



Children gather at a water truck to fill bottles with clean drinking water, 14 April 2021. © UNICEF/UN0463032/EI Baba

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Urgent Flash Update

State of Palestine
16 May 2021

Escalation in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Israel

HIGHLIGHTS

- As of 16 May 2021, 58 Palestinian children have been killed and 313 injured following seven days of intense exchange of rocket fire and airstrikes between Palestinian militants and Israeli Forces. Two Israeli children have been killed and five more injured.
- Following heavy bombardments in Gaza, it is reported that at least 38,000 people have moved to shelter in UNRWA schools.
- 40 schools and four health facilities in the Gaza Strip have suffered damage as a result of the intense hostilities. Three schools are reportedly damaged in Israel.
- UNICEF is implementing and scaling up humanitarian interventions in response to the immediate needs, focusing on Gaza and with targeted activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. UNICEF is providing Child Protection, Health, and WASH for those in acute need.
- As part of the immediate response UNICEF is supporting the emergency repair to damage of water and sanitation infrastructure and has released medical supplies sufficient for 72,000 people for the health system in Gaza. More supplies will be released in the coming hours. UNICEF with Child Protection partners are reaching most vulnerable children with Psychosocial First Aid, and provision of legal assistance to children detained in East Jerusalem.
- In addition to the 2021 HAC appeal, UNICEF requires \$7.7 million in total, to respond to immediate needs (\$3.5 million) and for preparedness measures for three months (\$4.2 million) as result of this recent escalation.

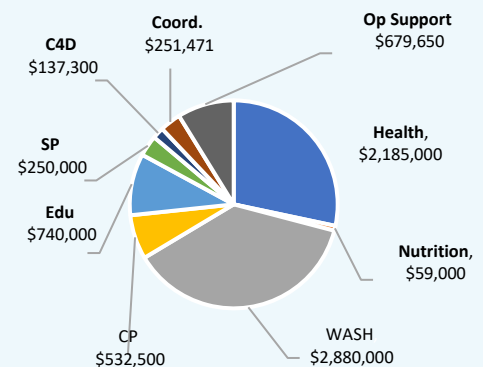
SITUATION IN NUMBERS (as of 16 May)

60 **children killed** (58 Palestinians and 2 Israelis)
318 **children injured** (313 Palestinians and 5 Israelis)
38,000 **internally displaced** in Gaza
43 **schools damaged** (40 in Gaza, 3 in Israel)
4 **health facilities damaged** in Gaza
325,000 **need WASH** services in Gaza
250,000 **children need MHPSS** services in Gaza

WORST-CASE SCENARIO

2 million **people affected** (1.9 Gaza and 100,000 WB)
Up to 600,000 **displaced**
15,000 **injured**

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS



SITUATION OVERVIEW

The current military escalation between Israeli Forces (IF) and Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (WB), including East Jerusalem (EJ), has resulted in significant injuries and loss of life on both sides as well as displacement in Gaza. Violence is now widespread and is also affecting mixed Arab and Israeli communities in Israel. The protracted protection crisis in the State of Palestine has, as a result of recent escalations, taken a gravely violent turn with alarming consequences on children. The Palestinian Ministry of Health has reported a total of 1,235 people injured in the Gaza Strip as of the afternoon of 16 May, with additional injuries expected from the continuing escalation. At least 55 Palestinian children were reportedly killed as of the afternoon of 16 May, of which nine have been verified by UNICEF to be children between the ages of 2-16, and 33 children reportedly injured as of the night of 15 May. 10 Israelis were also killed and hundreds injured by the rockets fired from Gaza, and as of 14 May there have been at least two Israeli children killed and five injured. Verification is underway for other reported violations against all children in all affected areas.

Heavy bombardment in Gaza since 13 May has also led to at least 38,000 people reportedly seeking shelter in 48 schools and Designated Emergency Shelters (DES). In addition, several thousand persons have been displaced and are living with relatives and host communities.

There are reports of 40 schools and three health facilities damaged in the Gaza Strip due to the escalation. Three schools are also reported to have been damaged inside Israel. Damage to water and sanitation infrastructure in the Gaza Strip has also been reported limiting the distribution of water and damaging sewage networks.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Overview: The State of Palestine continues to experience a protracted humanitarian crisis related to the political situation, the ongoing socio-economic and fiscal crisis and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has left 2.45 million Palestinians increasingly vulnerable to violence, hardship and lack of essential services and therefore in need of humanitarian assistance. To respond to these urgent humanitarian needs, UNICEF issued a humanitarian appeal for children (HAC) for 2021 with a requirement of US\$21.6 million to enhance response and preparedness capacities and continue and expand support to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children, adolescents and women. The current escalation adds to existing vulnerabilities, and will likely increase trauma, poverty, vulnerability, long lasting trauma and loss of livelihoods exacerbating an already dire situation. This urgent flash update complements the existing UNICEF 2021 HAC for the State of Palestine and includes the latest developments and reflects the additional humanitarian needs associated with them. The Gaza inter-agency contingency plan developed in August 2020 and updated in May 2021 has been officially activated and as such, this update is in alignment with the contingency plan and the work of the Humanitarian Country Team. Furthermore, there is also a West Bank inter-agency contingency plan developed in December 2020 that this is also referred to.

