

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Emergency

Situation Report (as of 22 August 2014, 08:00 hrs)



This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. This report covers the period from 21 August (08:00 hrs) to 22 August (08:00 hrs).

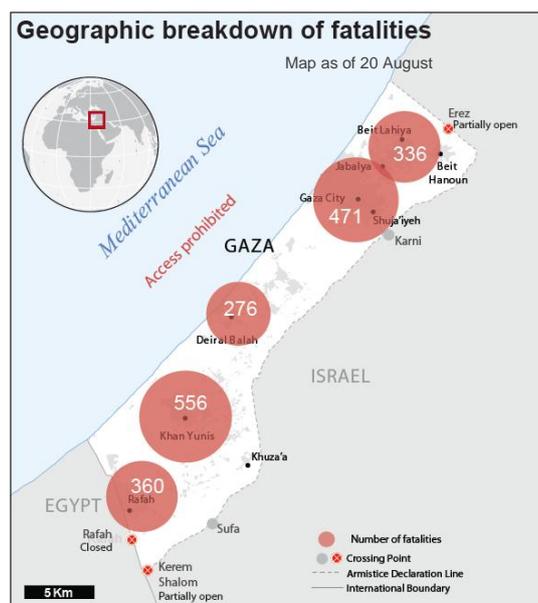
Note: There will be no situation reports on 23 or 24 August. The next report will be issued on 25 August.

Highlights

- Hostilities have continued, resulting in additional Palestinian casualties. The Palestinian fatality toll is now 2,042 of whom 1,444 have been identified as civilians, according to preliminary estimates.
- The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has risen to 460,000, more than a quarter of the entire Palestinian population of Gaza. 280,000 are taking shelter in UNRWA schools.
- Since 7 July, at least 140 Palestinian families in Gaza have had three or more members killed in the same incident, for a total of 735 fatalities.

Latest development:

- It is reported that as many as 18 Palestinians, suspected of collaborating with Israel, were killed by Hamas on Friday.
- UNRWA expects to have about 292,000 persons in their shelters tonight, and to exceed 300,000 soon.
- A child in Israel has been reportedly killed by a mortar shell fired from Gaza.



2,042

Palestinians killed, including 1,444 civilians, of whom 478 are children and 246 are women.¹

66

Israelis killed, including 64 soldiers and two civilians. One foreign national also killed in Israel.

140

Families in Gaza have lost at least three or more members in the same incident, totaling 735 fatalities.

460,000

People hosted at UNRWA (280,000), government shelters and with host families.

60-70%

Of the water network supplying Gaza city is now reported to be functioning.

Situation Overview

Hostilities have continued during the reporting period resulting in additional Palestinian casualties. Little movement or economic activity is reported because of the pervasive insecurity, and while core and emergency operations continue, staff movement has been put on hold or reduced to a minimum. UNRWA reports that many staff in its health centers, which serve both the refugee and non-refugee population, could not reach their workplaces, and that four of its 12 distribution centers closed yesterday, impacting the ongoing UNRWA/WFP exceptional food distribution.

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) continues to rise, with at least 460,000 persons – more than a quarter of the entire Palestinian population of Gaza – now displaced. Some 83 out of UNRWA's 156 school buildings are currently serving

¹Data on fatalities and destruction of property is consolidated by the Protection and Shelter clusters based on preliminary information, and is subject to change based on further verifications.

+ For more information, see "background on the crisis" at the end of the report

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Coordination Saves Lives

as emergency shelters and, for safety reasons, all are located west of the former Israeli imposed “buffer zone”, encompassing some 44 per cent of the Gaza Strip. However, since the resumption of hostilities on 19 August, airstrikes have been increasingly directed towards targets in the west of the Gaza Strip, increasing the risk to those displaced sheltering in UNRWA schools. If airstrikes to the west of the former buffer zone continue, UNRWA will have to consider opening emergency shelters in installations which have been cleared of unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the former buffer zone and may have to potentially relocate some of the displaced. UNRWA and government schools will not be ready for the new school year which was scheduled to start this coming Sunday.

