A child receives a vaccination in the northern Gaza Strip. © UNICEF-SoP/2025/Nateel

# Gaza Strip | West Bank

## Situation Update and Humanitarian Response

**UNICEF State of Palestine**

*5 February 2026*

unicef for every child

## CHILDREN IN THE GAZA STRIP CONTINUE TO FACE EXTREME HEALTH RISKS DESPITE SOME IMPROVEMENTS SINCE THE START OF THE 10 OCTOBER 2025 CEASEFIRE

### Health Situation Update

- Since 7 October 2023 until 3 February 2026, **71,803 Palestinians** have been reported killed in the Gaza Strip, including at least **21,289 children**. Additionally, **171,230 Palestinians** were reported injured, including 44,500 children. Since the start of the ceasefire on 10 October 2025 until the end of the year, **529 Palestinians** were reported killed, including more than **120 children**, and 1,184 Palestinians were reported injured. Children continue to be killed and injured during air strikes and fire along the so-called “Yellow line”.
- At least **11 children** have reportedly died from hypothermia this winter, including a two-month-old baby and a one-year-old child, underscoring the deadly impact of exposure to cold conditions without adequate shelter.
- **No hospital is fully functional** in the Gaza Strip, while 50 per cent (18/36) of hospitals are partially functional. Among primary healthcare centres, 1.5 per cent (3/200) are fully functional and 46.5 per cent (93/200) are partially functional.[1]
- **Respiratory infections**, acute **watery diarrhoea**, and **skin infections** are the most common illnesses. Respiratory infections are rising, including severe cases requiring hospitalization.
- **Preterm and low birthweight deliveries** have sharply increased, with hospitals seeing roughly **one in five newborns** requiring intensive neonatal and thermal care, as maternal malnutrition, chronic stress and limited antenatal care worsen pregnancy outcomes.[2]
- **Humanitarian health missions** inside the Gaza Strip continue to face regular access restrictions, mission denials, damaged road networks, limited warehouse capacity, and restrictions on bringing in basic supplies and medical equipment, such as respirators, ventilators, incubators.
- The extensive damage to the infrastructure related to water, sanitation and waste management, the **restrictions in bringing in supplies**, the resulting poor hygiene conditions worsened considerably by harsh winter conditions are leaving almost the entire population of the Gaza Strip **exposed and vulnerable to public health risks**.

### Impact on Children and Families

The **health crisis** in the Gaza Strip is not driven by a single shortage but by **a convergence of hazards**: collapsed services, critical supply impediments, restrictions on and de-registration of INGOs, unsafe water and sanitation, overcrowded shelters and winter exposure. Together, these conditions accelerate the transmission of communicable disease, compromise maternal and neonatal outcomes, and overwhelm an already severely reduced care capacity.

The widespread destruction of health facilities, coupled with overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions, has over the past two years led to outbreaks of diarrhoea, hepatitis A, acute respiratory infections, and circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (CvDPV2), re-emerging 25 years after its elimination in the Gaza Strip. **Malnutrition and illness further compound one another**, rendering otherwise common infections life threatening for young children.

**All children** in Gaza **require mental health,** and **psychosocial support services** after two years of horrific war, displacement, and exposure to traumatic events.

More than 11,000 children are estimated to have **serious injuries requiring long-term rehabilitation** and likely to lead to permanent disabilities, 4,000 need **urgent medical evacuation** for advanced care unavailable within the Strip, highlighting the catastrophic collapse of the health system.

# UNICEF HEALTH RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS – GAZA STRIP & WEST BANK

Working with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, WHO, and UNRWA, UNICEF supported a 10-day *second catchup* immunization round for children under 3 years across all Gaza governorates. Vaccines and cold chain supplies were prepositioned in advance; the campaign ran through **129 fixed sites** and **seven mobile teams**, staffed by **175 vaccination teams** and supported by **250 community mobilizers** to help families find the nearest point and bring their children safely. Below are the provisional results figures of the vaccination campaign, as of 30 January:

