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Immediate Needs Document in the State of Palestine

October – December 2023

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UNICEF SoP | ESCALATION URGENT NEEDS

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Since the start of the escalation on 7 October, large-scale grave violations against children have been reported in Israel and in the State of Palestine, including the killing and maiming of children, abductions, and attacks on civilian infrastructure and essential public services such as schools, WASH, and health facilities, including ambulances and health personnel. The hostilities have led to grave humanitarian consequences, with lives, homes, schools, medical facilities, and infrastructure damaged and destroyed.¹

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, at least 2,670 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been killed,² including at least 724 children³, with 9,600 people injured⁴, including 2,450 children⁵. Over 638,000 people are internally displaced within the Gaza Strip⁶, sheltering in schools or with relatives. UNRWA has reported that 102 UNRWA schools are used as designated shelters, hosting more than 270,000 people, while another 29 public schools run by the Palestinian authorities are also sheltering internally displaced people.⁷

Israeli sources report that at least 1,300 Israelis have been killed and 3,842 injured.⁸ No disaggregated data is yet available on Israeli children killed and injured, but initial reports indicate many casualties among children. According to Israeli sources, at least 155 Israelis, among them children⁹, have been captured and forcibly taken into the Gaza Strip.¹⁰

Since 7 October, 48 attacks on health¹¹ and 170 attacks on education facilities¹² have been reported in the Gaza Strip, with health attacks resulting in 12 fatalities and 20 injuries among healthcare staff, and nine attacks on health reported in Israel. In the northern Gaza Strip, 22 hospitals serving 2,000 inpatients have received orders to evacuate.¹³ The situation has reached dramatic levels. Fuel has run out, and the Gaza Power Plant is reportedly out of service as of the afternoon of 11 October 2023.

Additionally, the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remains tense. At least 58 Palestinians, including 16 children, were killed in various areas across the West Bank since 7 October 2023, and the Ministry of Health reported that 1,200 Palestinians were injured are reported injured.¹⁴ Most of the checkpoints in the West Bank remained closed, further exacerbating movement restrictions on the population.

¹ Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lynn Hastings, on the hostilities between Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip and Israel.

² As of 17:45, 15th October (MoH Gaza)

³ Children figures are as of 12:00, 14th October (MoH Gaza)

⁴ As of 17:45, 15th October (MoH Gaza)

⁵ Children figures are as of 12:00, 14th October (MoH Gaza)

⁶ OCHA oPt - Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #7, 13 October.

⁷ OCHA oPt - Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #6, 12 October

⁸ As of 17:30, 15th October (MoH Israel).

⁹ Including members of the Israeli forces, and Israeli and foreign civilians, among them women and children.

¹⁰ OCHA oPt - Escalation in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #5

¹¹ WHO, 12th October

¹² Education Cluster, 15th October

¹³ WHO, 14th October

¹⁴ As of 18:00, 15th October (MoH)

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Before this latest violence, children in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank including East Jerusalem were significantly affected by conflict-related violence¹⁵, and one million children were already in need of humanitarian aid – almost half the child population. In the Gaza Strip, more than 816,000 children were identified in need of mental health and psychosocial support following six rounds of armed conflict since 2008 and daily protection issues. This is compounded by the dire socio-economic and humanitarian situation, particularly that for children – resulting in increased vulnerabilities and a noticeable deterioration in the quality of people's lives.

The magnitude of the recent hostilities is leading to grave humanitarian consequences¹⁶ and is further putting children in the Gaza Strip and their families at risk, as well as their access to essential basic services. Delivery of social services, including WASH, health, and education, is impacted. The entry of food and fuel has also been restricted for the last week.

The electricity cuts are affecting WASH and health services, in particular hospitals that now rely on backup generators. All health facilities struggle to provide adequate medical care without electricity, power medical equipment, and refrigeration for medicines are totally saturated with the increased numbers of injured people.

People across the Gaza Strip have severely limited access to clean drinking water. Most of the water systems are non-operational due to damage to the infrastructure, lack of fuel or/and access constraints. According to the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), water production capacity is at 5 per cent of the normal daily production. As a last resort, people are consuming brackish water from agricultural wells, which is unfit for human consumption. The lack of safe water and the spread/overflow of wastewater can trigger water-related diseases, also affecting the physical well-being of women and children.

