



1537

Number of  
Palestinians killed in  
Gaza

6612

Number of  
Palestinians injured  
in Gaza

35

Number of  
Palestinians killed in  
the West Bank

650

Number of  
Palestinians injured  
in the West Bank

76\*

Attacks on Health  
Care since 7 October  
2023

Ministry of Health figures

\* From WHO SSA

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

- In the early morning hours of October 7, Hamas fired thousands of rockets into southern and central Israel. A senior Hamas military commander later announced the launch of Operation “Al Aqsa Storm”, which was joined by other armed Palestinian groups and is still ongoing.
- Israel has declared a state of war and a large-scale military operation is ongoing in Gaza.
- Fighting continues between Israeli forces and the armed Palestinian groups that infiltrated Israeli towns, cities, and military facilities near the Gaza Strip. According to Israeli official sources, **1300 Israelis, including foreign nationals have been killed** and more than **3,391 injured**. The media reports that up to 150 members of the Israeli armed forces and civilians have been captured and taken to Gaza.
- The ongoing air, sea and land strikes on Gaza continue, demolishing densely populated areas - including homes, schools, medical facilities, and other public health infrastructure - rapidly increasing the number of casualties and fatalities, and acutely displacing huge numbers of people. More than 423,000 people have been displaced, of whom over two thirds are sheltering in UNRWA schools.

- The complete blockage of the Gaza Strip announced by Israel remains in effect. Israeli authorities have stopped their electricity and water supply to the Gaza Strip and no movements of food, fuel, health, other humanitarian supplies or patients are allowed – worsening the already dire situation.
- The situation remains tense in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, with an increase in confrontations between settlers, Israeli forces and Palestinians.
- Numerous restrictions on movement put in place by Israeli authorities continue. Many checkpoints between the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Israel remain closed. The Allenby Crossing between Israel and Jordan is closed for Palestinians. Ben Gurion airport is operational, but most flights are cancelled.

## HEALTH NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

- **Humanitarian corridor needed** – Lack of access is preventing the delivery of life-saving assistance to the Gaza Strip, which will worsen the crisis and increase deaths. A humanitarian corridor must urgently be set up to facilitate the unimpeded movement of lifesaving humanitarian and health supplies, personnel, and patient referrals.
- **Acute shortage of medical supplies** –The number of casualties continues to grow, emergency, trauma, and surgical supplies are rapidly running out at hospitals and health partners’ warehouses. There is a shortage of blood at hospital blood banks in the Gaza Strip. In the last 24 hours, there have been 15 admissions to ICUs and 106 surgeries, at hospitals in Gaza, which are already at capacity. Medicines for communicable and non-communicable diseases for the treatment of the sick are in short supply. Restrictions on movement are severely obstructing WHO and partners’ ability to replenish dwindling stocks.
- **Access to essential health services must be maintained** – This is especially the case for emergency obstetric care, management of non-communicable diseases, and treatment of common infections. Rapid scale up of mental health and psychosocial services is also a priority, especially for health workers who have been working round the clock in a worsening situation.
- **Reinforcement of surveillance and control efforts for infectious diseases is vital** – The damage to water and sanitation infrastructure and overcrowding in displaced persons settlements increase the risk of disease outbreaks.
- **The Gaza power plant has run out of fuel and stopped functioning** - Hospitals are relying heavily on generators to maintain critical health services. However, fuel is quickly running out. Shifa Hospital, one of the largest in Gaza, has announced that it only has two days of fuel supply left. Other hospitals also only have a few days’ worth of fuel remaining in stock. There is also an increased demand for fuel for ambulances, due to the huge number of casualties. Hospital and health partners are forced to use contingency stocks, which are fast depleting. Disruption in health services will worsen the crisis.
- **The situation is worsening in the West Bank** – There is a high demand for emergency medical supplies at hospitals. Less than two weeks’ worth of blood is available at blood banks. Checkpoint closures, insecurity, movement restrictions, and attacks on health are making movement of ambulances difficult, amidst the rising number of calls for help.

## HEALTH ATTACKS

- WHO has documented 76 attacks on health care in the occupied Palestinian territory since 7 October:
  - 34 attacks in the Gaza Strip have resulted in 11 fatalities of health care workers on duty, 16 injuries, and affected 19 health care facilities and 20 ambulances.
  - The Gaza Emergency Operation Centre, supported by WHO, has sustained heavy damages.
  - 42 attacks on health care in the West Bank affecting 42 ambulances and including 28 attacks involving obstruction to delivery of health care; 20 involving physical violence towards health teams; 11 involving detention of health staff and ambulances; and seven involving militarised search of health assets.

