



*Palestinian boy inspects the ruins of his home in Gaza City destroyed during the escalation.*

18 May 2021

## Highlights

- As of 18 May, sixty-two (62) Palestinian children in Gaza have been reported killed and 444 injured following eight days of intense exchange of rocket fire and airstrikes between Palestinian militants and Israeli Forces. Two Israeli children have been killed and five more injured.
- Severe unrest in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem has resulted in 3 Palestinian children killed. A total of 223 have been injured in the West Bank and 54 injured in East Jerusalem since 7 May.
- Hostilities in the Gaza Strip have resulted in the displacement of 72,000 persons, 47,000 of whom are being sheltered in UNRWA schools.
- A total of 44 schools and 15 health facilities in the Gaza Strip have suffered damage as a result of the intense hostilities.
- Following the release of pre-positioned medical supplies for 72,000 people in Gaza, UNICEF is urgently procuring additional life-saving medical supplies, including drugs, medical disposables, and lab materials. More supplies are expected to be delivered on 25 May, once the security situation allows.
- UNICEF has increased the operational hours of the Southern Gaza Seawater Desalination Plant (SGDP) from 4 to 8 hours by operating standby generators to enable water production of 1,500 cubic meters per day for 70,000 people.
- UNICEF is delivering Child Protection services through a helpline in the West Bank and Gaza which has reached 258 children to date. Procurement of essential education in emergency stationery kits adequate for 30,000 conflict affected children is underway.
- UNICEF requires an additional US\$ 7.71 million for the immediate response and preparedness measures for the escalation in Gaza and the West Bank.

## Humanitarian Needs

The heavy bombardment of the Gaza Strip in the past ten days has resulted in significant loss of life, destruction and displacement of thousands of people, half of whom are children. As of today, hostilities have resulted in the internal displacement of 72,000 persons in the Gaza Strip, with 47,000 persons seeking refuge in 58 UNRWA schools organised as Designated Emergency Shelters (DES) and about 25,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in host communities. Since 10 May, 213 Palestinians, including 62 children, 35 women (of whom three pregnant) and 116 men, have been killed in Gaza.<sup>1</sup> Additional injuries are expected from the continued escalation. As of May, two Israeli children have been killed and five injured. The Israel national paramedic service reported that 114 people in Israel were injured by shrapnel and 194 injured while running to shelters (as of 18 May)<sup>2</sup>. Verification is underway for other reported violations against children in all affected areas.

Between 7 and 17 May, severe unrest in the West Bank (WB), including East Jerusalem (EJ) has resulted in the death of 3 Palestinian children. The West Bank alone has seen injuries to 223 children by live ammunition, rubber-coated bullets, sound grenades, and tear gas. Children in East Jerusalem have also been impacted by violence and unrest, with 26 children arrested by Israeli authorities, and 54 children injured.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported damage to 15 health facilities, whilst the Education Cluster has indicated that 49 educational facilities have been damaged due to the aerial bombardment as of 17 May. Three schools are

# State of Palestine 'Escalation in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Israel'

Report No. 2  
18 May 2021

unicef   
for every child

## Situation in Number



**67** Children killed (65 Palestinian and 2 Israelis)



**449** Children injured (444 Palestinians and 5 Israelis)



At least **72,000** displaced seeking shelter in Gaza



**49** Educational facilities damaged



**15** Health facilities were damaged

**Situation Overview and**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/escalation-gaza-strip-west-bank-and-israel-flash-update-7-1200-17-may-2021>

<sup>2</sup> MDA Updates: Operation Guardian of the walls, 18 May 2021.

reported to have been damaged inside Israel following rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip. Damage to water and sanitation infrastructure in Gaza has also been reported, limiting the distribution of water and damaging sewage networks. This is of concern both for meeting immediate humanitarian needs and in view of infrastructure investments that will be required to secure water and sanitation provision for the population over the medium and long-term, as a result of the scope of damage.

The current escalation between Israeli Forces (IF) and Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, will undoubtedly lead to long-lasting consequences for children and their families. Violence is also now widespread affecting mixed Arab and Israeli communities inside Israel.