Hostilities and casualties

Since the last situation update, at least 12 persons, many of whose status still needs to be verified, have reportedly been killed, including one two-month-old baby who reportedly died from the consequences of gas inhalation in Rafah on 23 July. This brings the cumulative death toll among Palestinians since 7 July to at least 2,042, according to preliminary data collected by the Protection Cluster from various sources, including 359 persons who could not be yet identified or their status established. Of the initially verified cases, 1,444 are believed to be civilians, including 478 children and 246 women, and 239 members of armed groups. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, as of 20 August, 10,224 Palestinians, including 3,106 children and 1,970 women and 368 elderly, were injured.

During the reporting period, at least 16 houses were totally destroyed in Israeli air strikes. In the majority of cases the targeted houses had already been evacuated, but surrounding houses were also severely damaged or destroyed. Since the launch of the Israeli military operation, over a thousand homes have reportedly been directly targeted by Israeli airstrikes, and it is estimated that at least 17,200 housing units have been totally destroyed or severely damaged during Israeli air strikes and shelling from 7 July to 20 August. Human rights organizations have expressed serious concerns regarding incidents where civilians or civilian objects have been directly hit by Israeli airstrikes, in circumstances where there was allegedly no rocket fire or armed group activity in the close vicinity. Such cases raise concerns about the targeting of civilians, in violation of the principle of distinction.

Of particular concern is the alarming number of incidents since the onset of the emergency in which multiple members of the same family have been killed. As of 20 August, at least 140 families have lost three or more family members in the same incident, for a total of 735 civilian fatalities.

Among the most serious incidents recorded during the reporting period:

- At approximately 09:30 on 21 August, an Israeli plane fired a missile at an agricultural plot belonging to the Al Reefi family, to the north of Gaza City. Five family members were killed, including three children, aged four, six and 13, and four were injured, including two children.
- At approximately 11:20 on 21 August, an airstrike hit a group of workers as they were digging new graves in the Al Sheikh Radwan cemetery in the north of Gaza City. Four of the workers were killed and a fifth was critically injured.

Indiscriminate firing by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza into southern and central Israel continued. Most fell in open areas or were intercepted by the Iron Dome system but one Israeli man was wounded by mortar shrapnel on Thursday. Since 8 July, three civilians in Israel have been killed, including one foreign national, and dozens directly injured by rockets or shrapnel. The total number of Israeli military fatalities remains at 64.

Displacement

As of yesterday afternoon, there were 279,389 IDPs hosted in 83 designated UNRWA schools, up from 261,341 the previous day. Another 34,602 IDPs were hosted in seven government shelters supported by UNRWA, up from 29,030 the previous day. There is no update available on the 10,241 IDPs in 11 government schools managed by MoSA. 137,411 IDPs residing with host families have been registered and reached by various partners. In addition, an estimated several thousand IDPs are taking shelter in public buildings and informal shelters. However, it is anticipated that with the resumption of hostilities, these numbers are also rising and that there may be a need to open additional shelters in government schools, particularly in Gaza city.

Given the length of hostilities and the large numbers of IDPs overcrowding, adequate protection and hygiene are growing concerns. UNRWA has completed an assessment of all sources of non-potable water to the shelters. All networks and wells providing water to the schools have been repaired, and all designated emergency shelters are connected either to a municipality network, to a water well, or to both. However, these sources do not provide sufficient amounts of water for the displaced. In the Rafah and Gaza governorates, the municipality network provides water to the shelters every two days for two hours at a time. In the Khan Yunis governorate water is supplied every three days for 1.5 hours. In the North and Middle Area, shelters receive municipality water on a daily basis.

However, even if they have access to adequate quantities of water, IDPs in host families and shelters may continue to face difficulties with proper hygiene. It is reported that women are frequently very uncomfortable and embarrassed with the lack of privacy. In addition to showers installed in the Arabic toilets in all its emergency shelters, UNRWA has started to put into practice more permanent solutions to improve hygiene. In Khan Yunis, two bathing areas have been established in each shelter where women and children can use bucket showers. An additional eight will be established for men. Currently, UNRWA is planning to start building external showers starting with the 16 designated emergency shelters that were identified to continue as long-term shelters for displaced who have no home to return to.

The number of IDPs seeking shelter in UNRWA installations as a result of the conduct of hostilities is unprecedented in UNRWA's history. ... The anxiety, the stress caused by the constant shelling, the loss of loved ones and homes, as well as the overall lack of perspective for a life in Gaza contribute to increasing tensions in the overcrowded shelters.

