



A child stands among temporary shelters in overcrowded conditions in the Gaza Strip, where summer heat and limited access to basic services increase health risks. © UNICEF-SoP/2026/Eleyan

Analysis of the response to the needs of children

Situation Update and Humanitarian Response

UNICEF State of Palestine

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for every child

UNDER SUMMER HEAT, WITH ACCESS RESTRICTED AND FUNDING FALTERING, CHILDREN PAY THE PRICE – ACHIEVEMENTS AND REMAINING GAPS AT MID-YEAR 2026

Gaza Strip Situation Update

- Humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip **remain dire**, with most of the population – 1.9 out of 2.1 million people¹ – displaced and exposed to **ongoing health and environmental risks**.
- Access restrictions and operational constraints continue to disrupt humanitarian delivery, with **only 280 out of 633 UNICEF aid trucks** (44 per cent) from Egypt **able to offload** during May and June 2026.
- Essential services remain critically limited: access to healthcare, water, sanitation, and protection services continue to be **disrupted by destruction or damage to critical civilian infrastructure, and movement restrictions**.
- Severe **restrictions on the entry of fuel, spare parts, and essential materials** – including **engine oil** required to operate generators – are driving system failures across health and WASH services.²
- In the WASH sector, conditions remain critical. An estimated **82 per cent of families are water insecure**, and up to 70 per cent **cannot access 6 litres per person per day**³ – far below minimum emergency standards – placing children at direct risk of dehydration and waterborne disease.
- Nearly **90 per cent of water and sanitation infrastructure** has been damaged or destroyed. Limited latrine access, unsafe disposal practices, and disrupted sludge management compromise infection prevention and control, increase the **risk of healthcare-related infections**, the growing **presence of rats** and other disease vectors, and contribute to widespread environmental contamination.⁴

Impact on Children and Families

Across the Gaza Strip, children's lives continue to be shaped by the **combined effects of displacement, access restrictions, and the progressive collapse of essential services**.

Daily survival for children is increasingly determined by access: families **struggle to secure sufficient water**, while sanitation systems remain overwhelmed, and waste continues to accumulate in and around living spaces. This exposes children to **contaminated environments**, increases **disease risks**, and further **limits safe areas** for play, learning, and development.

The consequences are most severe for vulnerable groups, including infants, children at risk of malnutrition, pregnant women, and children with disabilities, who depend heavily on continuous access to basic services to survive and stay healthy.

REACHING CHILDREN AT SCALE IN THE GAZA STRIP DESPITE SIGNIFICANT CONSTRAINTS

In the first six months of 2026, UNICEF and its partners continued to deliver life-saving assistance across the Gaza Strip despite significant operational constraints: More than **1.15 million people** accessed safe drinking water through emergency water trucking, while **516,000 people** gained access to sanitation services. Across the health sector, **487,000 children and women** accessed primary health care services, and **11,019 small and sick newborns** received specialised inpatient newborn care.

UNICEF and its partners also helped protect children's nutritional well-being, screening and treating **19,425 children** for acute malnutrition and providing infant and young child feeding counselling to **163,000 caregivers**. Meanwhile, **266,000 children** accessed formal or non-formal education opportunities, helping restore learning and a sense of normalcy amid ongoing upheaval.

Beyond these services, UNICEF supported the protection of children and families by reaching **834,000 children and caregivers** with explosive ordnance risk education and prevention activities and providing individual case management support to **3,680 vulnerable children**. In addition, **298,000 people** received humanitarian cash assistance, helping families meet urgent needs and cope with increasingly difficult living conditions.