All the education facilities in the Gaza Strip are closed for one week, affecting over 600,000 children. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) online service and hotline services are operating at a limited capacity, with outreach services not an option due to the security situation.

Schools in the West Bank, both UNRWA and Palestinian Authorities schools, are open, employing a blended learning approach that combines distance and in-person education.

Immediate Sectoral Needs¹⁷



Health and Nutrition
600,000 people



WASH
1,200,000 people



Education
300,000 children



Protection
300,000 people



Multi-purpose Cash
Assistance
74,000 people

¹⁵ Prior to the start of latest violence on 7 October, 50 Palestinian and 6 Israeli children had been killed in conflict-related incidents in the West Bank including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. (In the West Bank including East Jerusalem, 2023 was already the deadliest year for Palestinian and Israeli children since 2003.)

¹⁶ Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lynn Hastings, on the hostilities between Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip and Israel.

¹⁷ HOSTILITIES IN GAZA AND ISRAEL Flash Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory Version 1 as of 12 October 2023

WHAT IS UNICEF DOING?

The inter-agency contingency plan for the Gaza Strip has been activated to facilitate the coordination of the humanitarian response and address emerging needs, including the needs of those displaced from their homes.

UNICEF released its prepositioned supply located in the Gaza Strip, including:

- Medical supplies for hospitals for at least 1,600 trauma patients for one month
- Water treatment reagents (5m³) to produce water at the UNICEF-supported desalination plant in the Gaza Strip.
- 50,000 liters of fuel, to support the operation of water and sanitation facilities
- WASH spare parts (fittings, pipes, etc.) supporting the immediate repair of damaged networks when possible.
- 500 recreational kits for children in the Designated Emergency Shelters (DES).
- Humanitarian cash to 1,000 extremely vulnerable households for their children and households' immediate basic humanitarian needs.

To respond to Child Protection needs, UNICEF also started to provide remote Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) and counselling, MHPSS, and awareness on coping mechanisms to children and their families through existing partnerships while continuing to closely monitor the situation of children and grave violations while calling for an immediate ceasefire.

As the situation on the ground is evolving rapidly, UNICEF is also working with the UNICEF office in Egypt to preposition lifesaving supplies in Egypt to cover at least 150,000 people in the event of an opening of the crossing point between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. So far the following supplies are pre-positioned in Egypt for the Gaza Strip or planned for delivery:

- 2,000 dignity kits to reach at least 12,000 people, with a further 150 dignity kits on their way.
- Four mobile latrines.
- 45,000 packages of bottled water for 270,000 people.
- Water quality chemicals to support the operation of the UNICEF-supported desalination plant for one month to provide safe drinking water for more than 75,000 people.
- Education and protection supplies including recreational kits, tents, and blankets.
- Four emergency medicine health kits and 25 emergency health consumable kits for an estimated 195,000 people for one month.



UNICEF PLANNED RESPONSE

- WASH – 1.1 million people accessing sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs
- Health – 324,000 people supported with medical supplies
- Nutrition – 107,000 children between 6-59 months screened for acute malnutrition
- Child Protection – at least 180,000 children receiving explosive weapons-related risk education and child protection support
- Education – 100,000 children provided with education in emergencies learning materials
- Social Protection – 10,000 households reached with humanitarian cash transfers

PRIORITY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

As part of the inter-agency Flash Appeal, UNICEF will provide the following initial humanitarian response. The response will be adjusted as the situation is evolving fast, and needs assessments are yet to be conducted.

WASH immediate response - US\$ 5,520,000

UNICEF's WASH response will focus on the following: i) Provision of emergency fuel for three months for operating key water desalination plants and water and sanitation pumping stations located across the Gaza Strip; ii) Provision of water and disinfection and consumable materials for the operation of critical WASH facilities; iii) Rapid repairs and provision/procurement of required spare parts and tools for affected WASH infrastructure; iv) Provision of hygiene kits for the affected families; and v) Support effective leadership and coordination of the WASH cluster.

Health immediate response - US\$ 4,180,000

UNICEF's Health response will focus on the following: i) Procurement and delivery of essential medical supplies (medical drugs, consumables) to support the health care services; ii) Provision of fuel for hospitals and health centers; iii) Provision of services for newborns; and iv) Community awareness raising.