UNRWA Gaza Situation Report, 21 August 2014.

Update on Services

Food

Although the Gaza Strip must import most of what is consumed, locally-produced food represents an important source of nutritious and affordable food, with some 28,600 households relying on farming (19,000 households), livestock raising (6,000) and fishing (3,600) for their livelihoods. The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimate that the recent hostilities have forced farmers and herders to abandon their lands, and resulted in substantial direct damage to Gaza's 17,000 hectares of croplands as well as much of its agricultural infrastructure, including greenhouses, irrigation systems, animal farms, fodder stocks and fishing boats. The poultry sector has been particularly affected, with half of Gaza's poultry (broilers and layers) killed as a result of direct damage or because of restrictions on tending and feeding them. Lack of electricity is affecting the storage capacity of fresh food for shops and households. Access restrictions to the sea, which were partially lifted on 17 August to three nautical miles (NM) from the Gaza shore, were reinstated again yesterday, with all fishing again prohibited.

The crisis has worsened an already extremely fragile environment in terms of food security and livelihoods. Around 66 per cent of the population of Gaza was receiving food assistance prior to this crisis and the household food insecurity level or vulnerable to food insecure stood at 72 per cent of households. An exceptional one-off food distribution by UNRWA, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), targeting families who do not regularly receive food assistance, is continuing with 415,000 out of a targeted 730,000 people now reached. This complements the standard food assistance to 1,150,000 people provided by UNRWA and WFP in collaboration with their partners.

WASH

During the ceasefire, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility CMWU was able to conduct temporary repairs to water and sanitation networks. The repairs concentrated on densely populated areas and reached an approximate coverage of eighty per cent for emergency access to water supply. An average 60 – 70 per cent of the network supplying Gaza city is now reported to be functioning.

However, preliminary findings from some communities interviewed during the joint rapid needs assessment revealed that water services, which are being delivered by municipalities are not always reaching the affected communities despite the best efforts. This is most likely due to hidden damages and frequent power cuts interrupting network pressure. For instance, in the Ash Shuja'iyyeh neighborhood, one carrier line that was not classified as damaged was found filled with mud and debris. Although water was being pumped into the system, households along the street were not receiving any water. The eastern part of the area is receiving one to two hours of water every other day, while the western part is receiving two to three hours every other day. In areas with a severe level of destruction, sections of pipelines have been closed in order to secure a minimum pressure in the network. However, with the restarting of hostilities, repairs and assessments have again stalled.

It remains my conviction that we must not leave Gaza in the condition it was in before this latest escalation. Otherwise, the restrictions on the Strip – on exit and entry of goods and people – will continue to fuel instability, underdevelopment and conflict, and I am afraid the next escalation will be just a matter of time

Robert Serry, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Briefing to the Security Council, 18 August 2014.

Key humanitarian priorities:

Protection of civilians: an immediate ceasefire is needed to protect civilians. While hostilities persist, all sides must respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack.

Humanitarian space: access for humanitarian workers to carry out life-saving activities should be ensured, among other reasons, to complete search and rescue operations in several areas, and repair critical water and electricity infrastructure. Removal of the threat of numerous UXO in built up areas is vital.

Joint needs assessments: the first phase initial rapid needs assessment, covering the governorate level, was launched on 13 August to inform responses by humanitarian organizations. The second phase, covering the municipal level, took place on 18 and 19 August. Information collected is being analysed to determine the overall level of humanitarian needs.

Additional fuel supply: fuel is needed to operate backup generators at essential facilities, including water, sanitation and health, for longer hours.

Strengthen response to IDPs: improving priority response to IDPs across facilities and with host families; ensuring common standards of response to IDPs throughout the Gaza Strip, including comprehensive and common registration.

Erez: Open for movement during normal working hours (08:00-16:00).

Beit Hanoun (Arba-Arba): Operational.

Kerem Shalom: Open as per its regular operating hours (08:00-16:00).

Rafah: Open from 09:00 to 15:00.

