

gaza situation report



a daily update from unrwa

24-hour update as of 19 November 2012 at 15:00

gaza: facts and figures

- 1.2 million refugees
- 8 refugee camps
- 12,000 staff
- 245 schools for 225,000 students
- 21 health centres
- 12 food distribution centres for more than 800,000 refugees
- Living under a tightened land and sea blockade since 2007
- Shattered local economy

urgent funding need

- Food assistance: 6 million
- Cash assistance: 2 million
- Non-food items: 1 million
- Urgent repair of installations and refugee shelters: 1.5 million
- Medical supplies: 400,000
- Job creation programme support to Ministry of Health (MOH): 210,000
- Fuel (municipalities, MoH): 1.5 million
- Waste and rubble removal: 100,000
- Total: 12.71 million

situational overview

The Israeli military operation has entered its sixth calendar day. Israeli Air Force (IAF) strikes were supported by the Israeli navy during the night. The ongoing airstrikes have again targeted leaders of militant groups, infrastructure, the security apparatus, but increasingly residential buildings as well. One hit destroyed a four-storey building belonging to the Al Dalou family in a highly-populated area in Gaza city. The families present in the house were buried under the rubble. At least 11 people died in the strike and over 20 were injured – all of them civilians, including women, an infant, and children. This is an extremely worrying development. There has been a significant increase in civilian casualties during the past 24 hours.

When targeting residential buildings, the Israel Defense Forces are utilising a new practice. Residents are called by phone and asked to evacuate their homes, or a small warning missile is fired at the targeted building; larger missiles are subsequently fired at the target.

Heavy naval shelling from the sea during the night hours and frequent explosions caused by the airstrikes continued to cause fear and distress among the civilian population for the past 24 hours. Families report that their children are becoming experts at recognising the source of the various explosions they hear.

Like in the previous nights, there was a lull in rocket firing for a few hours after midnight. Rockets resumed in the morning.

24-hour update as of 18 November 2012 at 15:00

There remains very little movement of people and cars; streets are mostly empty. The ongoing airstrikes are unpredictable and therefore put everybody at risk; not only in the streets, but increasingly at home since the IAF started targeting residential buildings.

Some food stores along with fruit and vegetable markets have remained open and no shortages have been reported. People anticipate shortages soon, since the commercial crossing is only open intermittently.

The Egypt-Gaza tunnels have again been intensively targeted by the IAF, causing deep holes in the ground. No movement of goods has been reported, but flows of fuel continued, albeit in reduced amounts and with interruptions.

As during the last large-scale escalation in 2008/2009, the Israeli army has started using television and local radio channels (FM) to inform the population to stay away from Hamas infrastructure and members for their own safety.

The number of displaced families has increased, but they are still finding temporary solutions with friends and relatives. UNRWA is ready to open up schools as shelters if the need arises.

unrwa's response

UNRWA's shelter and emergency teams have prepared one school in Jabalia that can be opened as a shelter should it be necessary. The Agency received initial requests for assistance from 50 families (250 people) after their homes sustained damage. The families have been accommodated by their relatives.

UNRWA opened all 12 distribution centres across Gaza today, distributing food assistance to more than 25,000 beneficiaries according to the planned schedule. The Jabalia distribution centre – which was severely damaged yesterday – resumed operations today, distributing food to more than 6,500 refugees. UNRWA is very proud of its maintenance, distribution and operations staff, who were able to re-open the distribution centre in such a short time.

Today, 19 out of 21 UNRWA health centres were open, providing a range of services to the population in Gaza. Two health centres did not operate due to their close proximity to the border. Yesterday, UNRWA health centres received only four patients reporting injuries related to airstrikes, as most of the injured visit hospitals for such care. More than 650 of our health staff have been reporting to our health centres. Yesterday, staff treated more than 10,500 patients throughout the day; this number increased by 1,000 today as refugees are informed that UNRWA health centres are open.

24-hour update as of 18 November 2012 at 15:00

Forty-two per cent of essential medications are out of stock in the central pharmacy of the Gaza Ministry of Health (MoH). In order to support the current operations of the MoH in caring for the injured, UNRWA is prepared to donate medical supplies to the MoH from its stock. The Agency will require USD 400,000 to subsequently replenish its own stocks. In addition, the Ministry of Health has requested that UNRWA provide job creation programme staff support for health-care professionals to deal with the surge in patients as a result of the ongoing violence.

Food distribution currently underway is part of the regular distribution cycle (October to December). If emergency food assistance becomes necessary, the food commodities will be taken from that in stock for the ongoing distribution. Funding will be urgently needed to cover the distribution of emergency food that may be needed due to the current escalation.

UNRWA continued to provide solid waste collection in the eight refugee camps across Gaza to mitigate any public health concerns. Compared to a normal day, our sanitation operations covered 85 per cent of the camps and were successful at removing the accumulated waste from the long weekend.

Once the environment is safer, UNRWA will engage labourers and the necessary equipment to remove solid waste and rubble from the temporary dumping sites.

To ensure that water and wastewater pumping – as well as the electrical generators at Gaza hospitals and the blood bank – continue to work, UNRWA will provide the municipalities and the MoH with fuel.

UNRWA continued to record the damage to its installations and to undertake minor maintenance operations in order to ensure that installations were operational. Today, our maintenance staff installed plastic sheets to replace the broken windows of the Japanese Health Centre in Khan Younis.

unrwa casualties

On 18 November 2012, a Grade 4 student at the UNRWA Beach Preparatory Girls' School died following an Israeli airstrike to an open area in the north of Beach Camp. The female student was one of two fatalities caused by the airstrike. Six other people were reported as being injured, including a female clerk at the UNRWA Beach Preparatory Girls' School, who suffered leg injuries.

unrwa installations

UNRWA installations continue to suffer collateral damage from the continued violence.

On 18 November 2012 at 00:45, an Israeli airstrike targeted a Hamas military base in West Rafah. As a result of the airstrike, the buildings at the Saudi Fund for Development Rehousing Project (Phase 1), which is located not far from the base, were damaged. The damage mainly consisted of broken glass and blown-out windows and doors.

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On 18 November 2012 at 04:25, an Israeli airstrike targeted an open area near Al Naser Health Centre, northeast Rafah. As a result of the airstrike, the centre sustained minor window damage.

On 18 November 2012 at 06:05, four Israeli air strikes, believed to be targeting the Al Saraya Complex in Gaza City, caused damage to UNRWA's microfinance and microenterprise main office.

On 19 November 2012 at 06:00, an Israeli Defense Forces bombing of the Saraya compound in central Gaza City, resulted in shrapnel landing inside UNRWA's Gaza Training Centre compound.

crossings

- Rafah crossing is open per normal schedule. On 18 November, 401 people arrived into Gaza, 892 crossed into Egypt, and 16 were denied travel.
- Kerem Shalom crossing was closed today.
- Erez crossing is open for humanitarian cases and foreign nationals.