## HEALTH ACCESS

- Beit Hanoun (Erez) checkpoint remains inaccessible due to the security situation; no entry of medical supplies to Gaza is permitted through the Karam Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom checkpoint, and following airstrikes by Israel, the Rafah crossing with Egypt remains closed.
- From the Gaza Strip, an estimated 130 referral patients and their companions each day require access across Beit Hanoun (Erez) checkpoint to reach scheduled medical appointments.

- Six of the seven main hospitals in Gaza are at a breaking point and only partially functioning. Beit Hanoun Hospital is non-functional because of the repeated air strikes in its vicinity, causing damage to the hospital and surrounding roads. Ninety-nine per cent of the beds at Shifa Hospital, which is one of the main surgical hospitals, are occupied. Twenty-three Ministry of Health primary health care clinics that have the capacity to provide minor surgeries, stitches, dressing and health care for medical emergencies are also helping in treating the injured.
- Insecurity and damage to infrastructure is making it difficult for ambulances to reach those in need and for the injured and sick to get to health facilities.

## WHO RESPONSE

- WHO has secured \$3 million from the WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies for the immediate procurement of essential medications and supplies. Additionally, it is reprogramming \$1 million to procure urgently needed medical supplies from the local market to ensure the continuity of essential health services, including emergency obstetric care, management of chronic diseases, and infectious disease control.
- WHO is also working with the Ministry of Health to ensure access to mental health and psychosocial services for the most vulnerable among the population.
- WHO is collaborating with MOH and partners, including UNRWA, to ensure that disease surveillance and control measures are reinforced, especially in over-crowded schools and other collective centers where displaced persons are congregating.
- WHO trauma and surgical supplies pre-positioned at hospital were consumed within the first 24 hours of the ongoing emergency. Further supplies to the Ministry of Health were provided by WHO on 10 October to support the treatment of up to 500 severely injured people.
- WHO-supported mass casualty response plans and protocols were activated in seven Gaza hospitals, however, the Beit Hanoun is now non-functional and staff has been re-deployed to the Indonesian Hospital. WHO has previously provided extensive mass casualty management training to health workers at all seven hospitals.
- Plans for the delivery of additional resources are in progress as part of the overall UN Flash Appeal. WHO is ready to dispatch trauma and essential health supplies through its Dubai Logistics Hub and is coordinating with Egypt and the Palestine Red Crescent partners to ensure these could reach under pressure health facilities.
- WHO continues to systematically monitor health attacks within the Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care, as well as to document and report on health needs and restrictions on health access.

## HEALTH RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

- The Health Cluster's Flash Appeal of \$23.1 million has been launched to cover the needs of 600,000 people over 3 months. The appeal focuses on the procurement of urgently needed trauma and emergency care drugs, medical disposables, equipment, and laboratory supplies. In addition to these, the appeal also includes support to pre-hospital emergency medical services, early rehabilitation together with other essential health services for noncommunicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health, mental health, and maternal and child health.
- Surge staff deployed by Health Cluster partners are continuing to support case management at Gaza hospitals. Two Gaza National Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) have been deployed to support Shifa, Aqsa, and Abu Yousuf Al Najjar hospitals in expanding their emergency departments' capacity and open new Green Zones (for walking patients to receive treatment) within the hospitals. WHO-provided emergency tents and equipment are being used for this purpose.
- Access to essential health services is disrupted across the Gaza Strip. Normally there are close to 20,000 primary health care consultations per day, and nearly 8,500 daily secondary health care consultations, including 184 deliveries per day.
- Health Cluster partners continue making efforts to procure medical supplies from the local market to support critical hospital operations, however, the market is now severely depleted.
- In the West Bank, the Health Cluster partners have deployed mobile health clinics to treat the injured in far-flung locations in Nablus and Ramallah. Volunteers are also providing first aid to the injured, in their respective areas in the West Bank.

## WHO RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish a humanitarian corridor to facilitate the immediate entry of humanitarian and health supplies into the Gaza Strip and unimpeded access for patients for outside referrals.
- Immediate end to hostilities.
- Ensure the protection of civilians against attacks, including acts of retaliation.
- Ensure respect and the protection of health care at all times.
- Ensure the injured have immediate and unhindered access to health care.
- Ensure continuity of essential health services.
- Rapidly reinforce infectious disease surveillance and control measures.

### Further information:

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