Humanitarian needs and response



Needs

- At least 373,000 children require direct and specialized psychosocial support (PSS). Children are showing symptoms of increasing distress, including bed wetting, clinging to parents and nightmares. Every child in the Gaza Strip is affected by the crisis and will require some level of psychosocial support.
- There is an urgent need to strengthen preventative measures to protect women and children against different forms of violence while they are displaced in overcrowded shelters and host families.
- Thousands of explosive remnants of war (ERW) are left in civilian areas affected by conflict, causing a major threat, especially to children, farmers, humanitarian workers and IDPs returning home. UN premises have also been contaminated by ERW.

Response

- Protection Cluster members are monitoring and investigating incidents to identify possible violations of international law, as well as consolidating information on civilian fatalities.
- CPWG partners are providing PSS interventions in shelters and in host families.
- PRCS continues to provide PSS interventions through UNWRA and governmental schools/shelters.
- UNICEF has reached 550,000 people in Gaza with life-saving and child protection SMS text messages, targeting the most vulnerable communities in Gaza.
- The Sawa Child Protection Helpline has so far taken more than 200,000 calls.
- Since 8 July, UNRWA Community Mental Health Programme (CMHP) has conducted 16,084 PSS sessions for 134,819 parents and recreational activities for 151,665 children. CMHP also coordinated and supervised the implementation of sessions by other partners covering 27,780 adult IDPs and 110,292 children.
- UNICEF, in partnership with Ma'an Development Center, is providing daily PSS and extracurricular activities to 2,000 children in six shelters in Gaza city managed by the MoSA.
- Overall, fifty UNICEF psychologists are providing counseling to 3,000 children.

- PEDCOM is providing awareness sessions for parents, recreational activities for children, individual counseling and group sessions and capacity building of pre-school teachers on identifying and responding to PSS distress in young children.
- ERW awareness campaign for families in UNRWA shelters continues. Radio and TV ERW awareness messages are broadcasted several times a day to spread awareness about the danger posed by unexploded ordnance.
- UNMAS is undertaking risk assessments in 5 governorates, and mainly for UNRWA installations. Clearance operations are being conducted by EOD police.
- UNMAS and child protection partners are also conducting Risk awareness/education, including to humanitarian workers and UNRWA staff.

Gaps and Constraints

- UNMAS is limited to conducting emergency responses;
- GBV needs assessment cannot be undertaken until the security situation improves.
- Local organizations are in great need of fuel and electricity to be able to continue conducting their interventions.
- Children and families are in desperate need of core child protection support and information, including psychosocial support; however the ongoing hostilities continue to impede movement of child protection staff and emergency psychosocial teams.
- Major electricity outages (two hours electricity a day) continue to hamper communication with staff and partners on the ground. Most child protection services remain closed.
- Children and families hosted in the community and in private schools remain largely unreached by child protection interventions.



Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

Needs

- It is estimated that 17,200 families (consisting of approximately 103,200 individuals) whose homes were totally destroyed or heavily damaged are in need of emergency NFI kits. In the medium term, they will require cash assistance to cover rental fees and basic household items.
- Emergency shelter repair items are needed for about 5,635 families (33,800 individuals), whose homes were damaged but are still inhabitable. Another 32,400 families (an estimated 194,400 individuals), whose homes sustained minor damage need basic NFI assistance such as nylon and plastic sheets.

Response

- 279,389 people are being provided with shelter in 83 designated UNRWA schools across the Gaza Strip and 34,604 individuals are sheltered in seven government shelters supported by UNRWA. There is no update available on the 10,241 in 11 government schools and then early 115,000 IDPs residing with host families have been registered and reached by various shelter partners.
- Shelter and WASH partners have provided household NFIs to 54,385 families and hygiene NFIs to 85,530 families since the beginning of the emergency. Standard household NFI kits include two mattresses and four blankets. Sometimes kitchen sets are also included, IDPs residing in shelter do not normally receive kitchen sets since there is no available capacity to cook. Such items are normally distributed to either IDPs with hosting families or those residing in damaged, but still inhabitable houses. Standard hygiene NFI kits usually include soap, shampoos, toothpaste, tooth brushes, towels, tissues paper and basic cleaning supplies.

Gaps and Constraints

- Cash assistance of more than US\$ 70 million is needed for 17,200 families to cover rental fees and urgent expenses.
- Emergency shelter kits are needed for 22,556 displaced families.
- 28,992 family hygiene kits are needed for IDPs with host families and in UNRWA and government shelters.

