



SITUATION REPORT

CRISIS IN PALESTINE



© UNFPA Palestine

Country:	Occupied Palestinian Territory
Date Issued:	06 April 2024
Issue #:	7
Covering Period:	01 March to 01 April 2024
Contact Persons:	Dominic Allen, Representative dominic.allen@unfpa.org

KEY FIGURES

33,054 Fatalities* 32,623 in Gaza 70% children and women 431 in West Bank	79,782 Injuries* 75,092 in Gaza 4,690 in West Bank	~1.7M Internally displaced* 1.7M in Gaza (75% of Gaza) 2,840 in West Bank	1.34M Women of reproductive age** 541,567 in Gaza 797,097 in West Bank	13,649 Expected deliveries in the next month** 5,522 in Gaza 8,127 in West Bank	10 out of 36 Hospitals in the Gaza Strip are partially functional and provide limited services.
	1.1 M People projected to face catastrophic levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 5)				
	15,000 Pregnant women are at risk of imminent famine				

SITUATION OVERVIEW

In Gaza, the scale of devastation is unprecedented, with approximately 1.7 million people displaced and entire communities obliterated. The specter of starvation looms, particularly in the north where around 200,000 people are trapped, with famine expected between now and May. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, 32,623 Palestinians have been killed, with over 7,000 missing or buried under rubble, and 75,092 injured. The urgent need for humanitarian aid in Gaza cannot be overstated, as the region grapples with a crisis of unprecedented proportions.

The looming ground operation in Rafah poses a grave threat to 1.5 million Palestinians, including tens of thousands of pregnant women, new mothers and newborns. Today, Rafah is unrecognizable due to congestion, with people sleeping in the streets and makeshift shelters. Any attack would exacerbate suffering and hinder aid delivery, imperiling the safety of hundreds of thousands of desperate, traumatized people fleeing bombardment with nowhere else to go.

The siege enforced on Gaza by Israel, including closed crossings and lack of essential resources like water and electricity, have been critical factors contributing to the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe. Humanitarian organizations are facing numerous challenges including security risks and access constraints especially for aid missions to northern Gaza. Ensuring aid reaches Gaza at the necessary scale demands access to all entry points, particularly via land routes. Aid delivery by air and sea is not a substitute for land routes, which are faster, more cost-effective, and easier to monitor. Air drops pose significant challenges, including high costs, lack of monitoring, and potential danger. Ultimately, these methods cannot adequately address Gaza's health and food insecurity.

Famine is imminent in Gaza as the recent IPC assessment reveals that half of its population, **1.1 million people**, faces catastrophic food insecurity. Among the 677,000 on the brink of famine are an estimated **15,000 pregnant women**, heightening the risks for both mothers and newborns. Children's acute malnutrition rates have doubled since January, with one in three under two suffering from malnutrition. Tragically, 27 children in the north of Gaza have already died due to malnutrition. Israel's restrictions on aid, displacement, and infrastructure destruction exacerbate the crisis. 95% of pregnant and breastfeeding women have insufficient micronutrient intake, further elevating risks.

*OCHA Flash Update #148 - 29 March 2024
 **MISP calculation

The assault on healthcare facilities in Gaza has been relentless, with over **400 attacks**, predominantly airstrikes and raids, causing extensive damage to hospitals and clinics while claiming the lives of healthcare workers. Currently, only **10 out of 36 hospitals and 20 out of 80 primary healthcare** facilities are functional, operating at limited capacity and overwhelmed with patients, grappling with critical shortages of fuel, medicines, supplies, and medical staff.

155,000 pregnant women and new mothers, along with their newborns, face dire circumstances, contending with severe shortages of food, water, and medical care. Tragically, newborns are falling victim to dangerously low birth weights, worsened by the lack of nutrition, clean water, and neonatal health services. The situation is exacerbated by the shutdown of all but three maternity hospitals, with Al-Helal Al-Emirati Maternity Hospital in Rafah overwhelmed by demand and struggling to cope with acute shortages of essential supplies and medications. Medical professionals are forced to make agonizing decisions as they endeavor to provide care under increasingly challenging conditions. Hospitals are discharging women shortly after childbirth, and cesareans are on the rise due to fear and uncertainty. Simultaneously, there is a surge in premature births and low birth weights due to multiple factors including stress, early labor/birth, and malnutrition. Urgent action is vital to ensure the survival and well-being of mothers and newborns in Gaza, where approximately 180 deliveries take place daily.