Based on preliminary government and cluster assessments in Gaza and hospitals in East Jerusalem, this update is to address the immediate needs of the affected populations and adopt essential preparedness measures for three months to ensure continuity of humanitarian assistance. Nonetheless, considering the field developments and potential transformations, including escalation and extension of the crisis, preparedness measures are to ensure required capacities are in place to address the potential emerging needs in the field. This appeal is not covering the exigencies of the worst-case scenario in the inter-agency contingency plan, but the situation will continue to be monitored and thus this urgent flash update is subject to revision.

Sectoral Needs

WASH: Deterioration of the water production capacity in Gaza due to electricity shortages from damaged power lines and destruction of water and sanitation facilities means an estimated 325,000 people in the Gaza Strip, out of whom 165,000 are children, will require humanitarian assistance to access safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Water utilities such as the Northern and Southern Gaza Desalination Plants and wastewater treatment plants East of Bureij and East of Khan Younis have had to cease operations due to staff safety concerns, which is impacting water distribution and treatment.

Child Protection: Trauma and fear, characterized by increased noise from rockets and missiles, injuries, widespread destruction and the loss of lives as a result of the escalation, has heightened the need for mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS). Estimates are that 250,000 children are in need of MHPSS services in Gaza, with up to 98,000 children in the West Bank in need of MHPSS. In the West Bank and particularly in East Jerusalem, heightened tensions centering around the Sheikh Jarrah evictions and the Old City area resulted in, as of 11 May, significant numbers of Palestinians injured, including 54 children. As of 15 May, 26 Palestinian children were arrested and detained by Israeli Forces, with UNICEF providing legal assistance and

psychosocial support to those affected. There is a need to continue access to these protection and prevention interventions in East Jerusalem strengthening the existing partnership with local civil society organizations already.

Health: The current escalation risks worsening an already poor health situation in the Gaza Strip, where the struggling health sector is further burdened by a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. If the situation continues to escalate, with larger numbers of people displaced, it will further increase the risk of spreading COVID-19 and impact vaccination efforts. Of immediate concern is the likely shutdown of the Gaza Strip's sole power plant due to lack of fuel, with negative consequences on hospitals' and health facilities' capacities. Maternal and child health services have also been disrupted and significant numbers of pregnant and lactating women and new born babies would need special consideration. The WHO Health Emergency team have conducted a rapid needs assessment in the field clinics set up by the first responders in East Jerusalem, which determined preliminary priority needs lists for the provision of medical health supplies for two hospitals, amounting to US\$ 578,000.

Education: As of 16 May at least 40 schools have been affected and/or damaged in Gaza and three schools reportedly damaged in Israel. Verification of these reports will be conducted once the security situation permits. The escalation has affected 591,685 school age children in Gaza Strip, including 286,743 who attend UNRWA schools. A further 21,300 education staff are also affected. Due to COVID-19, schools in the Gaza Strip have been closed since 8 April and education is being provided through distance learning approaches. Children in West Bank are learning through a blended learning approach that combines distance and face-to-face learning. East Jerusalem schools re-opened fully face-to-face but are at risk of closure if the current escalations are prolonged. In Gaza, if escalations are to continue at this pace, it is unlikely that face-to-face learning will resume before the end of academic year in mid-June 2021, and school children will also require psychosocial support and counselling.

Coordination UNICEF is a key member of the Humanitarian Country Team and leads the WASH Cluster and co-leads the Education Cluster with Save the Children. UNICEF also leads the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP-AOR) and it plays an important role in the Emergency Communication Center in Gaza.

UNICEF RESPONSE TO DATE

WASH: UNICEF pre-positioned essential operations and maintenance materials for the desalination plant, including fuel for three days of dedicated generator operations and water treatment chemicals. UNICEF has also pre-positioned emergency water purification tablets, water testing kits, 12 emergency collapsible tanks and 15,000 jerry cans for storage purposes that are ready to be deployed by partners when needed to reach 20,000 people with initial basic WASH support. Additionally, UNICEF has equipped the Gaza Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) warehouse with water and wastewater spare parts to undertake repairs to damaged networks and other WASH facilities.