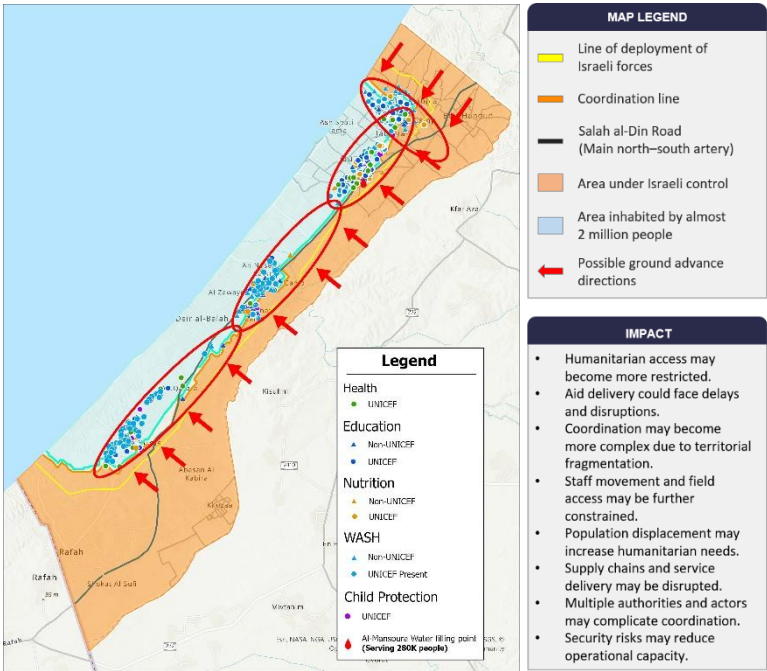
These achievements demonstrate that, even under extremely challenging conditions, humanitarian action remains possible. Sustaining these gains will depend on continued access, and adequate funding.

ANALYSIS OF UNICEF DATA ON ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Restricted humanitarian access remains a major constraint to sustaining life-saving services for children and their families. Scenario-based analysis of areas near the “Yellow Line” indicates that, in a worst-case scenario, up to **282,600 people**, including **133,828 children**, will be affected by intensified military activity and movement restrictions. An estimated **66,412 children** may face disrupted access to essential services.

Up to **188 UNICEF service delivery points** and **107 additional cluster-supported service delivery points** fall within projected areas of impact, increasing the risk of disruptions to health, nutrition, education, and WASH services.

The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map, do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
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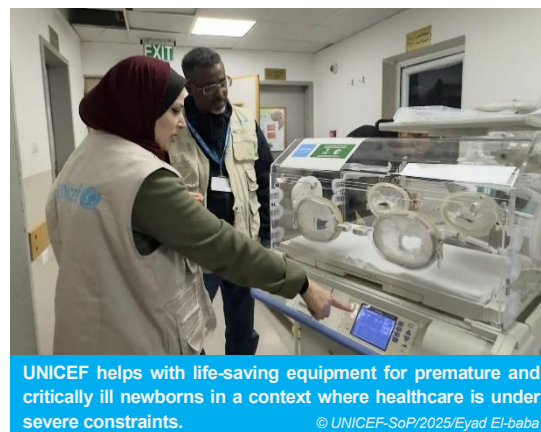
MID-YEAR GAP ANALYSIS: A 60 PER CENT FUNDING GAP IN OVERALL FUNDING

	SECTOR NEED (IN USD)	FUNDING GAP (IN USD, AS OF 30 JUNE)	KEY FUNDING GAP	BENEFICIARIES IMPACT	IMPACT ON CHILDREN
Health	123.8 million	78.2 million 63% gap	Shortage of: - Essential medicines, including antibiotics - Specialised medicines - Fuel and operational resources - Medical equipment, e.g. incubators	Children and women accessing primary health care services will receive inadequate treatment due to shortages of essential medicines and supplies . Small and sick children requiring specialised inpatient care may not receive the life-saving treatment they need due to lack of equipment, medicines, and supplies.	- Reduced quality of care limits the effectiveness of treatment for children. - Inadequate infection prevention increases exposure to infections and health complications within health facilities. - Limited availability of specialised treatment increases the risk of preventable morbidity and mortality among children.
Nutri- tion	150.0 million	119.2 million 79% gap	Shortage: Insufficient ready-to-use complementary food (RUCF) supplies	Children affected will not receive nutrition supplies for the prevention of acute malnutrition and to support child growth	- Reduced coverage of RUCF increases the risk of acute malnutrition among children. - Increase of the risk of chronic malnutrition (stunting), with long-term effects on growth and development.
WASH	115.0 million	34.9 million 30% gap	Shortage of: - Water trucking and system maintenance - Critical supplies and spare parts for water systems	600,000 people, including children , will face reduced access to safe and reliable water, sanitation, and waste management services Families will increasingly rely on limited and less reliable	- Limits children's access to safe water for drinking and hygiene. Inadequate sanitation services increase exposure to unhygienic conditions and waterborne diseases.

