

Information Note – Friday 16 January 2009- 6:00PM Jerusalem /11:00AM US EST

Source: UNICEF oPT

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE – CRISIS IN GAZA

The UNRWA compound was hit on 15 January by the Israeli military, therefore impacting the UN coordination for delivery of supplies to Gaza. UNICEF supplies are stored in UNRWA warehouses; but the damage to UNRWA building had no impact on these supplies. However, no trucks entered Gaza today and the distribution of supplies has not taken place as usual in the last two days due to that attack.

CASUALTIES

According to the Ministry of Health on 15 January, a total of 1055 people were killed and 5000 injured since the beginning of the Israel military operation in Gaza. Also according to MoH the number of children casualties since the beginning of the operation and until 14 January was 322 killed and more than 1600 injured. With no cease-fire yet, the civilian population continues bearing the brunt of the escalation in violence, with children especially vulnerable.

According to the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a total of 771 rockets and mortars have been fired at Israel since 27 December and up to 16 January, resulting in four dead and 285 wounded.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS & IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON CIVILIANS

Twenty one days have passed since the beginning of the Israeli operation in Gaza, resulting in massive destruction of homes, schools, health facilities and the displacement of 40,000 people, who have sought refuge in UNRWA's 40 emergency shelters, mostly located in Gaza City and North Gaza.

CHALLENGES

Movement within the Gaza Strip is extremely dangerous due to the military operations and it has become increasingly difficult for humanitarian organizations to assess needs and distribute aid.

UNICEF ACTION

Health/Nutrition- UNICEF local partner in Gaza, Ard El-Insan, resumed work at two UNICEF supported therapeutic centers in Gaza and Khan Younis, providing food to moderately and severely malnourished children.

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- According to UNICEF's local partner, Al Mezan NGO, as at 14 January, 59 schools in Gaza have been damaged from strikes. UNICEF and partners are discussing interventions to assure that children can start school by early February. It is impossible to currently assess the situation due to continuous fighting in Gaza.

In Israel, two schools have also been hit by rockets fired from Gaza (Save the Children Alliance Fact Sheet 15 January 2009)

WASH- As the cluster lead, UNICEF is coordinating remote needs assessment (getting information through households and NGOs on the ground). UNICEF is also finalizing the list of emergency supply requirements for Gaza

CHILD PROTECTION and ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT/PARTICIPATION (ADAP) –

Child Protection

As an initial and rapid response, 100,000 copies of a leaflet on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and UXO are currently being distributed through UNICEF CP partners in Gaza. In addition, two radio spots for parents on how to provide children with emotional support continue to be aired daily - 10 times /day on 4 radio stations in Gaza.

UNICEF also provides support to a national NGO, Palestinian Centre for Democracy and Conflict resolution (PCDCR), which runs a toll phone line providing one-on-one support to parents and children daily between 9:00AM-midnight.

ADAP

A response to Gaza emergency is being elaborated with local NGO partner Pyalara. In addition, the assessment of the status of UNICEF supported Centers in Gaza is ongoing through local NGO partners, Ma'an and Tamer. The assessment includes the needs for supplies, reconstruction of the centers and other items required for the community outreach.

A meeting has been held with Handicap International who will provide a list of children and youth who have been disabled by the current conflict, so that UNICEF can include them in the psychosocial response planned in the Family Centers as soon as access is granted.

UNICEF has been informed by Tamer that two of UNICEF's supported adolescent centres in schools have been affected by the conflict. One school- TalAIRabei' girl school has been damaged by continuous shelling, the other Shuhada' Jabalia Boys school has been taken over by the Israeli military forces and is being used as a base for their tanks and ground forces.

Monitoring and Evaluation- A monitoring plan has been developed to track UNICEF's compliance with the Core Commitment for Children in its response plan and activities in Gaza. This will facilitate the measurement of the outputs/outcomes and will provide inputs to donor reports and lessons learnt. The unit is also assisting with preparation of rapid needs assessments. The sectors (Education, Child Protection) and clusters (WASH) are obtaining information on the needs in Gaza through phone calls to households, NGOs, Gaza-based staff, OCHA situation reports, and media. It is not possible to conduct a formal rapid needs assessment but OCHA is planning for one as soon there is access. Assessment of new partners in Gaza is also underway. The standard NGO/CBO assessment form has been revised and shared with MENARO to accelerate the process. As of today, 15 new NGOs have been identified.

COMMUNICATION - UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Health, WHO and other partners to issue a press statement on the importance of meeting the nutrition of infants and young children. Daily inputs are given to OCHA after receiving updates from programmes. Footage, photos and information on WASH related human interest story has been shared with DoC for the global website. UNICEF footage and photos are continued to be used by UN agencies 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 – See first paragraph