

Gaza Crisis, UNICEF oPt External Information Note

17 February 2009



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Palestinian children playing in front of an UNRWA school where they and their families took shelter during the hostilities.

Facts and figures

- Total population of Gaza: 1,417,000. The total number of children in Gaza is approximately 793,520, or 56 percent of the population. (PCBS). The population density in Gaza is 3,881 people per square kilometer (OCHA).
- At the height of the crisis, an estimated 90,000 people were displaced including those in shelters and with host families. As at 16 February, the total number of displaced persons is unknown; however, three non school UNRWA emergency shelters remain open in Gaza, hosting 359 people including 200 children (OCHA).
- Children account for roughly a third of the dead and wounded. 1,440 Palestinians were killed during the hostilities, of whom 431 are children and 114 are women. This number does not include those who have died due to lack of access to regular health care. The number of injuries still stands at 5,380, of whom 1,872 are children and 800 are women.
- Three Israeli civilians were killed and 183 injured since 27 December by rocket and mortar fire by Palestinian militants from Gaza.

General overview

Humanitarian agencies have faced unprecedented denial of access to Gaza since 5 November. Humanitarian access remains unreliable and restricted. Violent incidents continue to undermine the Gaza ceasefire.

Health/Nutrition

According to WFP's market survey on 15 February, fresh and dry foods are available in Gaza, however, accessibility of red meat, poultry meat and eggs remains an issue due to high prices due to shortages of animal feed. Until the resumption of the cash economy and employment, Gazan families will continue to depend on food aid and cash assistance. UNICEF is concerned that the nutritional status and general health of children in Gaza is likely to deteriorate given these conditions and due to the lack of access to clean tap water.

UNICEF Response

A UNICEF-supported MMR campaign targeting 120,000 students in grades 8 and 9 began Saturday, 14 February, at the Ministry of Education and UNRWA schools in Gaza. The campaign includes awareness sessions about infectious diseases, and each student will receive a dose of Vitamin A. The campaign ends March 2 and is implemented by both the Ministry of Health and UNRWA.

UNICEF continues supporting the distribution of fortified biscuits (294,650 boxes) in 300 preschools targeting 80,000 preschool children aged 3-5 years old, in collaboration with the MoH and MoEHE.

Education

Access restrictions to Gaza continue to hinder efforts to support education in Gaza. In addition to the continued shortage of drinking water in schools, children are lacking education and recreation materials. School repairs, education supplies and psychosocial support for children remain a priority in the education sector.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

As at 16 February, according to figures from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) in Gaza, 50,000 persons are still completely without access to piped water and an additional 100,000 receive water only every 7-10 days. Although emergency repairs to the water network are ongoing, the access restraints on urgently needed spare parts are greatly hindering major repairs.

UNICEF response

UNICEF continues to support the CMWU in carrying out emergency repairs of the water network in Gaza. UNICEF will in the coming days support CMWU in repairing pipes and fittings, as well as purchasing sodium hypochlorite for disinfection. This project will benefit a total of 50,000 people in getting access to the drinking water.

In the next week, UNICEF is planning to engage in emergency water delivery by tankers and deliver 2,000 hygiene kits through its partner organization, Oxfam. The water tankering services will benefit up to 25,000 people, including 6,000 children. The 2,000 hygiene kits in the pipeline for distribution include 1000 baby hygiene kits, 400 family hygiene kits and 600 family water kits, benefiting approximately 2,000 families in need in Gaza.



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A Palestinian boy helps his family collect water in southern Gaza.

Child Protection/Adolescent Development and Participation

UNICEF response

Since the beginning of the emergency operations, UNICEF has reached out to some 1,725 children through recreational sessions organized by community based organizations. Psychosocial support has been provided to 400 beneficiaries using a toll free number operated by a UNICEF partner. In addition, 2,460 care givers have been provided with support to deal with distress amongst children.

Adolescent friendly learning spaces continue to provide support to targeted adolescents through recreational activities in 21 different locations.

Funding

In the inter-agency Gaza Flash Appeal, which was launched on 2 February, UNICEF requested a total of \$34.5 million for activities in support of Gazan children and their families over a nine month period and received so far \$6,263,602 equal to 18% of the total requested amount.

The breakdown of the requested and received funding per sector is as follows:

UNICEF requested \$3,736,355 for activities in the Health sector and has received \$1,896,191, as well as \$432,000 in pledges. Overall, percentage funded in UNICEF's Health Section is a total of 62%.

UNICEF requested \$2,400,000 for activities in the Nutrition sector and has received \$351,186. Overall, the percentage funded in UNICEF's Health Section is a total of 15%.

UNICEF requested \$6,510,000 for activities in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector and has received \$2,176,661, as well as \$500,000 in pledges. Overall, percentage funded in UNICEF's Health Section is a total of 41%.

UNICEF requested \$9,792,300 for activities in the Education sector and has received \$727,513. Overall, percentage funded in UNICEF's Health Section is a total of 7%.

UNICEF requested \$12,151,520 for activities in the Child Protection sector and has received \$1,112,051, as well as \$600,000 in pledges. Overall, percentage funded in UNICEF's Health Section is a total of 14%

Communication

New UNICEF photos and video from Gaza are available to be used by UN agencies, partners, and international media outlets. To request photos, please contact: photo@unicef.org; to get videos, please visit: thenewsmarket.com/unicef.