- Shelter NFIs such as plastic sheets and tarpaulin are needed for 32,400 families (approximately 194,400 individuals) whose homes sustained minor damage.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Needs

- Drinking water has to be supplied separately from the municipal network, as the latter is not potable.
- IDPs at host families lack sufficient sanitary facilities, affecting mostly women.
- Some of the water network was damaged in the fighting and needs to be repaired.
- Hidden damages to WASH infrastructure still need to be discovered.

Response

- During the ceasefire, water service providers conducted temporary repairs to water and sanitation networks, mostly in densely populated areas, reaching an approximate coverage of 80 per cent for emergency access to water supply.
- In areas with a severe level of destruction, sections of pipelines were closed in order to secure a minimum pressure in the network.
- CMWU continues to provide for all possible repairs and refurbishment of repairable facilities.
- Support to network and facilities repair provided to CMWU/service providers through ICRC, UNRWA, UNICEF, Oxfam GB and Ma'an Development Center to address urgent damage to the system; Save the Children also plans to provide support to repairs in North Gaza.
- PWA and CMWU have issued damage assessment reports and are currently formulating figures in terms of impact on population.
- Tankering of Drinking water to different areas and shelters across Gaza Strip continues through a number of partners including UNRWA, Oxfam GB, UNICEF with GVC and PHG, ANERA, PU and PARC.
- A total of nine public distribution points (bladders) each 5 m³ have been installed in Khan Yunis and Gaza city by UNICEF and Mercy Corps. An additional 2,299 water tanks each 1.5 m³ have been installed as filling points or distributed to effected families by several organizations.
- Over 250,000 litres of bottled water were distributed by ANERA, CHF and PARC.
- An Emergency Water Tankering Working Group, led by the Palestinian Water Authority has been established and PWA drafted a "Quality Standards for Drinking Water in Emergencies" tip sheet. This will help regulate the distribution process and control the prices.
- During the past week, the Municipality of Gaza collected over 1,800 tons of solid wastes off the streets and managed to access the main landfill in Juhor Ad Dik.
- MoLG has continued to spray a number of sites with pesticides as a vector control measure.
- 13,000 families have been reached by UNICEF through the WFP e-voucher system and have received basic hygiene items.
- Over 5,830 jerry cans have been distributed by a number of partners including UNICEF, GVC and PARC.

Gaps and Constraints

- The resumption of hostilities has stalled repairs and assessments as lack of security restricts movement and access.
- Lack of electricity and fuel is also a restricting factor.
- There are shortages in financial resources, water trucks, generators, storage, pumps and management capacity.



Health and Nutrition

Updates to this section will be provided on Monday, 25 August.



Food Security

Needs

- IDPs are in need of food and other immediate assistance.
- The entire population of Gaza has been affected by the conflict and almost all need food and other assistance to recover.
- An estimated 100,000 people whose homes were destroyed or damaged beyond repair will need food and other assistance for a longer term.
- Families relying on agricultural-related livelihoods need food, other immediate assistance and support in re-establishing their sources of income. An early recovery to re-establish their livelihoods and production capacity is required.
- Restock with animal vaccination against FMD, Brucellosis, Chlamydia and Sheep pox are needed for 64,000 head of small ruminants and 20,000 head of cattle.
- Humanitarian access to allow for provision of food and other emergency assistance to the civilian population should be consistently assured.

Response

- Despite ongoing hostilities, the regular food assistance to more than one million UNRWA and WFP core beneficiaries is ongoing.
- In addition, 415,000 out of around 730,000 people have been reached by the one-time exceptional food distribution to affected families who are not receiving regular food assistance implemented by UNRWA, WFP and the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- WFP, in cooperation with UNRWA, is providing ready-to-eat emergency food rations to IDPs in UNRWA and government shelters on a daily basis.
- WFP continues to provide food assistance to IDPs hosted with relatives and to patients and hospital staff.
- Food Security Sector (FSS) partners are delivering complementary food distributions to IDPs at UNRWA and government shelters.

Gaps and Constraints

- The ongoing military activity is putting food distribution and other humanitarian activities at risk.
- There is a lack of a proper mechanism to identify the most vulnerable groups relying on agricultural-related livelihoods and being heavily affected by the conflict.
- A lack of successful coordination at crossings complicates food delivery.
- Electricity shortages are affecting the storage capacity of fresh food for both shops and households.
- The price of some food items has gone up, including fresh fruit, vegetables and eggs, due to the large damage sustained to farms and agricultural lands, among other reasons.
- Immediate emergency funds to cover massively increasing food needs of IDPs and returnees are required.