Child Protection: UNICEF works with the Ministry of Social Development, five NGOs in the West Bank, two NGOs in Gaza and one which provides remote support to provide psychosocial first aid and referral for specialized psychosocial support and counselling to children affected by the protracted crisis. Across these UNICEF and other CP-AOR partners there are 143 trained counsellors. In Gaza, UNICEF is using the Family Center platform to provide distance counselling and support to children and their families. UNICEF has already provided legal assistance to all children arrested and catering for the broader community affected in Eastern Jerusalem. UNICEF is also strengthening the monitoring of grave violations against children to inform advocacy and programmes.

Health: On 14 May UNICEF released pre-positioned drugs and consumables to the Ministry of Health in Gaza for 72,000 people. These supplies will support the continuity of Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) services and the treatment of injured persons. UNICEF continues to support the health system to respond to the immediate health response for COVID-19 prevention and treatment as well as for the provision of vaccines through the COVAX facility. On 19 May, 102,960 doses of Pfizer vaccines are expected for delivery to the State of Palestine through COVAX, from which 46,800 doses are planned for delivery to Gaza. The delivery date of vaccines may be subject to postponement or temporary storage in a location inside Israel until delivery is possible due to the situation in Gaza.

C4D: UNICEF is working with other agencies including UNMAS to support affected communities to access information, education and communication (IEC) materials including on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) to reduce the risk of vulnerable populations in the Gaza Strip from injury to unexploded ordinance. UNICEF continues support evidence-based community awareness through RCCE work around the conflict and COVID-19 prevention, given that SoP continues to face the second wave of COVID-19.

RESPONSE STRATEGY

UNICEF has been operating in all of the State of Palestine prior to the conflict to deliver both humanitarian and development programmes, with the humanitarian programmes outlined in the [2021 Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal](#). UNICEF has a fully operational team in East Jerusalem and in Gaza. UNICEF has already released lifesaving humanitarian supplies pre-positioned in Gaza and more stocks will be released in the coming hours.

In response to the present conflict escalation, **UNICEF is already scaling up its capacities and implementing humanitarian interventions** focusing on the Gaza Strip and with targeted activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. While continuing with its existing partners, UNICEF is also in the process of establishing new partnerships to respond to the significant increase of children's needs. In Gaza, UNICEF is working through Ministries, the UN agencies (including UNRWA), local civil society partners as well as the private sector. In East Jerusalem, UNICEF is working directly with the with the four hospitals catering largely for the Palestinian communities and a network of local NGOs. Considering the likelihood of a continuous increase of tensions in the coming weeks, **UNICEF is also prepositioning additional resources and capacities in anticipation of a possible significant increase of displacement and needs** (in line with the various Inter Agency Contingency Plans).

In **WASH**, UNICEF's immediate priorities aim at maintaining low morbidity and mortality related to water-borne diseases through the provision of humanitarian safe water, sanitation and hygiene interventions in the Gaza Strip. UNICEF is working with the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) and the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) to ensure the continued provision of essential services. Immediate UNICEF actions are to support water provision by providing fuel for the operation of emergency generators and maintenance materials for the **Southern Gaza Desalination Plant and other WASH facilities**. UNICEF will also support UNRWA and civil society partners to ensure access to essential WASH services (including support to water trucking and distribution of "water kits") in the DES and affected communities. To prevent the increase of water borne diseases, and COVID-19, among the affected population, UNICEF is supporting the provision of **basic hygiene kits** through e-vouchers with WFP for displaced persons inside DES or outside the DES.

The UNICEF **Child Protection (CP)** in emergency response aims at ensuring that the rights and dignity of children are respected, and that emergency protection interventions are accessible to most vulnerable children, especially girls. Interventions will target vulnerable children in need of **psychosocial support and specialized services**, with **referral mechanisms to psychologists, doctors or lawyers**.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- Distribution of pre-positioned emergency water purification tablets, water testing kits, emergency collapsible tanks and jerry cans for water storage for **25,000 people**
- Provide fuel and maintenance materials for the desalination plants and other WASH facilities to ensure access to safe water for **250,000 people for 3 months**
- Undertake emergency water trucking and sanitation services for affected populations living in or outside the DES shelters for **10,000 people for 3 months**
- Provision of basic hygiene kits (including COVID-19 prevention materials) through e-voucher with WFP for displaced persons in DES or outside the DES for **44,000 people**



