

Information Note – Friday 23 January 2009- 10:00 PM Amman / 3:00 PM US EST

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HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE –GAZA

OVERVIEW:

The ceasefire, declared on the 18 January, entered its sixth day. Extensive destruction was caused to homes and public infrastructure throughout the Gaza Strip, with many families losing their entire possessions (MoH).

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 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that an estimated 90,000 people have been displaced, including up to 50,000 children. Around 49,693 have taken refuge in at least 50 shelters provided by UNRWA. Following the cease-fire, many displaced persons started leaving the emergency shelters to join other family members' homes or, to the extent possible, back to their own homes.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) and WHO report that 34 health facilities were damaged or destroyed and 16 ambulances were damaged in direct or indirect shelling. Since 27 December 2008, 16 health personnel were killed and 22 injured while on duty, according to the MoH health information centre in Gaza.

During the conflict, 49 UN buildings sustained damage (OCHA).

Schools are closed and many children have not been able to leave their homes due to the danger/fear of unexploded ordnance (UXO).

Electricity coverage is still of only 8-12 hours a day. The water and sanitation system is under extreme duress.

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 also injured 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 UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes visited Gaza on the 22 January on a five-day mission to review humanitarian needs in Gaza.

UNICEF will take part in an OCHA-coordinated inter-agency Rapid Needs Assessment 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.

Once assessments are completed, an inter-agency appeal on Gaza is expected to be launched early February.

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**EDUCATION**

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

As schools (governmental and UNRWA-operated) in Gaza are to start on 24 January, UNICEF has alerted the MOE on the issue of unexploded ordnance (UXOs) and has requested the police to clean schools from UXOs. UNICEF is advocating for the clearance of schools, clinics and youth centres.

Teachers were called to conduct an assessment of schools, and the education authority at the directorate level is conducting a rapid assessment.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

All MoH hospitals have declared that the emergency status declared on 27 December remains intact, as many injured patients are still hospitalized.

UNICEF is providing ongoing child survival and immunization support and scaling up integrated maternal and child illness services, psychosocial support and nutrition aid.

UNICEF and UNRWA are working together to immunize all children against Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) in Gaza. 56 Primary Health Centres (PHC) managed by the MoH and another 18 managed by UNRWA have all resumed childhood vaccination programmes. 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.

Assessments are underway to evaluate immediate health needs and damage to health facilities. UNICEF in coordination with WHO commenced a rapid health assessment for PHC settings and hospitals including premises, staff, supplies, ambulances to be concluded Tuesday next week. The MoH in Gaza is conducting a needs assessment and has asked each hospital to assess

damages. UNICEF is also working with partners to identify storage capacity for the pre-positioning of medical and other needed supplies all over the Gaza Strip.

On 22 January, UNICEF supplied the 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. Antenatal clinics, school health programme, health education programme and nutrition monitoring surveillance resumed their work at 60 per cent capacity.

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

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.

WASH

UNICEF has activated the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene inter-agency group to coordinate response in these sectors.

UNICEF disbursed \$50,000 to Gaza's water utility for rapid repairs to the water network. The initial rapid assessment carried out by the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) in Gaza and other humanitarian actors found that damages to the water networks, wells and waste water system amount to a total of \$3.6 million.

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

The assessment of youth centers by UNICEF ADAP partners in Gaza, MAAN and TAMER, are almost finished. Out of 28 youth centers, 3 have been destroyed, some centers sustained minor damages. Two tents were delivered to MAAN for activities to resume in two of the damaged adolescents learning centers.

Partners in the psychosocial sector will conduct home and hospital visits starting Saturday.

UNICEF is leading the mine risk awareness operation. Two radio spots on the protection of children from UXOs are being aired on four different radio stations. UNICEF has also ensured that 100,000 copies of a leaflet on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and UXO are distributed throughout Gaza. The NGOs MAG and Handicap International are responsible for risk assessments and clearance, and the Police Explosive Unit have started the marking/clearance of UXOs. A toll free number has been created for reporting on UXOs.

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 yesterday 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 no trucks were allowed into Gaza.

Yesterday 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.

FUNDING

UNICEF has requested \$20 million in humanitarian funding for the Gaza crisis. Funds received so far include \$143,062 from the UNICEF National Committee in Finland and \$73,100 from the UK National Committee. Today the Government of Japan announced that it will fund UNICEF's health, water and sanitation activities in Gaza with \$3 million as the first government donation in response to UNICEF's Gaza appeal.