Education

Needs

- According to field damage assessment, a total of 216 schools (141 government and 75 UNRWA schools) affected by shelling are in need of repair, including 22 completely destroyed.²
- UNRWA and government schools will not be ready for the new school year which was scheduled to start this coming Sunday.
- A lasting ceasefire is urgently needed to undertake unexploded ordnance clearance, damage assessments and repair work to damaged educational facilities, as well as preparation for the new school year.

Response

- The Education Cluster is coordinating with MoEHE and UNRWA regarding the new school year, and is engaged in ongoing assessments.
- The Education Cluster is also working with service providers to coordinate a special package for returning school students, with a focus on PSS support and recreational activities.

Gaps & Constraints

- Inadequate funding for cluster activities.
- The need for longer-term shelter for tens of thousands of IDPs will present significant challenges to the operation of schools currently being used as shelters.

Logistics

Updates to this section will be provided on Monday, 25 August.

General Coordination

The first phase of the joint rapid needs assessment, led by the EOC started on 13 August, and data analysis is ongoing. The second phase of the joint rapid needs assessment started on 18 August, covering 19 municipalities (some 80 assessment staff were involved and at least 250 key informants interviewed, including youth, persons with disabilities and elderly). The remaining six municipalities were covered on 19 August and the eight refugee camps will be covered as soon as the situation allows. Data collected will be entered on tablets and linked directly to a database. The information will be subsequently validated and analyzed, before it is disseminated. Protection and gender concerns have been integrated throughout the process as have questions on the information needs of affected communities.

Funding

Based on available information, funding to the Gaza Crisis Appeal stands at US \$176 million out of a total request of US \$367 million (48%), however, of this around US \$148 million is for UNRWA, US \$20 million for WFP and only US \$8 million for others, leaving large gaps to respond in other critical sectors such as Health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Education and Shelter and Non Food Items. Many key UN and NGOs partners identified for the Gaza response have received little to no funding to date for their projects in the Crisis Appeal. The Crisis Appeal is available online at www.ochaopt.org.

Donors and recipient agencies are kindly requested to report funding received to fts@un.org.

The Emergency Response Fund (ERF) is an additional mechanism available to fund interventions in Gaza through rapid and flexible support to affected civilian populations. The ERF has begun processing project applications in regards to the Gaza emergency. To date, thirteen project proposals were approved for a total of US \$3.1 million. Further funding for the ERF is still being sought.

² UNRWA has revised its damaged schools estimate from 90 to 75 buildings. The change was in part due to many schools operating in double shifts under different names.

UN humanitarian agencies, in cooperation with NGO partners have applied to the CERF Rapid Response window to cover urgent needs in food assistance, psychosocial support, WASH, rubble removal and critical drugs, and the request is under processing by CERF.

Background to the crisis

On 7 July 2014, the Israeli army launched a large military operation in the Gaza Strip, codenamed “Protective Edge”, with the stated objective of stopping Palestinian rocket firing at southern Israel and destroying the military infrastructure of Hamas and other armed groups.

This development marked the collapse of the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire understanding reached between Israel and Hamas in November 2012, which has been gradually undermined since December 2013. The latest escalation round started in early June, characterized by an intensification of Israeli airstrikes and rockets launched from Gaza at southern Israel. Tensions further increased following the abduction and killing of three Israeli youths in the southern West Bank, on 12 June, which the Israeli government attributed to Hamas. Overall, in the period leading up to the start of the current operation a total of 15 Palestinians, including one civilian, were killed, and another 58 others, mostly civilians, injured, as a result of Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip; seven Israelis, five of whom were civilians, were injured due to rocket fire.

The current crisis comes against a backdrop of heightened vulnerability and instability. Unemployment increased dramatically since mid-2013, following a halt of the illegal tunnel trade, exacerbating the impact of the Israeli blockade in place since June 2007. Additionally, former de facto government employees, including the security forces, have not been paid salaries regularly since August 2013 and no salaries at all since April 2014. Delivery of basic services has been also undermined due to an ongoing energy crisis, involving power outages of 12 hours per day.

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