



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
occupied Palestinian territory

# PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS UPDATE ESCALATION IN HOSTILITIES IN GAZA AND SOUTHERN ISRAEL

20 NOVEMBER 2012 1500 HRS

*This humanitarian situation report is produced by OCHA oPt, in collaboration with humanitarian partners, including the clusters and sectors.*

## Key issues

- ❖ As of 13.00 hrs today, since the beginning of hostilities on 14 November, 70 Palestinian civilians, including 23 children and 12 women, have been killed.
- ❖ Three Israeli civilians have been killed and 169 are reported injured, the vast majority civilians..
- ❖ The targeting by the Israeli military of residential properties in Gaza continues, resulting in increasing civilian casualties.
- ❖ The indiscriminate rocket firing from Gaza at Israeli residential areas today resulted in an increase in the number of directly hit homes, civilian injuries and displaced people.
- ❖ While intensive negotiations to broker a ceasefire intensify, Gaza civilians are leaving their homes in increasing numbers to find refuge following warnings from the Israeli Defence Forces.

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

The current Israeli offensive in Gaza enters its seventh day with Israeli airstrikes and shelling from land and sea continuing. According to Ministry of Health sources, at least 38 people were reported killed on Monday 19 November, most of whom appear to be civilians, with 60 injured including 25 children. Among the fatalities, were two children and their father in Jabalia Camp from an Israeli airstrike; twenty others were injured including seven family members. In total, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) announced that it had targeted approximately 100 sites throughout the Gaza Strip overnight, including underground rocket launchers and ammunition storage facilities, Hamas 'command and control centres' and the Islamic Bank in Gaza City. Localities targeted included the highly populated areas of Jabalia, the Ash Shuja'iyyeh and Az Zaitoun neighbourhoods in Gaza city, Khan Yunis City and the eastern villages, refugee camps in the middle area, Rafah City and the tunnels between

Gaza and Egypt. The Protection Cluster reports<sup>1</sup> that, in total, as of 13.00 hours on Tuesday, over 105 Palestinians are reported to have been killed, including 70 civilians, of whom 23 are children and 12 are women, according to Gaza Ministry of Health data. According to MoH data, as at 10.00 on 20 November, 890 injured Palestinians had been admitted to hospital, the vast majority of whom are civilians. Unconfirmed reports indicate that up to seven alleged Palestinian collaborators were killed today in the Gaza Strip. In addition, initial reports on Tuesday 20 November indicate that approximately 13 people have been killed.

The IDF reported that on Monday 19 November some 135 rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip towards Israel, of which 67 struck targets in Israel, mainly open areas, and 42 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile system. Rocket fire from Gaza continued on 20 November, especially in the south of Israel, with over 100 rockets up to 15:00, including two missiles landing south of Jerusalem

1. Information is collected by OHCHR, PCHR, Al Mezan and B'Tselem, with reference to Ministry of Health, Gaza, data.



in the West Bank. In the 24 hours up to 1500 hrs on Tuesday, nine Israeli civilians and one soldier were reported injured. Since the beginning of the offensive three Israeli civilians have been killed and 169 injured, the vast majority of whom are civilians, according to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

In the afternoon of 20 November, the Israeli Air Force dropped leaflets on a number of localities in northern Gaza and in Gaza City ordering the residents of these areas to vacate their homes and to relocate to other areas of Gaza City through specified routes. This is adding to the sense of fear and uncertainty among civilians concerning the possibility of a new Israeli offensive and is adding to displacement which has been relatively contained until now, as Gazans heed the warnings and take refuge with relatives and in schools. In response, UNRWA has opened 10 schools to cope with the displacement of up to 6,000 individuals. Reportedly, two Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) schools in Jabalia were entered by approximately 100 internally displaced persons (IDPs) each seeking refuge.

There is growing concern in Gaza about protection of civilians in light of rising civilian deaths and injuries, especially children, as a result of the targeting of residential areas in the last few days. Of particular concern are incidents where multiple members of the same family (and their neighbours) are victims. The capacities of the civil defence teams are being stretched to their limits, especially where high-rise buildings are targeted and given that technical equipment is lacking or has been degraded in recent years because of import restrictions due to the blockade.

The situation in the West Bank has deteriorated further with widespread demonstrations reported across the West Bank on 19 and 20 November with frequent clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli military. Two fatalities were reported and numerous injuries have been reported.

The ongoing violence in Gaza and the West Bank is taking place amid international efforts led by Egypt aimed at brokering a ceasefire. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has arrived in the region to contribute to efforts to reach a ceasefire.



## Crossings

**Rafah crossing:** The crossing continues to be open. On 19 November, 380 people arrived in Gaza and 554 others crossed into Egypt; 36 people were denied passage.

**Kerem Shalom crossing:** The crossing opened today 20 November before closing early due to shelling from Gaza. A total of 24 trucks arrived in Gaza carrying fruit, flour, biscuits, sheep, cooking gas and UNRWA fuel; normally, Kerem Shalom processes an average of 250 trucks of imports a day.

**Erez crossing:** was open on 19 November, allowing 31 travellers to cross into Israel (10 foreigners and 21 humanitarian cases) and an additional 80 travellers to cross from Israel into Gaza.