## Summary Analysis of Programme Needs and Response

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

According to the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), since the beginning of the escalation on 7 May, there is a drop of more than 40 per cent of the water supply to the Gaza population. Deterioration of water production capacity in Gaza due to electricity shortages from damaged power lines and destruction of water and sanitation facilities means an estimated 325,000 people in the Gaza Strip, out of whom 165,000 are children, will require humanitarian assistance to access safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Pipelines, sewage evacuation vehicles, tens of water wells and a wastewater pumping station have been damaged. On 10 May, the main electricity feeder from Israel to Rafah (line No. 9) was damaged, and electricity utility operators have been unable to repair it. This power line provided electricity to approximately 65 per cent of Rafah's WASH facilities (around 500 water and sanitation facilities), including the wastewater treatment plant and two main sewage pumping stations.

Prior to its closure, the Northern Gaza Desalination Plant was producing 10,000 mcm/day to serve around 250,000 inhabitants of Gaza City, and the Southern Gaza Desalination Plant was producing 6,000 mcm/day for 70,000 people in Khan Younis and Rafah governates. The Northern Gaza Desalination plant is now, however, non-functional due to staff safety concerns, while the Middle area plant and the Southern Gaza Desalination Plant are functioning four hours a day instead of the 12 hours during normal operations. Further, there is significant damage to the wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure, rendering almost all the treatment plants non-functional. Consequently, 120,000m<sup>3</sup> out of the 175,000m<sup>3</sup> of wastewater generated daily, is diverted into the sea as raw (untreated) sewage. Further, due to insecurity, staff are unable to access the sites to determine the scale of destruction to the plants and related infrastructure.

**Current Response:** The Gaza Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) is undertaking repairs to damaged water supply and wastewater pipelines using spare parts pre-positioned by UNICEF. UNICEF has also increased the operational hours of the Southern Gaza Seawater Desalination Plant (SGDP) from 4 to 8 hours by operating standby generators, thereby increasing water production by 1,500 cubic meters per day for 70,000 people in Khan Younis and Rafah governates. Additionally, UNICEF and its partners are assessing WASH infrastructure to determine the extent of damage and required actions. There is urgent need for the desalination plants and other water supply infrastructure to be operational and reliable to meet Gaza's minimum water supply needs and maintain sanitation services.

The WASH Cluster is working with partners to respond to the emergency and critical WASH needs focusing on providing and maintaining access to essential WASH services for the population affected by the current escalation. WASH partners are supporting service providers by providing pre-positioned critical operation and maintenance materials and procuring emergency fuel to maintain WASH services for the affected population. Much more is required to address the critical humanitarian needs.

**Planned Response:** In Gaza, in collaboration with WFP, UNICEF is providing essential dignity hygiene kits, and drinking water to meet the needs of 4,000 vulnerable households, and up to 16,000 children for one month, through e-vouchers. UNICEF is supporting essential repairs, operations and maintenance to damaged WASH infrastructure, providing support to service providers and civil society partners with a pipeline of essential fuel and WASH spare parts. In the absence of reliable power supply, UNICEF is also procuring 200,000 litres of fuel to ensure the operation of the three main desalination plants, thereby ensuring access to safe water. UNICEF is ready to provide essential WASH services in the Designated Emergency Shelters (DES) as well as for IDPs in other urban displacement centres as access to sites becomes possible.

### Child Protection (CP)

Psychosocial distress and trauma in children, families, caregivers and service providers is acute across the Gaza Strip as a result of the hostilities. Protection partners are reporting significant mental health distress and trauma from the constant barrage of rocket fire and missiles. Furthermore, there are now heightened risks of children being injured by contamination from Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). The majority of community-based protection interventions have been suspended due to the insecurity and destruction of road networks, including the suspension of in-person rehabilitation and psychosocial support services. The 12 UNICEF supported Family Centres, and 30 outreach sites are currently not operational.

