on 16 January.

9. The Israeli Defence Minister described the shelling of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) compound in Gaza as a "grave mistake". The head of the Israeli JHCC informed that the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) will investigate the 15 January bombing of and fighting in and around the UNRWA compound and Al Quds hospital. It was also updated by the JHCC that the IDF could produce markings for humanitarian facilities to help distinguish them during fighting.

10. On 16 January, a group of human rights and refugee protection agencies called for the facilitation of, "the immediate delivery of adequate humanitarian assistance to the civilian victims of this conflict...with the cooperation of Egypt and Israel..." and encouraged, "the U.S. in particular to take a more robust leadership position in securing an immediate ceasefire to mitigate this humanitarian disaster". Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on 16 January that, "Israel's use of heavy artillery in residential areas of Gaza City violates the prohibition under the laws of war against indiscriminate attacks and should be stopped immediately." It was further highlighted by HRW that, "firing 155 mm shells into the centre of Gaza City, whatever that target, will likely cause horrific civilian casualties." MSF compared the death rate since the Israeli operation began in Gaza to the, "Russian Army's December 1999 bombing of Grozny, the capital of Chechnya".

2.2. Food

11. Despite the incident on 15 January, UNRWA still operated ten food distribution centres and distributed rations to 696 households. WFP did not distribute food on 15 January but was able to distribute 5,600 kgs of bread on 14 January.

12. WFP launched Operation Lifeline Gaza on 16 January, which is a one-year emergency operation to provide food assistance to 100,000 people, which increases the total food assistance caseload to 365,000 (80 percent of the non-refugee population of Gaza).

2.3. Health

13. The health system continues to deal with mass casualties and the infrastructure was further compromised when three hospitals were hit during the fighting on 15 January. The ICRC noted that the damage caused by shelling of the Al Quds hospital on 15 January was, “completely and utterly unacceptable based on every known standard of international humanitarian law”. According to the Palestinian MoH, since 27 December, 13 medical personnel have been killed and 22 have been injured while on duty. Sixteen ambulances and 16 health facilities have also been damaged through direct or indirect shelling.

14. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society reported that they receive an average of 130 appeals per day to evacuate wounded individuals; however, Israeli authorities have not approved entry into several areas, particularly in northern Gaza, for several days. The ICRC, Médecins Sans Frontières and the Humanitarian Coordinator have publicly expressed their concerns regarding continued constraints to medical teams’ freedom of movement within Gaza, and the lack of respect of health facilities during fighting.

15. According to the UNFPA, an average of 150-170 babies are born every day in the Gaza Strip; since 27 December, an estimated total of 3,150-3,570 babies have been born in Gaza. UNFPA has expressed serious concern over reports of premature labour and delivery caused by shock and trauma related to the ongoing fighting. They expressed further concern regarding the exposure of premature and newborn infants to hypothermia, due to the lack of electricity. There are also concerns about access to medical facilities for those women who must deliver by c-section.

16. WHO reported that 37 of the 56 Palestinian MoH-managed primary health care centres and two NGO-run centres are functioning, however, there are major interruptions to services due to insecurity. WHO reported that there has been an interruption of treatment for approximately 40 percent of chronically ill patients.

17. According to the Israeli JHCC, Magen David Adom plans to open, by 20 January, a medical centre on the Israeli side of the Erez crossing, for the treatment of injured Palestinians.

2.4. Water and Sanitation

18. The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) has not been able to assess the impact of damage incurred at the Gaza City Wastewater Treatment Plant during the fighting on 15 January, though there are initial reports that a stream of sewage is flowing from the plant. The CMWU delivered 2,000 litres of fuel to the Beit Lahia Wastewater Treatment Plant which will allow it to function for one week.

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
Over 45,000 (including 25,300 children)	49	At least 4,331

*As of the evening of 14 January

19. UNRWA has opened eight additional emergency shelters each of which is accommodating approximately 1,000 people, which is twice their capacity. However, the majority of displaced people (the total number of which is unknown) are staying with host families.

2.6. Infrastructure, Fuel & Electricity

20. A significant portion of households do not have electricity, in particular those in Gaza City. During the fighting on 15 January, two electrical lines from Israel were damaged, as well as feeder lines from the Gaza Power Plant.

3.0 International Assistance and Priority needs

3.1. Funding

21. 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 (7) 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.

22. 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 remain relevant to the ongoing emergency and increased the budget to USD 529 million.

23. 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

24. In total, as of 16 January, donors have already committed or pledged over USD 80 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.

3.2. Priority Needs

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

26. **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.

27. **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.

28. **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.

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

30. **Cash:** Cash has still not entered the Gaza Strip and is urgently needed. A system must be established that ensures the regular and predictable monthly transfer of the necessary cash - not only for the international organisations to be able to deliver much needed humanitarian assistance, but also in order to pay the salaries of Palestinian Authority personnel.

31. 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

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