

Information Note – Thursday 15 January 2009- 7:00PM Jerusalem /Noon US EST

Source: UNICEF oPT

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE – CRISIS IN GAZA

CASUALTIES

According to the Ministry of Health on 15 January, total of 1055 people were killed and 5000 injured since the beginning of the Israel military operation in Gaza. According to MoH the number of children and women casualties since the beginning of the operation until 14 January were 322 children and 85 women killed and more than 1600 children and 678 women injured. The reason for the high increase in the death count is the identification of many bodies that were previously not identified or found under the rubble in areas previously not accessible.

According to the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, total of 720 rockets and mortars have been fired at Israel since the beginning of the Israeli military operation on 27 December until 14 January. According to OCHA, nine Israeli soldiers have been killed since 27 December. According to the Israeli Police Spokesman, Israeli civilian casualties stand at four dead and 58 injured.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS & IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON CIVILIANS

The Israeli military operation entered its 20th day. Aerial bombardment, artillery shelling and naval firing continued with Israeli ground troops advancing into populated areas on the outskirts of Gaza city. Pockets of population are trapped in their homes with aid organizations unable to access these communities. No news of temporary humanitarian cease-fire was reported today.

Israel military struck the UN compound today in Gaza Strip, wounding at least three people. The compound included the UNRWA HQ, other UN offices and a school which is currently giving refuge to displaced people.

CHALLENGES

Impossible to conduct rapid needs assessments due to insecurity; Israeli military inability to provide safe routes for the UN/ UNICEF to deliver urgently needed supplies, ultimately impacting UN response to the crisis in Gaza; security and lack of access to UNICEF warehouse due to ongoing fighting on the ground

UNICEF ACTION

Health/Nutrition- UNICEF will continue to provide basic essential supplements of vitamin A&D, iron folate to 45,000 infants and U5 children for those accessing the 35 out 58 MoH PHC centers and UNRWA clinics. To address the needs of up to 8,000 malnourished children, UNICEF currently supports two out of four Ard EL Ansan therapeutic treatment centers (two are currently working). UNICEF is also providing policy guidelines on infant and young child feeding practices in Emergencies including the use of breastmilk substitutes.

UNICEF is working with WFP, FAO and partners on food security and nutrition sector coordination. Plans are being made to conduct Rapid Nutrition survey and scale-up response with a focus on infant and young child nutrition, the needs of pregnant and lactating women, treatment of severe acute malnutrition and micronutrient supplementation.

Education- UNICEF met with MoE to discuss early recovery. The schools were scheduled to start on 17 January, however the recent military operation and shelling in Gaza has resulted in significant damage to schools' infrastructure and loss of equipment and stationary. UNICEF and partners are discussing interventions to assure that over 40,000 children in the first batch can start school by early February. It is impossible to currently assess the situation due to continuous fighting in Gaza.

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WASH- UNICEF as the cluster lead is coordinating remote needs assessment (getting information through households and NGOs on the ground).

CHILD PROTECTION and ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT/PARTICIPATION- UNICEF CP partners in Gaza are distributing 100,000 copies of a leaflet on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and UXO. In addition, radio spots for parents on how to protect children during bombardment as well as how to provide children with emotional support continued to be aired daily - 10 times /day on 4 radio stations in Gaza. UNICEF continues to provide support to a national NGO which runs a toll phone line providing one-on-one support to parents and children daily between 9:00AM-midnight.

Youth & Adolescent Development Participation programme in collaboration with Child Protection will be planning to establish 30 family centers from which women, children and youth can benefit. It will be a one stop shop to provide psychosocial support; where supplies such as mother and baby kits, family hygiene kits, recreational and early childhood development kits, blankets, winter clothes and shoes for children can be distributed as well as mine risk education activities can take place.

COMMUNICATION - Daily inputs are given to OCHA after receiving updates from programmes. UNICEF is also working with the Ministry of Health to issue a press statement on the importance of meeting the nutrition of infants and young children. UNICEF footage and photos are continued to be used by UN agencies, partners as well regional and international media outlets. Daily media/interview logs, directly or via Natcoms, with oPT and MENARO are available upon request. [**Please note and inform Natcoms and partners that UNICEF oPT shares new photos and videos of the Gaza emergency regularly with HQ- all available via DoC/New York](#)

SUPPLIES - No truck crossed to Gaza today as UNRWA had suspended the UN convoy inside Gaza due to insecurity and attack on UNRWA HQ in Gaza.

[UPDATE ON UNICEF RESPONSE- GAZA EMERGENCY](#)

WASH- UNICEF responded by providing 66,250 bottles of 1.5 litres to Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) for distribution to benefit 66,000 conflict affected person; as well as 500 family water kits for 5000 families of 6 people delivered to PRCS for distribution. PRCS distributed 50 water family kits for 6,000 persons. These kits were pre-positioned with the PRCS previously.

Health/Nutrition- UNICEF responded by providing 355 first aid kits (3,500 people), 20 resuscitation kits (200-300 persons), 13 emergency health kits sufficient for 10,000 people for a period of 3 months; two 12KVA generators given to UNRWA to support the blood bank preservation. To address the needs of at least 120 newborns/day to safe and clean delivery and 560 high risk pregnancy women per month, UNICEF provided 8 obstetric and midwifery kits sufficient for 400 deliveries. Given the interruption in the immunization services since 27 December, UNICEF ensured vaccine security through maintenance of cold chain system through the provision of 10,000 L3 fuel tanks. UNICEF is coordinating with MoH and the Food Security/ Nutrition cluster, to harmonize and map out partners' capacity to deliver, to harmonize technical guidelines on nutritional supplements and ready to use therapeutic foods to maximize impact for children and women.

Child Protection – As an initial and rapid response, 100,000 copies of a leaflet on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and UXO were printed and distributed in Gaza CP partners. In addition, two radio spots for parents on how to protect children during bombardment and shelling as well as how to provide children with emotional support are being aired daily. UNICEF continues to provide support to a national NGO which runs a toll phone line providing one-on-one support to parents and children daily between 9:00AM-midnight.