"Doctors have said they are no longer seeing normal-sized children, newborn babies dying simply because their birth weight is just too low. Mothers should wrap their arms around their children. These children should not be wrapped in body bags." -Dominic Allen, UNFPA Representative after visiting maternity hospitals in Gaza

According to a rapid assessment by WASH Cluster partners, Gaza's 690,000 menstruating women and adolescent girls face urgent challenges due to a critical shortage of sanitary products and access to water and wash facilities. Many resort to using rags as pads are unavailable, while clean water for hygiene is scarce. Close to three-quarters of these women and girls lack privacy for washing, with a similar number having no access to clean water. The assessment reveals grim statistics: only one toilet for every 341 people, with 80% non-functional in displacement sites; less than a quarter offering safe and private latrine access; one shower available for every 1,292 persons in the only 39% of sites with showers; and sanitary pads inaccessible to over two-thirds of women and girls, rising to nearly 90% in makeshift shelters. Furthermore, only half of displacement sites have separate showers for genders, majority without adequate lighting.

"I use clean pieces of cotton from my children's clothes because there are no pads, and we can't afford the high prices in the market. Then I wash them and reuse them when I have access to water and soap. Currently, there are no clothes, water, or soap available. We are forced to throw them away or bury them." -Sara, 28 year-old woman from Gaza

Since early October, an estimated 37 mothers are killed daily, leaving families devastated and children vulnerable. Close to one million women and girls are forcibly displaced, facing exacerbated protection risks in overcrowded shelters lacking basic necessities and privacy. Gender-based violence (GBV) is rampant, with internally displaced women expressing acute vulnerability due to loss of protection amidst the increasing presence of Israeli Forces and separation from family support networks. This fear is compounded by the total breakdown in law and order, stemming from desperation and scarcity. GBV prevention and response services have collapsed, with safe houses forced to close and the GBV Sub-Cluster unable to provide comprehensive support due to displacement and destruction.

"It was a very intense discussion - listening directly to women in makeshift tents on the sand, with the sound of bombs in the distance - to understand their needs. When I asked the women, 'What's your one message to the world?' they unanimously answered, 'Dignity' especially after the ceasefire." -Dominic Allen, UNFPA Representative after a field visit to Mawasi IDP camps in Rafah

The situation in the West Bank has reached its worst point in decades, with hundreds killed and thousands injured, including children. Movement restrictions persist, hindering access to vital health and social services, ambulance movement, and humanitarian aid delivery. Approximately 73,000 women are pregnant, with 8,100 expected to give birth in the next month alone. Since October 7, 2023, a staggering total of 1,620 Palestinians, including 710 children, have been displaced across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, due to the demolition

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

- Expanded access to primary healthcare services by increasing medical service points and deploying teams in IDP shelters, offering reproductive, maternal, and child health services, and managing non-communicable diseases.
- Immediate access to northern Gaza for comprehensive nutrition and healthcare services to be facilitated.
- Delivery of acute malnutrition treatment services throughout Gaza, emphasizing stabilization centers in the north.
- Sustainment of the supply of aid commodities, including food, medicines, and fuel, throughout Gaza by road, while fully resuming traffic of commercial goods.
- Provision of complimentary foods and micronutrient supplements for pregnant and lactating women, young children, the chronically ill, and the elderly.
- Scaling up of life-saving services for GBV survivors and those at risk, including safe spaces and community-based law enforcement, with a focus on vulnerable groups such as women, children, and persons with disabilities.
- Assurance of a continued pipeline of dignity kits, menstrual hygiene supplies, and clothing, while enhancing access to water and sanitation facilities.
- Heightened awareness and provision of services for people at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly women and adolescents.
- Mitigation of the impact of school closures on children's education, especially for girls, to prevent harmful coping strategies such as early marriage and address long-term consequences, prioritizing vulnerable groups.
- Provision of urgent mental health care, especially for vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, children, and those with pre-existing complex conditions.

UNFPA RESPONSE

In March 2024, UNFPA delivered life-saving reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention and response supplies to health facilities, shelters, and protection sites across the North, Middle Area, and South of the Gaza Strip. This includes essential pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and equipment for obstetric facilities and field hospitals to assist with clinical deliveries, STI treatment, obstetric surgery, care for severe complications during childbirth. Comprehensive postpartum kits were distributed to women at IDP shelters in the North of Gaza to assist new mothers and their babies. Supplies for GBV risk mitigation, menstrual hygiene management items, and cash assistance to women and girls to maintain their dignity, hygiene, and safeguard their menstrual health were also provided.