**Current Response:** UNICEF has existing partnerships in place with five NGOs in East Jerusalem and two in the Gaza Strip, which provide Psychological First Aid, including specialist psychosocial support and counselling to children affected by the crisis. There are 143 available trained counsellors (51 in East Jerusalem and 92 in Gaza) although 85 counsellors in Gaza are currently not operational due to the intense shelling. UNICEF is working with a partner to deliver Child Protection services through a helpline in the West Bank and Gaza. In the last week the partner responded to 258 calls, 209 (81 per cent) of which were from Gaza. Of the calls from the Gaza Strip 84 calls were received from children (50 per cent girls), of which eleven children received psychosocial support (PSS). There were 49 calls from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, from persons in need of psychological first aid (PFA). In Gaza UNICEF has mobilised 348 Recreational Kits and 300 Psychosocial Kits to support child friendly spaces in the Designated Emergency Shelters for IDP children.

**Planned Response:** UNICEF will implement a remote CP and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) emergency response through partners, and if needed, as a service provider of last resort. This will include remote counselling; telephone hotlines; specialized CP services, including CP case management and referral to appropriate actors; PSS services and PFA; parenting support; identification of separated children and family tracing; and engagement with community-based CP networks. To expand and strengthen remote PSS counselling UNICEF is working with partners in the West Bank for trained psychosocial counsellors to support vulnerable children in the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, UNICEF plans to conduct a needs assessment and analysis, including mapping of CP risks through support to the joint Emergency Assessment Teams led by OCHA and remote protection monitoring through Governorate Protection Focal Points.

### Health and Nutrition

The current escalation risks worsening an already poor health situation in the Gaza Strip, where the struggling health sector is further burdened by a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of severe injuries and the COVID-19 pandemic, intensive care unit (ICU) occupancy in hospitals is currently at 43 per cent and is expected to rise as the ongoing bombing on Gaza continues. Strikes further damaged essential infrastructure, including roads leading to two of the main hospitals, resulting in an additional decline in the public's access to basic services. As the situation continues to escalate, there is a likelihood that the internal displacement of people might further increase the risk of spreading COVID-19 and impacting the COVID vaccination efforts. Of immediate concern is the Gaza power supply which has been reduced from four to eight hours per day, on average, with a number of feeder lines not functioning, disrupting the provision of healthcare and other basic services, including water, hygiene and sanitation.

As protests and confrontations continue across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the health cluster partners, and community volunteers continue to treat a substantial number of injuries. There is a growing concern about the number of live ammunition injuries, as it further threatens the security of medical staff attempting to reach those in need of medical services.

An estimated 2,500 women will give birth in the next week across Palestine (1,000 in Gaza and 1,500 in the West Bank). The ongoing crisis is impacting women's ability to give birth safely due to damage in health facilities, physical inaccessibility, airstrikes on the Gaza Strip and the closing of checkpoints across the West Bank. It is essential to ensure the continuation of life-saving services such as safe delivery and essential new-born care in order to prevent maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality. Assessments are ongoing to evaluate the impact of the escalation and emergency needs.

**Current Response:** Following the release of pre-positioned medical supplies for 72,000 people to the Gaza health system, UNICEF is urgently procuring life-saving medical supplies, including drugs, medical disposables, and lab materials to meet growing needs. UNICEF continues to support the health system to address COVID-19 prevention and treatment measures as well as for the provision of vaccines through the COVAX facility. On 25 May, a total of 102,960 doses of Pfizer vaccines are expected to be delivered to the State of Palestine through COVAX, from which 46,800 doses are planned to be delivered to the Gaza Strip. The delivery date of vaccines may be subject to postponement or temporary storage in a location inside Israel until delivery is possible due to the situation in Gaza. What needs to be factored in at present is a large number of uninoculated individuals grouped together in emergency shelters and its potential consequences. UNICEF, with UNFPA and partners in the Gaza Strip, are working on establishing a mechanism for the continued provision of essential maternal and child health care services including remote counselling on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) for the most vulnerable pregnant, lactating women and babies.

**Planned Response:** In collaboration with health cluster partners, UNICEF plans to support the procurement of essential drugs and consumables for 24,000 conflict-affected people in Gaza and East Jerusalem to cover needs for three months. The drugs and consumables are based upon a WHO-led assessment of the East Jerusalem hospitals and a request by the MoH in Gaza. UNICEF, jointly with partners is going to support around 200 malnourished young children in Gaza through the procurement of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RTUF) and high energy biscuits.