## Vaccination Catch-Up Campaign in the Gaza Strip, 18-29 January 2026

- **Most targeted children reached:** 15,689 children under 3 were vaccinated in nine days – **about 87 per cent** of the total target (17,892). This exceeds the reach of round one (14,288).
- **Children now back on schedule:** 12,719 children (about **81 per cent** of those vaccinated) are now **up to date** with their routine immunizations.
- **Catching up those who missed doses:** Teams found and vaccinated **2,901** children who had **missed earlier appointments** ("defaulters"), reducing the pool of unprotected children.
- **Protection against the biggest risks:** Among defaulters, teams administered **1,541 polio doses**, **1,426 rotavirus doses**, and **1,395 measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) doses** – closing immunity gaps against paralysis, severe diarrhoea, and MMR.
- **Reaching the hardest to reach: 60 "zero-dose" children** (children receiving **their very first vaccine**) were identified and vaccinated – a critical step to prevent outbreaks in crowded settings.
- **Access made easier for families:** Services were delivered through a **mixed network of fixed and mobile points**, so caregivers in displacement sites or damaged neighbourhoods could find a nearby option the same day.
- **Community engagement in action:** A network **of 253 community mobilizers** engaged with local influencers to build trust (**over 5,200 religious and community leaders**) and inform caregivers (over **323,000 caregivers**) and increase awareness about the vaccination campaign. Their efforts included identifying defaulters, removing access barriers, providing reminders and directions, and supporting the safe and timely vaccination of all eligible children, including the most vulnerable.
- **Strong partnership at every step:** The campaign was coordinated by **MoH–WHO–UNRWA–UNICEF**, with **vaccine and logistics distribution** completed beforehand so sites opened with supplies in place.

## Highlights of other UNICEF Response in the Gaza Strip (selection)

- Restoration of essential **life-saving paediatric intensive care services** at the Al Shifa Hospital, Gaza City. Seven hospital beds have been re-established and equipped with ventilators, monitors, and oxygen delivery systems. Together with the four **life-saving paediatric intensive care unit** (PICU) beds at the Patient Friendly Hospital, the number of PICU beds now reaches 11. This is in addition to the 55 **neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)** beds that UNICEF established in 2024.
- An additional **seven UNICEF-supported nutrition facilities** were established in January, bringing the total to **203**. This scale-up strengthened the life-saving nutrition response by improving access and timeliness for vulnerable children and pregnant and breastfeeding women, particularly in hard-to-reach areas.
- UNICEF launched a Gaza-wide Back to Learning campaign and managed to bring **Recreational Kits** to the Gaza Strip for the first time in over two years. These supplies, plus Early Childhood Development Kits and Education Kits, will support children's learning, wellbeing, and resilience. Since Thursday, 15 January, 5,168 recreational kits have entered the Strip, supporting more than 375,000 children – including 1,000 children with disabilities.
- **UNICEF and partners are supporting over 135,000 children to resume learning** through temporary learning centres – a critical linkage to provide mental health and psychosocial support, that also connect children to nutrition, child protection, health and sanitation services.

## UNICEF Health Response in the West Bank – Recent activities

- **Upgrading primary healthcare:** To strengthen and climate proof the health system, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health completed the **design phase** and launched the bidding for renovations of **five Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities**. Once completed, these centres will serve **21,000 people (41 per cent children**) with improved maternal, newborn, child health and immunization services.
- **Keeping the vaccine cold chain running:** To safeguard vaccines during power cuts and emergencies, UNICEF delivered and installed **20 generators** in health facilities in **Tulkarem and Jenin**, ensuring reliable backup power for cold chain operations.
- **Expanding clean energy for health services:** UNICEF is supporting the **solarization of 16 PHC facilities** across **10 governorates**, helping to ensure uninterrupted essential services. These centres serve more than **15,000 children and their caregivers**, strengthening both resilience and sustainability.
- **Mobile clinics reaching isolated communities:** UNICEF, with a partner, continues to bring essential primary healthcare to **10 marginalized communities** in the Nablus and Jenin areas. Each month, mobile teams reach **over 4,000 people**, including **2,000+ women**, and provide maternal, newborn, child health and Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) services to **650 boys** and **550 girls**.
- **Strengthening early learning through play:** UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development and a local NGO partner, completed a **3-day Training of Trainers** on the *learning through play* approach using LEGO kits. **20 participants** from health, education and social sectors across **eight governorates** took part.

