

Information Note – Thursday 22 January 2009- 5:00 PM Amman / 10:00 AM US EST

Source: UNICEF MENARO

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE –GAZA

CASUALTIES

Figures provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) stand at 1,314 Palestinians killed and 5,300 injured during the twenty two days of fighting. This includes 412 children and 110 women killed, and 1,855 children and 795 women injured as at 19 January. More bodies are being discovered in areas previously inaccessible and new figures are expected early next week.

Nine Israeli soldiers were killed during the operation. According to the Magen David Adom national society (Israeli equivalent to Red Cross and Red Crescent Society), Israeli civilian casualties stand at four, and 182 injured - four critically injured, 11 moderately injured and 167 lightly injured since 27 December.

On the morning of the 22nd, Israeli troops fired and injured a child east of Gaza City near the border. Four Palestinians were injured today by shell fire from an Israeli gunboat reportedly firing at Palestinian fishermen on the Gaza coast. Two Palestinian children were killed on 20 January by unexploded ordnance in Az Zaitoun.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The ceasefire has entered its fifth day. Israel withdrew the last of its forces in the early hours of 21 January.

Extensive destruction has been caused to homes and public infrastructure throughout the Gaza Strip, with many families losing their entire possessions (MoH).

OCHA reports that an estimate of up to 90,000 has been displaced, including up to 50,000 children. Preliminary findings from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) indicate the complete destruction of over 4,000 residences, partial destruction of 17,000 buildings, and 25 schools, hospitals and universities. The Ministry of Health (MoH) and WHO report that 34 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed in direct or indirect shelling.

Electricity coverage is still only 8-12 hours a day.

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes arrived in oPt on the 21 January on a five-day mission to review humanitarian needs in Gaza. Today he visited the Gaza Strip and met with residents and UN staff.

An OCHA-coordinated inter-agency Rapid Needs Assessment was to take place in Gaza on Sunday and Monday. However, this will probably take place a week on Monday once a Security Risk Assessment is completed. UNICEF will take part in the assessment team, pending security clearance. The UNDP-led Early Recovery Assessment is also awaiting clearance from the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). Meanwhile, the Rapid Assessment team is collecting information through a network of UN staff and partners in Gaza.

WHITE PHOSPHOROUS – The Israeli media reported that the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have acknowledged it used two types of ammunition containing phosphorous during its operations in Gaza. Accordingly, the IDF is investigating the misuse of one of these types in Beit Lahiya.

UNICEF ACTION

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EDUCATION – On 22 January, UNICEF supplied the Ministry of Education (MoEHE) with 12,000 water bottles for 12,000 school students.

UNICEF has requested the police to clean schools from unexploded ordnance, however the campaign has not yet started. UNICEF is advocating for the clearance of schools, clinics and youth centres.

All schools (governmental and UNRWA-operated) in Gaza are to start on 24 January. Teachers and head teachers reported back to school on 21 January. Schools will work in two shifts to accommodate additional students, whose schools were completely damaged.

A Rapid Needs Assessment for education is being finalized.

Health and Nutrition – On 22 January, UNICEF supplied Ministry of Health (MOH) with 20 midwifery kits and midwifery supplies sufficient for 100 deliveries for at least one month; 400 first aid kits for 4,000 people; 24 surgical kits for 2,400 patients; and 102 resuscitation kits sufficient for 100,000 patients.

On 21 January, UNICEF supplied the MOH with Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) drugs sufficient for 40,000 children for a period of six months.

With UNICEF support, an important vaccine storage facility in Gaza is now functional, and routine vaccines will be available until March. Vaccines are being provided in 34 clinics as normal, and access for patients has improved. UNRWA is working with UNICEF to immunize all children in Gaza. Vaccines and hormones are kept in a proper condition and are being secured within each district, sufficient to run the services for one month². The main MoH warehouse (drugs and vaccines) has fuel reserve, sufficient for at least 5 days.

UNICEF in coordination with WHO commenced a rapid health assessment for Primary Health Care (PHC) settings and hospitals including premises, staff, supplies, ambulances to be concluded Tuesday next week. Out of 56 (PHC) clinics, 54 are functional at 90 per cent capacity. The remaining two PHC clinics in Beit Lahia and Zaytoun area were severely damaged and are not operational.

Antenatal clinics, school health programme, health education programme and nutrition monitoring surveillance resumed their work at 60 per cent capacity.

Today 22 January, the two UNICEF-supported therapeutic centers in Gaza and Khan Younis are working at full capacity to provide services for 180 malnourished children and their mothers on a daily basis.

WASH – On 22 January, UNICEF distributed 1,800 basic hygiene kits to two NGOs, reaching 18,000 people.

As sector lead, UNICEF carried out today, a WASH coordination meeting with UN agencies, INGOs and NGOS, with the participation of the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) in Gaza. The CMWU initial rapid assessment report showed that damages to the water sector (water networks, waste water networks, water wells, pressure lines) amount to a total of \$3.5 million.

UNICEF has also disbursed \$50,000 to Gaza's water utility for rapid repairs to the water network. Since 18 January, CMWU technical teams have been working to assess and repair

damage to the water and sewage networks. CMWU announced that repairs have brought back running water to 100,000 people in Gaza.

On the 21st, UNICEF delivered six trucks of family hygiene kits to Gazans, and over 1,300 water purification tablets went into Gaza to provide safe drinking water for 30,000 people over the next three months.

CHILD PROTECTION and ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT/PARTICIPATION (ADAP) –: UNICEF ADAP partners in Gaza, MAAN and TAMER, are finalizing their rapid assessments of the Youth/Adolescent centers. Maan runs 20 centres and Tamer 8 centers. Two tents were delivered to MAAN for activities to resume in two of the damaged adolescents learning centers while assessments carry on.

UNICEF is raising awareness around the dangers of unexploded ordnances (UXO). Two radio spots on the protection of children from UXOs are being aired on four different radio stations. A mine action meeting took place today in Ramallah, to discuss and coordinate future plans. UNICEF has also ensured that 100,000 copies of a leaflet on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and UXO are being distributed throughout Gaza.

UNICEF continues to support 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 and midnight.

UNICEF has been asked by the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) to prepare a report on child rights violation during the Gaza crisis. This report will be part of many inputs for a final document on grave violations committed against children during the recent conflict.

COMMUNICATION – UNICEF's regional Goodwill Ambassador Mahmoud Kabil today visited wounded Palestinian children in Egyptian hospitals close to the Gaza borders. New UNICEF photos and video from Gaza are continued 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

SUPPLY - Today two trucks with UNICEF supplies went into Gaza: one carrying 14,400 water jerry cans from Amman; the other with 232 basic family water kits procured by the oPt office.