### Education and Adolescents

Nearly 600,000 school-age children are affected by the conflict in Gaza, half of which attend UNRWA schools. A further 21,300 education staff are also affected. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools in the Gaza Strip have been closed since 8 April and education is being provided through distance learning approaches. Children in the West Bank are

learning through a blended learning approach that combines distance and face-to-face learning. East Jerusalem schools re-opened fully on face-to-face but are at risk of closure if the current escalations are prolonged. With the current escalation in Gaza, it is unlikely that face-to-face learning will resume before the end of the academic year in mid-June 2021. As of 14 May, the education cluster received reports indicating that at least 49 schools have been affected and/or damaged in Gaza and three schools reportedly damaged in Israel. Verification of these reports will be conducted once the security situation permits.

The priorities for the Education Cluster are to ensure children in Gaza can continue learning as soon as the situation allows and that they receive remote mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS) during the crisis. UNICEF as co-lead for the Education cluster will coordinate to ensure that cluster partners have the capacity to rehabilitate any damage to schools as soon as the security situation allows.

**Current Response:** UNICEF is procuring essential education in emergencies stationery kits adequate for 30,000 conflict affected children. These supplies will help the most vulnerable children to continue learning and access distance education opportunities for the immediate response. Psycho-social support for 5,000 conflict affected children is in progress. The Education Cluster is collecting information on schools damaged due to the conflict.

The Education Cluster has identified priorities to ensure children can continue distance learning during the escalation and receive remote mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS). Additionally, the Education Cluster will coordinate to ensure that cluster partners have the capacity to rehabilitate any damage to schools as soon as the security situation allows.

**Planned Response:** UNICEF will work with partners, including the Ministry of Education, to assess and rehabilitate the damaged schools in time for school reopening for the next academic year in September 2021. UNICEF also plans to partner with local communities and organizations to support affected teachers and children with PSS, and with a local partner to organize peer support sessions within communities and with children. Teachers and volunteers will be given orientation on how to conduct these sessions to support children's learning and provide a protective environment. UNICEF plans to support children's summer activities to provide vulnerable children in Gaza with MHPSS support and catch-up programs to build resilience and prepare children carefully for transition to learning again, following months of schooling lost with the COVID-19 pandemic and escalation of the conflict, in collaboration with the protection cluster and the Child Protect Area of Responsibility. The Education Cluster will coordinate with partners for the provision of emergency supplies including fuel and stationery to support the MoE in Gaza to enable the timely and safe administration of the official 12th-grade exams.

#### **Communications for Development (C4D), Accountability to Affected Population**

The current escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the West Bank with the increasing number of casualties especially among children, requires strong communication with communities, especially children and young people. As the situation is expected to deteriorate, there is a heightened need for on the ground and digital engagement with the affected populations especially inside shelters. The need to ensure an effective feedback mechanism, (Accountability to the Affected Population and Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation), established with the affected population will be key in ensuring that community concerns and questions are timely addressed.

**Current Response:** UNICEF is working with other agencies, including UNMAS to support affected communities to access information, education and communication (IEC) materials including on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) to reduce the risk of vulnerable populations in the Gaza Strip from injury to unexploded ordinance. UNICEF also continues to support evidence-based community awareness-raising through Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) work around the conflict and COVID-19 prevention, given that the State of Palestine continues to face the second wave of COVID-19.

**Planned Response:** UNICEF, with other agencies and implementing partners, will support youth mobilization and community engagement activities inside and outside Designated Emergency Shelters.

#### **Social Protection**

The current crisis adds to existing vulnerabilities and it is likely to increase poverty, vulnerability and loss of livelihoods exacerbating an already dire situation.

**Current Response:** UNICEF is completing a pilot cash transfer to the most vulnerable households in the Gaza Strip through the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) as part of the COVID-19 response.

**Planned Response:** UNICEF will continue to work with the MoSD and WFP to provide humanitarian cash and voucher support to the most vulnerable affected households to provide humanitarian social protection support including given high levels of underlying poverty in the Gaza Strip.