## FUNDING NEEDS

UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal for 2026 requires US$ 673.8 million to meet the urgent needs of children and their families in 2026. As of now, only 1.4 per cent of the appeal is funded. UNICEF urgently requires an additional US$ 664.6 million to scale up life-saving assistance.

| Funding Needs | Funding Received | Funding Gap (excluding carry-forward from 2025) |
|---|---|---|
| USD 673.8 million (100%) | USD 9.3 million (1.4%) | USD 664.6 million (98.6%) |

## STORY: REACHING EVERY CAREGIVER, PREVENTING ILLNESS IN EVERY CHILD

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In every neighbourhood of the Gaza Strip – from Rafah's crowded shelters to the narrow alleys of Gaza City – parents spent the past days making the same choice: to bring their children for vaccination. And behind that simple act stood one of the largest community engagement efforts UNICEF has led in the Strip. The goal was not only to inform, but to listen, guide and support families through the uncertainty of displacement, cold weather and disrupted services so that every child under three could stay healthy.

For many caregivers, their first source of information was a voice they already trusted: the UNICEF-supported social mobilizer who visits their area week after week. In the first five days alone, **95 per cent** of caregivers said they had heard about the campaign – through door-to-door visits, mosque announcements, radio jingles, social media messages, vehicles with loud public-address systems, and megaphones echoing through damaged streets and banners marking clinic entrances. These reminders mattered. They helped families understand where to go, what to bring and why catching up on vaccines could prevent outbreaks later, and ultimately save a child's life.

**253 mobilizers, coordinators and supervisors** walked from tent to tent and shelter to shelter, conducting more than **2,100 community engagements**, reaching over **204,000 caregivers**, including **116,000 women**. They answered questions, addressed fears and referred children who had missed their doses – more than **2,770 defaulters** and **57 zero-dose children**, each one personally guided to a vaccination point. In some areas, mobilizers carried tape measures and MUAC bands, screening **703 children** for malnutrition and identifying those needing follow-up, including children with disabilities.

This work is not about a single moment or a single child. It is about ensuring that, even in the hardest conditions, families are supported, informed and accompanied – and that every child, no matter where they live or how many times they've been displaced, has the chance to stay healthy and free from vaccine-preventable diseases. UNICEF's community engagement network turns that promise into reality every day.

## WHAT UNICEF IS CALLING FOR

- **Unrestricted entry of essential Health and Nutrition supplies and critical medical equipment** – including respirators, ventilators and incubators – as well as the means to **rebuild warehouse and logistics capacity** to ensure reliable storage and distribution.
- **Scale up the reconstruction of primary health-care facilities in the Gaza Strip**, restoring services to pre-conflict levels, and transitioning towards permanent, resilient health infrastructure.
- **Expand neonatal and paediatric intensive care capacity**, with an increase in fully equipped beds and improved referral and care pathways.
- **Maintain nutrition services for the identification, early detection and prevention of stunting (chronic malnutrition)**, including improved screening, nutrition services and continuous monitoring.
- **Strengthen immunization services** through restoration of the entire Gaza cold chain including innovative solarization mechanisms in place, expand sites offering full immunization services, improve tracking, monitoring systems and continued outbreak preparedness activities.

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For additional information, please refer to UNICEF's reports here. For further inquiries, please contact:


**Jonathan Veitch**
Representative
UNICEF State of Palestine
jveitch@unicef.org

**Ettie Higgins**
Deputy Representative
UNICEF State of Palestine
ehiggins@unicef.org

**Tom White**
Emergency Manager
UNICEF State of Palestine
twhite@unicef.org

**Jonathan Crickx**
Chief of Communication
UNICEF State of Palestine
jcrickx@unicef.org


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[1] Health Cluster Dashboard, and Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS) assessments.
[2] UN Information Service Geneva Press Briefing, Illnesses, Infections and Storms: Gazans Facing Another Harsh Winter.