			and solid waste management • Fuel for service delivery	water sources, while sanitation and waste services remain insufficient to meet needs	• Accumulation of waste and sewage elevates public health risks , incl. disease outbreaks .
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STORY: WHEN EVERY BREATH MATTERS

In the Gaza Strip, many children are born prematurely and underweight due to malnourished and traumatized mothers. Premature and fragile, many newborns struggle to breathe in overstretched hospitals with limited equipment. For these babies, access to specialised care can mean the difference between life and death. Through the delivery of three incubators, three high-frequency oscillatory (HFO) ventilators and nine conventional ventilators, UNICEF is helping restore critical neonatal care, giving newborns a fighting chance in their very first hours of life. For some newborns in the Gaza Strip, the first breath is not guaranteed – but with the right care, this does not have to be the price they pay. More details [are available here](#).



UNICEF helps with life-saving equipment for premature and critically ill newborns in a context where healthcare is under severe constraints. © UNICEF-SoP/2025/Eyad El-baba

WHAT UNICEF IS CALLING FOR

UNICEF calls on donors to support continued humanitarian action by:

- **Providing predictable, flexible financing** to sustain **life-saving Health, Nutrition, and WASH** responses and absorb emergency cost increases caused by e.g. disruptions to water access points.
- **Providing urgent support for sanitation**, wastewater, and solid-waste interventions to reduce public health risks for children, including those associated with the **growing presence of rats**.

UNICEF calls on authorities to fulfil their obligations to:

- **Facilitate safe, sustained and predictable humanitarian access** for all humanitarian operations to run consistently and safely across all areas, including those currently affected by movement restrictions and shifting control dynamics.
- **Enable the entry/approval of core humanitarian items** to stabilise water and sanitation services, e.g. pumps, pipes/fittings compatible with existing systems, as well as fuel, and other essential items.
- **Allow reliable entry of WASH consumables and spare parts** that keep systems running: **generator parts/consumables (including lubricating/engine oils)** and **water treatment chemicals**, as well as desalination maintenance inputs (e.g. membranes) to prevent sudden service disruptions.
- **Facilitate safe access to waste disposal options and wastewater management sites** to address the ongoing solid waste crisis, reduce accumulation around shelters and residential areas, and limit pest-related and public health risks.

FUNDING NEEDS

UNICEF's [Humanitarian Action for Children \(HAC\) appeal for 2026](#) requires US\$ 707.8 million to meet the urgent needs of children and their families in 2026. As of now, 40 per cent of the appeal is funded. UNICEF urgently requires an additional US\$ 421.7 million in 2026 to scale up life-saving assistance.

	Funding Needs	Funding Received*	Funding Gap
All sectors	USD 707.8 million (100%)	USD 286.2 million (40%)	USD 421.7 million (60%)

*Funding received includes funds received in 2026 and carry forward from 2025. New funding received in 2026 amounts to USD 149.8 million.

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



¹ An estimated 1.9 million out of the total 2.1 million people in the Gaza Strip have been displaced, many of them several times (UN estimate in 2025).

² OCHA oPt, [Humanitarian Situation Report](#), 15 May 2026.

³ [UNICEF SoP, Situation Update and Humanitarian Response](#), 29 May 2026.

⁴ [UNRWA Situation Report #219](#), 29 April 2026.