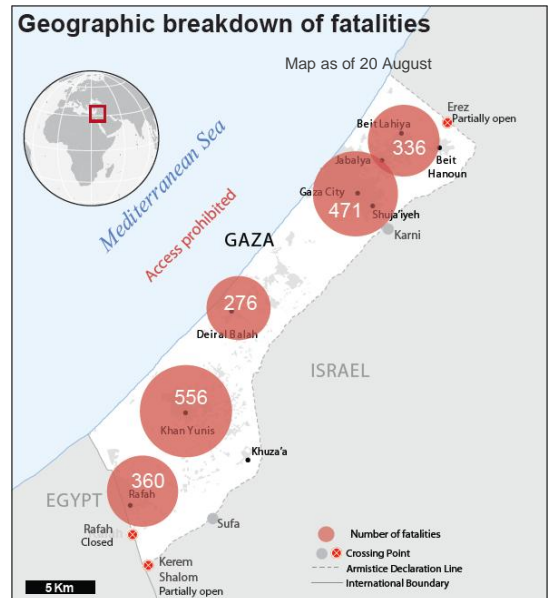




This report is produced by OCHA oPt in collaboration with humanitarian partners. This report covers the period from 25 August (08:00 hrs) to 26 August (08:00 hrs). The next report will be issued on 27 August.

Highlights

- The emergency is now in its 50th day. The Palestinian fatality toll is now 2,101 of whom 1,460 have been identified as civilians, according to preliminary assessments.
- Two more multi-storey buildings in Gaza were targeted and destroyed by the Israeli air force overnight.
- The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) remains at 475,000, more than a quarter of the entire Palestinian population of Gaza. Approximately 290,000 are taking shelter in UNRWA schools.
- Rafah and Erez passenger crossings have reopened today, despite damage sustained in previous days; Kerem Shalom commercial crossing closed today due to rocket fire from Gaza.



Latest Development: 13:15: A vehicle belonging to the Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation (GEDCO) was reportedly struck in Beit Lahia by an Israeli missile, killing two utility workers.

<h3>2,101</h3> <p>Palestinians killed, including 1,460 civilians, of whom 493 are children and 253 are women.¹</p>	<h3>67</h3> <p>Israelis killed, including 64 soldiers and three civilians. One foreign national also killed in Israel.</p>	<h3>142</h3> <p>Families in Gaza have lost at least three or more members in the same incident, totalling 739 civilian fatalities.</p>	<h3>5</h3> <p>High-rise buildings destroyed since Sunday.</p>	<h3>475,000</h3> <p>People hosted at UNRWA (approx. 290,000), government shelters and with host families.</p>
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Situation Overview

Hostilities in Gaza and southern Israel have now entered the eight week. The reporting period saw the continuation of a new Israeli trend of bombing high-rise buildings. Overnight, the Israeli air force fired multiple missiles that completely levelled the 16-storey structure known as ‘Little Italy’ in the Nasser neighbourhood of Gaza city. The building, which housed over 60 apartments and dozens of shops, was evacuated following warning calls. Another airstrike destroyed the 14-storey al-Basha building in the Rimal area of Gaza city. Although warning messages were also reportedly delivered in this incident, 15 people were injured.

The new trend is believed to be an intensification of the targeting of structures alleged to be the ‘command centres’ of armed groups or from whose vicinity projectiles have been fired. It is adding significantly to the number of displaced and depleting

¹ Data 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](#)

the number of housing units available to the long-term homeless, already estimated at over 100,000, as a result of the latest escalation in hostilities.

All three crossing points between Gaza and the outside world have come under attack over the past few days. The Erez passenger crossing between Gaza and Israel opened today, having closed on 24 and 25 August, due to mortar fire from Gaza on both days. The Kerem Shalom commercial crossing between Gaza and Israel opened today, but closed in the late morning following a security incident. The Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt is functioning, despite being hit by an Israeli airstrike early yesterday morning, which killed a security guard and caused extensive damage to the terminal. The crossing was also partially closed today while the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) deactivated unexploded ordnance.

Hostilities and casualties

Since the last situation update, at least 25 persons, many of whose status still need to be verified, have reportedly been killed. The figures consist of four civilians, including two children and one woman, and eight members of armed groups. Two of the fatalities died of wounds sustained earlier and one body was recovered from Rafah.

This brings the cumulative death toll among Palestinians since 7 July to at least 2,101, according to preliminary data collected by the Protection Cluster from various sources, including 376 persons who could not be yet identified or their status established. Of the initially verified cases, 1,460 are believed to be civilians, including 493 children and 253 women, and 265 members of armed groups. Approximately 25 Palestinians accused of collaborating with Israel have reportedly been killed in Gaza by armed groups since 21 August. These have not been included in the fatality toll above.

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, have been injured. Preliminary estimates indicate that up to 1,000 of the children injured will have a permanent disability. An estimated 373,000 children are showing symptoms of increasing distress, including bed wetting, clinging to parents and nightmares, and require specialized psychosocial support (PSS).

