

Information Note – Wednesday 21 January 2009- 5:00 PM Jerusalem / 10:00 AM US EST

Source: UNICEF oPT

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE –GAZA

CASUALTIES

Figures provided by MoH are 1,314 killed (412 children and 110 women) and 5,450 injured (1855 children and 795 women) as at 19 January. No new figures were provided today as more bodies are being discovered in areas previously inaccessible. New figures are expected early next week.

Nine Israeli soldiers have been 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, while four have been critically injured, 11 moderately injured and 167 lightly injured since 27 December.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The unilateral ceasefire has entered its fourth day. ICRC stated that since the ceasefire took effect in the Gaza Strip, the scale of the devastation and the need for humanitarian aid has become ever more apparent.

<http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/palestine-update-200109?opendocument>

Media sources report that while the Israeli military has pulled out of Gaza, the Israeli naval vessels are in Gaza's territorial water and continue to control the air space.

The UN Country Team (UNCT) has planned two assessment missions: an OCHA coordinated Rapid Assessment, and a UNDP led Early Recovery Assessment. Two assessment teams are due to enter Gaza pending security clearance and access. Meanwhile, the Rapid Assessment team has already started collecting information through a network of UN staff and partners in Gaza.

The first Early Recovery meeting was called by UNDP in Gaza today. The following agencies will cover the different sectors:

- Education: UNICEF and UNRWA
- Health: WHO, UNRWA, and UNICEF
- Water, hygiene and infrastructure: UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank
- Shelter, housing and infrastructure: UNDP, UNRWA, and UN Habitat (youth centers and kindergartens included)
- Protection (governance and security) and community safety: TBC
- Psychosocial services: UNICEF (child protection), UNRWA, WHO, UNFPA, and UNIFEM
- Macro economy: UNDP and World Bank
- Food security, livelihood and income generating activities, including agriculture livestock and fishery: WFP, FAO, UNDP, UNRWA, WHO and UNICEF (nutrition)
- Environment, rubble clearance, and UXOs: UNDP, UNICEF and WHO

UNICEF ACTION

Education - UNICEF staff in Gaza conducted a visit to two schools in the Tel Al Hawa area. The school semester for 440,000 UNRWA and government operated schools, including 343 government schools, will be on 24 January instead of early February. Under normal conditions, schools should have opened on 17 January. UNICEF provides support to government schools through educational, teacher and recreational kits. Teachers and heads of schools reported to work today as part of the preparation. Some schools will function in two shifts to accommodate students from schools, which were destroyed during the military operation.

Health and Nutrition - UNICEF is working with the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) and UNRWA in starting the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) campaign, targeting 120,000 students at UNRWA and government run schools.

The nutrition monitoring surveillance system has been resumed with 50% capacity as of 20 January.

Two Ard El Ansan therapeutic centers, supported by UNICEF, are providing services for 120 malnourished children per day reaching about 3,600 children monthly. Prior to the conflict each centre served 5,000 children every month.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): In the immediate aftermath of the ceasefire, UNICEF disbursed an initial \$50,000 to the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) in Gaza to support urgent repairs, including the local water and damaged sewage networks.

Out of the 4,343 family hygiene kits that entered Gaza yesterday, 650 kits are being distributed to 650 displaced families sheltered in UNRWA schools (in Khafa and Khan Younis), and 1,000 kits to affected communities in Beit Hanoun and Gaza City through local NGO partners. The remaining kits will be distributed to displaced persons hosted with families once these beneficiaries are identified by NGO partners.

CHILD PROTECTION and ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT/PARTICIPATION (ADAP)

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.

Two new UNICEF radio spots on mine risk education will be aired as of today in four local radio stations in Gaza. UNICEF has ensured that 100,000 copies of a leaflet on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and UXO are being distributed throughout Gaza.

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 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.

COMMUNICATION – Upcoming videos will cover UNICEF supported Adolescent centres and the opening of the second semester of schools in Gaza. Please see the global website for new videos, audio and text stories. Daily media/ interview logs, directly or via UNICEF National Committees, with oPT and MENARO are available upon request. UNICEF oPT continues to share new photos and videos from Gaza with HQ - all available via DoC/New York.

Supply- Due to the nature of the emergency and depending on the types of items, UNICEF is looking into NGO assessments of procurement capacity. UNICEF is exploring new channels of distribution such as a new local transporter on the ground and expanded warehousing capacity.