Nutrition immediate response - US\$ 1,200,000

UNICEF's Nutrition response will focus on the following: i) Scale up/ Sustain Infant and young child feeding including early childhood programming (counselling, breast feeding, artificial feeding, complementary feeding, monitoring); ii) Support nutrition care for wasted children including screening for wasting and referral for treatment; iii) Micronutrient supplementation for women and children; iv) Procurement and provision of nutrition supplies for children and women; v) Support effective leadership and coordination of the nutrition sector.



Child Protection immediate response - US\$ 2,400,000

UNICEF's Child Protection response will focus on the following: i) Strengthening remote assistance for children and families particularly for MHPSS and specialized services, including through the family centers in the Gaza Strip as soon as they are operational again; ii) Strengthening mechanisms for monitoring grave violations against children to inform advocacy and programmes; iii) Education and raising awareness on mine risks and unexploded ordinance (UXO); and iv) Support effective leadership and coordination of the Child Protection Area of Responsibility.

Education immediate response - US\$ 2,393,000

UNICEF's Education response will focus on the following: i) Provision of remedial education, catch up classes and learning support to mitigate learning losses; ii) Distribution of essential teaching and learning materials to support the continuity of learning; iii) Provision of after school or in school recreational activities to support the wellbeing of children; iv) Cleaning and rehabilitation of damaged schools or schools used as shelters to make them useable; and v) Support effective leadership and coordination of the Education cluster.

Social Protection/ Child sensitive Humanitarian Cash-Plus immediate response - US\$ 3,275,000

UNICEF's Social Protection "cash-plus" response will focus on the following: i) Child sensitive humanitarian cash transfers; and ii) Referrals of vulnerable children in the targeted households to health and MHPSS services.

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)/ Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) - US\$ 150,000

UNICEF's AAP and PSEA actions will focus on strengthening the use and the timely feedback of complaints and requests for services received through the three UNICEF supported complaints and feedback channels namely: the Inter-Agency (IA) hotline run by WFP, a PSEA-safe hotline run by an NGO partner, and a direct email to UNICEF State of Palestine.

COORDINATION

UNICEF is an active member of the UN Country Team and the Humanitarian Country Team and closely coordinates with other organizations and local partners. UNICEF also leads the coordination of the WASH Cluster and co-leads the Education Cluster with Save the Children. Within the Protection Cluster, UNICEF leads the Child Protection Area of Responsibility. UNICEF is part of the Inter-Cluster Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Technical Working Group. UNICEF also co-leads the Nutrition Working Group within the Health Cluster.



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FUNDING REQUIREMENT

To respond to the on-going unprecedent humanitarian crisis, UNICEF estimates an urgent need for an initial US\$ 20 million to cover life-saving needs over the next three months as part of the Inter-Agency Flash Appeal.¹⁸ This comes in addition to the 2023 UNICEF HAC appeal of US\$23.8 million with a current gap of US\$13 million. Needs are expected to increase significantly, and the UNICEF funding appeal will be revised accordingly. Without sufficient funding, thousands of people, including children in desperate need, will not have access to essential social services, psychosocial support, and emergency supplies.

Sector	UNICEF Requirement as part of Inter-Agency Flash Appeal	
Health	\$	4,180,000
Nutrition	\$	1,200,000
Child protection	\$	2,400,000
Education	\$	2,393,000
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	\$	5,520,000
Social Protection/ Humanitarian Cash	\$	3,275,000
Cross-sectoral (SBC, AAP and PSEA)	\$	150,000
Coordination	\$	882,000
Total	\$	20,000,000

¹⁸ UNICEF will revise its 2023 HAC appeal to include additional urgent needs.

For further information:

Lucia Elmi | Special Representative, UNICEF Office in State of Palestine | +972 (0)2 584 0400 | lelmi@unicef.org
Lana Wreikat | Director a.i, Office of Emergency programme (EMOPS) | +1 212 326 7150 | lwreikat@unicef.org
June Kunugi | Director, Public Partnership Division (PPD) | +1 212 326 7118 | jkunugi@unicef.org



United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Tel: +972 2 5840400

Fax: +972 2 5830806

P.O.BOX 25141

Jerusalem 9125101

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