#### **Supplies Overview**

##### **UNICEF has:**

- 50 Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits to support around 2,500 children in 25 ECD spaces.

- 348 Recreation kits to support around 31,000 displaced children in child-friendly spaces for 2 months.
- 118 stationery kits and school bags to support 118 children for the remaining month until schools close in mid-June; 416 recreational kits to support 20,800 children, and 10 adolescent kits to support 500 adolescents.
- 300 Psycho-Social kits to support around 1,500 children in 300 families in households.
- 16 collapsible water tank with a capacity of 10,000 litres to benefit around 5,300 affected or displaced people per day (water consumption 30 l/c/d), and 16 collapsible water tank with a capacity of 5,000 Litter to benefit around 2,560 people (water consumption 30 l/c/d).
- 19,497 collapsible jerry cans with a capacity of 20 litres to benefit around 12,998 affected/displaced people per day.
- 828 non-food item (NFI) kits (including jerry cans, garbage plastic bags, and laundry bucket) to benefit around 4,223 affected people and has 283 NFI kits (including winter blankets, mattresses, and pillows) to benefit 1,443 affected people.

## Coordination

Coordination UNICEF is a key member of the Humanitarian Country Team and leads the WASH Cluster and co-leads the Education Cluster with Save the Children. UNICEF also leads the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP-AOR) and it plays an important role in the Emergency Communication Center in Gaza. UNICEF is working with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to revise the current Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). UNICEF response will be fully aligned with the HRP and will also inform the revision of the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal. .

## Funding Status\*

The current UNICEF State of Palestine HAC appeal for 2021 is severely underfunded and is being further increased to integrate the new requirements to respond to the escalation of conflict. UNICEF **urgently needs \$7.71 million** to respond to the life-saving and growing needs—of this, \$3.49 million is required to cover critical response until mid-July 2021 and \$4.22 million is for preparedness measures should the conflict continue to escalate (full details of this immediate funding requirement are outlined below).

Based on preliminary government and cluster assessments in Gaza and hospitals in East Jerusalem, the urgent \$ 7.71 million is to address the immediate and dire needs of the affected populations and adopt essential preparedness measures for three months to ensure continuity of humanitarian assistance. Nonetheless, considering the field developments and potential transformations, including escalation and extension of the crisis, preparedness measures are to ensure required capacities are in place to address the potential emerging needs in the field. This requirement is not covering the exigencies of the worst-case scenario in the inter-agency contingency plan. The situation will continue to be monitored and requirements will be revised according to the needs.

To ensure immediate scale up and response, UNICEF has reprogrammed \$200,000 from UNICEF regular resources, and \$635,000 was reprogrammed from Other Resources following agreements with donors. In addition, a loan of \$1.5 million was released from UNICEF's Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) until additional funding support is mobilized. The Country Office is working in close collaboration with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to mobilise resources through the CERF, the Humanitarian Pooled Fund, and other partners. Given the fluidity of the situation, flexible resources will be critical for the response.

## Urgent Funding Requirements for the immediate response and preparedness

Sector	Urgent Requirements	Preparedness Requirements	Total
Health	\$ 1,300,000	\$ 885,000	\$ 2,185,000
WASH	\$ 1,080,000	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 2,880,000
Child Protection	\$ 390,000	\$ 142,500	\$ 532,500
Education	\$ 240,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 740,000
Social Protection	\$ -	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
Communication for Development/ RCCE	\$ 62,300	\$ 75,000	\$ 137,300
Nutrition	\$ -	\$ 59,000	\$ 59,000
Cluster Coordination	\$ 114,145	\$ 137,326	\$ 251,471
Operational Support	\$ 308,500	\$ 371,150	\$ 679,650
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 3,494,945</b>	<b>\$ 4,219,976</b>	<b>\$ 7,714,921</b>

UNICEF State of Palestine: <http://www.unicef.org/oPt>

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UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children 2021: [https://www.unicef.org/appeals/state\\_of\\_palestine.html](https://www.unicef.org/appeals/state_of_palestine.html)

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