Additionally, UNFPA, in collaboration with partners, provided life-saving primary healthcare, antenatal, and postnatal care services to pregnant and lactating women at non-formal shelters. Psychosocial first aid and GBV risk mitigation sessions were provided to thousands of displaced women, girls, and adolescents, reaching IDPs across various locations in Gaza, as well as through the Shubbak II Shabab helpline. UNFPA supported the establishment of a steering committee to monitor and organize sheltering services for GBV survivors.



RESULTS SNAPSHOT



24

SRH TEAMS DEPLOYED AND PROVIDED ANTENATAL AND POSTNATAL CARE SERVICES TO **8,000** PREGNANT AND LACTATING WOMEN AT NON-FORMAL SHELTERS ACROSS THE NORTH, MIDDLE, AND SOUTH OF THE GAZA STRIP



2

WOMEN AND GIRLS SAFE SPACES WERE ESTABLISHED IN RAFAH, PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE GBV PREVENTION AND PROTECTION SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS.



20,714

LIFESAVING PHARMACEUTICALS WERE DELIVERED, INCLUDING OXYTOCIN TO PREVENT AND MANAGE POSTPARTUM HEMORRHAGE.



185

INTER-AGENCY REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH KITS DISTRIBUTED TO HEALTH FACILITIES ACROSS THE NORTH, MIDDLE AREA, AND SOUTH OF THE GAZA STRIP.

INCLUDING MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT TO ENABLE:

- **3,600** women giving birth in a health facility can be treated appropriately, reducing maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.
- **600** women and girls seeking care following complications of pregnancy and childbirth.
- **20,500** family planning commodities to reduce risk of STIs and unintended pregnancy.
- **9,000** syndromic treatment preventing continued spread of STIs in the community.



16,561

CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS, AND WOMEN REACHED WITH PSYCHOSOCIAL FIRST AID SESSIONS, GBV PREVENTION AND RISK MITIGATION SESSIONS, RECREATIONAL AND YOUTH-LED COMMUNITY SUPPORT INITIATIVES



501,370

DISPOSABLE MENSTRUAL PADS WERE PROVIDED TO WOMEN AND GIRL, INCLUDING **370** COMPREHENSIVE DIGNITY KITS AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT KITS



1,200

NEW MOTHERS AT IDP SHELTERS IN THE NORTH OF GAZA RECEIVED COMPREHENSIVE POSTPARTUM KITS



COORDINATION

Sexual and Reproductive Health:

UNFPA chairs the weekly SRH Technical Working Group in Gaza and works closely with partners to provide an updated service map on the functionality of obstetric facilities in Gaza, ensuring continuous coordination and focusing on responding to urgent needs while looking at preparedness according to possible scenarios. Provide guidance and operationalization of urgent delivery assistance at medical points, increase access to safe births for women in shelters, and collaborate with the GBV AoR and health cluster, as well as SRH partners, in developing guidance on healthcare for GBV survivors.

UNFPA leads the Mobile Clinic working group to redirect services to vulnerable locations in the West Bank and to mitigate accessibility challenges.

Gender-Based Violence:

The GBV sub-cluster, in partnership with local partners, has scaled up its response to better protect women and girls. This includes the establishment of safe spaces, provision of Psychological First Aid, and group psychosocial support activities for women and girls. Eight GBV SC meetings were conducted (four in Gaza, three in the West Bank, and one at the national level). Developed a GBV response update and coordinated the GBV Sub-cluster flash appeal. Established GBV emergency referral pathways among different service providers.

[The Gaza Strip: Gender Based Violence - Response Update March 2024](#)

Adolescents and Young People

The United Nations Youth Thematic Group met with Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) to discuss supporting youth advocacy in emergency plans. YAP engaged in global advocacy with international youth organizations, such as the United Nations Youth Association of Denmark.

CALL TO ACTION

- UNFPA calls on all parties to implement the UN Security Council’s resolution, demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the release of all hostages.
- UNFPA calls for an immediate end to attacks on hospitals in Gaza, and protection of health staff, patients, and civilians.
- UNFPA calls for the establishment of reliable entry points for relief supplies, provision of security assurances, implementation of a robust humanitarian notification system, and assurance of a stable communication network to facilitate the effective delivery of aid.
- UNFPA calls for the prioritization of age and gender-responsive humanitarian interventions, as well as systematic inclusion of engagement and partnership with youth in all phases of humanitarian action.

FUNDING STATUS

UNFPA launched its **3rd appeal for over 90 million USD** for its operational response from **January to December 2024**. As of April 2024, UNFPA has secured 20.5 million USD, with an additional 21.5 million USD pledged and in the pipeline. An additional 48 million USD is urgently needed to fully support UNFPA’s operational response from April to December 2024.



© UNFPA Palestine