Of continuing concern is the number of incidents since the onset of the emergency in which multiple members of the same family have been killed. As of 25 August, at least 142 families have lost three or more family members in the same incident, for a total of 739 civilian fatalities.

Indiscriminate firing by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza into southern and central Israel continued. Most of the rockets fell in open areas or were intercepted by the Iron Dome system but up to 25 people were lightly injured when a house in Ashqelon was struck by a rocket. Since 8 July, four civilians in Israel have been killed, including one foreign national and dozens, including at least six children, directly injured by rockets or shrapnel. The total number of Israeli military fatalities remains at 64.

Displacement

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) remains at an estimated 475,000 persons – more than a quarter of the entire Palestinian population of Gaza. As of yesterday evening, there were 289,109 IDPs hosted in 85 designated UNRWA schools, and another 35,013 IDP hosted in seven government shelters supported by UNRWA. There is no update available on the 13,729 IDPS registered in 17 government schools managed by MoSA or the 140,895 IDPs residing with host families, who have been registered and reached by various partners. In addition, an estimated several thousand IDPs are taking shelter in public buildings and informal shelters.

Before the conflict, UNRWA, based on previous hostilities, had anticipated some 35,000 to 50,000 displaced people in its installations for a period of days in the event of a military escalation. The current number of IDPs represents six times the maximum number of displaced foreseen in its contingency plan and is unprecedented in the Agency's 64 years history in Gaza.

The exponential growth in the number of IDPs has placed the schools used as shelters under enormous strain - shelters are hosting an average of 3,400 persons each - requiring UNRWA to adapt its assistance mechanisms, shelter management and buildings to accommodate an extremely high number of IDPs for a prolonged period of time. With several failed humanitarian pauses and ceasefires over recent weeks, and the increase of airstrikes and shelling during the daytime, many families are hesitant to leave the shelters. Some of the families have already been displaced for more than six weeks.

Those displaced to UNRWA shelters, regardless of their refugee status, are assisted by a team who are experienced in emergency response. Each team consists of qualified staff including health professionals, teachers, social workers, psychosocial counselors, engineers, water focal points, security guards and operations managers. They are supported by community volunteers, cash for work beneficiaries, and shelter committees. UNRWA staff are trained to ensure that shelters remain neutral and that only civilians gain access to them. UNRWA also provides initial technical support to counterparts involved in establishing non-UNRWA shelters, and further contributes food and NFI assistance for the populations taking refuge in these shelters.

There are also reports of significant displacement in southern Israel, particularly among communities which are in range of mortar fire from Gaza, which the Iron Dome system is unable to intercept. Many families had evacuated at the beginning of the conflict in July, relocating to family and friends in more northerly locations, but returned during the extended ceasefire period,

only to evacuate their homes again since the resumption of hostilities last week. This movement has reportedly intensified after the killing of a four-year-old boy in one of the affected communities by a mortar shell fragment on Friday, with hundreds reportedly leaving yesterday. According to some sources, as many as 70 per cent of the 40,000 residents of communities near the Gaza border may now have left their homes.

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: Opened initially but closed at 11:30 following a security incident.

Rafah: Operational despite extensive damage suffered on 25 August.

Humanitarian needs and response

Updated information on needs and response will be included in tomorrow's situation report.

General Coordination

Yesterday, UNDP and OCHA met with the Minister of Public Works and Housing and the Minister of Social Affairs, as well as a representative of the Palestinian Energy Authority and the Manager of the Gaza Power Plant to discuss the energy situation in Gaza and possible ways forward. OCHA provided information on the impact of the lack of electricity on the humanitarian situation and emergency fuel distributions as coordinated by OCHA and delivered by UNRWA. One of the outcomes of the meeting was that a task force of key actors would be established to work in a more concerted way on energy issues; it was proposed that the task force would be chaired by the Palestinian Energy Authority.

Today, an OEC meeting was convened with the participation of Clusters / Sectors and OCHA. An IDP meeting to coordinate the IDP response was also held between OCHA, MoSA, and Clusters / Sectors today.

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. Clusters and sectors are currently engaged in ongoing analysis of the data generated from the two level needs assessments.

Funding

Today, UNRWA issued a revised version of its Flash Appeal which requests US \$296 million to cover immediate and basic needs during hostilities of up to 360,000 IDPs staying in emergency shelters and families not staying in shelters during hostilities who require food assistance. The appeal also requests support for those who will remain displaced or to support the return of IDPs following cessation of hostilities. A revised version of the Crisis Appeal will follow next week.

Based on available information, funding to the Gaza Crisis Appeal stands at approximately US \$177 million out of a total request of US \$367 million (48 per cent); the vast majority of this represents funding for UNRWA, as well as US \$20 million for WFP food assistance, 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, 13 project proposals were approved for a total of US \$3.1 million. Further funding for the ERF is still being sought.

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.

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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