## Electricity

During the reporting period, minor damage was reported to local electricity networks across Gaza during air strikes, causing longer hours of blackouts in some areas. The Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO) reports that attempts to repair these networks, as well as an Israeli feeder line in the Khan Yunis area, have remained unsuccessful due to the security situation.

Yesterday 19 November, the Gaza power plant received 380,000 liters of fuel, which enabled it to keep operating one out of four turbines during day time and two turbines at night. Electricity production remains well below the full capacity of the plant (between 35 and 60 out of 120

megawatts). Scheduled blackouts across Gaza have remained at 8-12 hours per day.

According to local sources, over 600,000 liters of diesel and 400,000 liters of petrol entered through

the tunnels yesterday, allowing less than 50 per cent of the Gaza fuel stations to function partially. Given the long electricity outages, fuel is of critical importance to operate back-up generators.

## UPDATES BY CLUSTERS



### Protection

The growing number of civilian casualties, including the large proportion of children, continues being the major concern. In light of the reported warnings delivered by the IDF in certain areas, calling civilians to leave, members of the Protection Cluster have reiterated that such warnings do not diminish the obligation of Israeli forces to abide by the principles of distinction between civilians and civilian objects, and combatants and military targets, as well as by the principles of proportionality and precaution.

Concerns continue regarding the psychosocial impact of the conflict on Gaza's children. It is estimated that a significant number of them will require some form of professional psychosocial support. Specific groups in desperate need of support include the approximately 6,800 children whose homes have been destroyed or damaged.

There is also growing concern with regard to the large number of explosive remnants of war (ERW) in the streets of Gaza. This has created a significant risk to the population and humanitarian workers, which is exacerbated due to the current inability of the local police to remove dangerous items. Specialized UN agencies (UNMAS and UNICEF) are preparing for the rolling-out a rapid risk awareness rising response plan.



### Food Sector

The World Food Programme (WFP) distribution with CHF for the November and December 2012 cycle was launched today in Gaza and Khan Yunis. A total of 573 metric tonnes (MT) of food

commodities was distributed to 3,000 families (approximately 25,800 beneficiaries). Tomorrow, WFP and partners plan to continue distribution in Khan Yunis and Middle Area in 10 distribution points.

Due to displacement that took place in the afternoon of today, UNRWA, WFP and other UN partners prepared for an emergency response. Currently the UNRWA/WFP plan for food distribution is to distribute a ready-to-eat ration at UNRWA schools, both for refugees and non-refugees, using existing UNRWA and WFP stocks. The ration includes canned food, bread, date bars and current stocks and will cover major requirements for at least 1-2 weeks.

### **Wheat flour stocks in Gaza**

The total stock of wheat grains available at Gaza mills as of today 20 November is 4,900 MT, sufficient to cover the needs of the population for approximately 8 days.

All bakeries in Gaza Strip are operating normally.



### Health

The significant shortage of drugs and disposables continued to be the major impediment undermining the ability of Ministry of Health (MoH) hospitals in Gaza to cope with large numbers of injuries. Currently, 192 drugs (40 percent of the essential list), and 586 medical disposables (65 percent of the essential list) are out of stock. The MoH continues postponing all elective surgeries because of the shortages of anesthesia, as well as transferring non-urgent

cases to NGO hospitals. Since the beginning of hostilities, four health staff have been injured and six ambulances sustained damage during air strikes. The MoH reports that 22 patients have been referred to hospitals in Egypt for further treatment.



## Shelter and Non-food Items (NFI)

To date, it is estimated that at least 140 houses have been either destroyed or sustained major damage during Israeli attacks, with some 57 houses damaged in the last 24 hours. Additionally, more than 1,000 houses (including 280 in the last 24 hours) have sustained minor damage. These figures might be underestimated, as some areas remain inaccessible due to the high insecurity levels.

Today (20 November), UNRWA opened 10 schools to accommodate displaced people. Seven of the schools are located in Gaza City and are accommodating around 4,000 individuals, while three in northern Gaza are accommodating around 2,000 individuals. Reports from this afternoon suggest that two Ministry of Education schools in Jabalyia (Haleema El Sardiya and El Fouja) are now hosting approximately 100 displaced people each.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has so far provided plastic sheets for nearly 950 families, whose houses have sustained minor to moderate damage. UNRWA has also provided NFI, primarily blankets and mattresses, to some 30 families in northern Gaza, to facilitate their accommodation with hosting families.



## Agriculture

Since the beginning of the Israeli offensive, the majority of agricultural activities have come to a complete halt. Agricultural infrastructure, including poultry farms, mainly those located in east sections of central Gaza, has sustained damage. This is of concern, as locally produced chicken constitutes an important source of nutrients and protein in the Gazan diet, accounting for over three quarters of the overall meat consumption. Additional damage reported during the reporting period include one irrigation well in the Beit Lahia area and 15 camels killed in south Gaza.



## Education

Schools in Gaza have remained closed for the seventh day in a row, with reports of more than 462,000 students enrolled in basic and secondary schools losing at least four schooling days. Reports indicate that a total of 40 educational facilities, including 38 schools and two kindergartens have sustained some type of damage since the beginning of hostilities. The schools include 31 run by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 6 UNRWA schools and one private school. So far, six school staff have been killed.