Child Protection and PSEA

- Implement remote Child Protection and MHPSS emergency response for **5,000 children** (Gaza 4,000 and WB 1,000)
- Support child-friendly spaces in 30 DES to provide safe spaces, access to MHPSS and recreational support for **11,000 children** (Gaza)
- Ensure communities have access to safe reporting channels for cases of abuse or exploitation



Health and Nutrition

- Procure essential medical supplies including drugs to ensure continuity of the health care services for **18,460 people** (15,600 in Gaza and 2,860 in East Jerusalem)
- Procure essential medical supplies including disposables and first aid kits for **12,740 people** (10,790 in Gaza and 1,950 in EJ)
- Provision of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food to prevent malnutrition in **200 children**



Education

- Create 40 learning spaces in the Gaza Strip to ensure continuity of learning for **9,000 children**
- Distribute learning materials for **30,000 children** (including 5,000 in the West Bank)



In Gaza, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Social Development and civil society partners to deliver child protection services both face-to-face and remotely. In the West Bank, UNICEF is scaling up services through new partnerships and direct **remote service provision**. In East Jerusalem, UNICEF is reinforcing partnerships for **MHPSS** work through the existing network of partners. UNICEF supports UNRWA delivering CP services in the DES.

The UNICEF **Health and Nutrition** response aims at supporting continuous access to **lifesaving essential health care services** in Gaza and East Jerusalem for **injured people, pregnant, lactating women, neonates and children under five with WHO and UNFPA**. In Gaza, UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Health, and in East Jerusalem support is being provided to the four hospitals serving Palestinians, to ensure the continuity of Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) services through the **provision of essential drugs and consumables**. UNICEF will also continue supporting emergency COVID-19 vaccination roll out through the COVAX facility in partnership with WHO.

In **Education**, **UNICEF's** emergencies programme aims at ensuring continuity of learning to affected children bring them and their teachers a sense of normalcy. UNICEF will **support learning spaces** to be used as channels of communication to families in the DES in Gaza working with UNRWA and civil society partners. UNICEF will also provide essential learning supplies to school children through the Ministry of Education.

The UNICEF C4D and multi-partner Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) programme works directly with communities to raise their awareness and change their behaviors and to promote community engagement. UNICEF works through the Ministry of Local Government, UNRWA, the Inter-Agency RCCE Task Force and civil society partners to deliver programmes. **Risk Education on unexploded ordnances** will aim at protecting children from the direct impact of the conflict.

UNICEF is committed to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP). UNICEF is **intensifying the broadcast of available reporting channels** and strengthening ongoing partnership with implementing partners that can provide **helpline services, counselling, and referrals for SEA**. Safe and confidential channels are advertised on supplies and communications materials being delivered to affected populations, including messages to e-voucher beneficiaries. Reporting channels include an email address, social media platforms and an already functional hotline for psychosocial first aid with staff trained to assist and refer survivors of SEA.



C4D, community engagement and AAP

- Risk Education on Unexploded Ordnances (UXO) targeting **5,500 most vulnerable children**
- Youth mobilization and community engagement activities inside and outside Designated Emergency Shelters.



Social Protection

- Support **1,000 most vulnerable conflict-affected poor households** in Gaza with multi-purpose cash

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

The UNICEF State of Palestine HAC 2021 requires \$21.6 million in 2021 and was 36 per cent funded as of 31 March 2021. The country office will require an additional US\$ 7.71 million for the immediate response and to prepare for an escalation to the conflict. Of this value \$3.49 million is required for an immediate response covering the first two months of the response until mid-July 2021 and \$4.22 million is required for preparedness measures.

UNICEF is reprogramming \$200,000 from UNICEF regular resources to be used for the immediate response. The CO has also received an Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) loan for \$1.5 million from UNICEF HQ. Furthermore, the Country Office is working with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to mobilise additional resources through the CERF, the Humanitarian Pooled Fund, and other partners.

UNICEF is working with the HCT to revise the current Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and this flash is part of the inter-agency work.

Sector	Urgent Requirements	Preparedness Requirements	Total
Health	\$ 1,300,000	\$ 885,000	\$ 2,185,000
WASH	\$ 1,080,000	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 2,880,000
Child Protection	\$ 390,000	\$ 142,500	\$ 532,500
Education	\$ 240,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 740,000
Social Protection	\$ -	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
Communication for Development/ RCCE	\$ 62,300	\$ 75,000	\$ 137,300
Nutrition	\$ -	\$ 59,000	\$ 59,000
Cluster Coordination	\$ 114,145	\$ 137,326	\$ 251,471
Operational Support	\$ 308,500	\$ 371,150	\$ 679,650
TOTAL	\$ 3,494,945	\$ 4,219,976	\$ 7,714,921

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