



Child playing in a Family Center in Gaza
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State of Palestine

Humanitarian Situation Report



January – March 2019

Highlights

- The 30th of March 2019 marked one year since the launch of the Great March of Return (GMR). In 2019 the Gaza Strip has witnessed a significant increase in Palestinian casualties due both to the context of mass demonstrations and other activities along Israel's perimeter fence with Gaza, and Israeli rocket attacks following rockets fired from within Gaza. Children continue to face grave protection concerns. In 2019 there have been 8 children killed and 897 injured as a result of incidents in Gaza. Since the beginning of the GMR there have been 5,778 children injured and 52 killed in Gaza.
- Withdrawal of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) monitors has left a gap in human rights monitoring and protection in Hebron H2, and has heightened the risk of further serious human rights violations.
- In Gaza, over 74,000 children and women benefited from UNICEF supported health and nutrition services in hospitals, clinics and outreach teams. UNICEF with the MoH and partners improved postnatal home visiting (PNHV) services, and 530 new-born children and their mothers received quality postnatal care services.
- In 2019 to date UNICEF has supported 6,856 children with protective presence on their way to and from schools in vulnerable areas of the West Bank.
- To support vulnerable people in Gaza through the winter, UNICEF provided 6,000 households with e-vouchers in January and February 2019 to procure hygiene items, children's clothing, blankets or school uniforms.
- As of March 2019, UNICEF is 49% funded against humanitarian programs. However, constraints remain for effective humanitarian programming including due to supply access for Gaza. Furthermore, funding gaps particularly remain for cluster coordination and education programming.

2,500,000

Total people in need
(UN OCHA Humanitarian HRP 2019)

1,100,000

Total children (<18) in need
(UN OCHA Humanitarian HRP 2019)

429,000

of children to be reached
(UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children 2019)

657,900

of people to be reached
(UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children 2019)

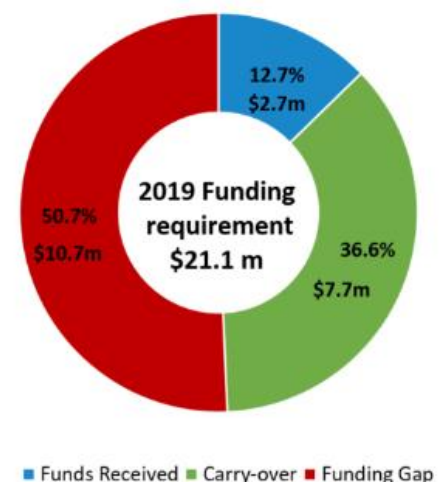
UNICEF Appeal 2019

US\$ 21.1 million

Funding Status*

US\$ 10.4 million available

	Overall Needs	UNICEF and IPs		Cluster Response	
		2019 Target	Total Results	2019 Target	Total Results
WASH: # of people in humanitarian situation benefited from improved access to water	1,900,635	320,226	29,955	732,165	254,050
Child Protection: # of children who receive interventions including life skills, group and individual counselling and child-parent interaction programs	339,075	13,250	2,695	35,472	9,291
Education: # of children benefiting from protective presence / accompaniment to school	8,226	6,700	6,856	6,900	6,856
Health: # of women and children under the age of five benefited from medical supplies	398,453	94,295	74,974	NA	NA



Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs:

Palestinian children continued to face human rights, protection, and humanitarian issues in 2019, including challenges in accessing services because of where they live, or as a result of being from a particularly disadvantaged group, particularly children living with disabilities. Long-term humanitarian needs in the State of Palestine remain largely attributable to the ongoing conflict. Poverty has increased, with over 29% of Palestinian families living below the poverty line, including over 50% in Gaza. The chronic crisis has been exacerbated since March 2018 by the significant increase in Palestinian casualties in the context of demonstrations taking place near Israel's perimeter fence as well as limited escalations in hostilities. Palestinians are subject to a series of internal barriers, contributing to delays in the movement of goods and services and creating pockets of extreme vulnerability. The risk of escalation of violence is compounded by the lack of progress on reconciliation efforts between the de facto authority in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority. These factors impact the daily lives of children and increase the burden on development and humanitarian actors to effectively respond to children's needs.

The 30th of March 2019, marked both Land Day and one year since the beginning of the Great March of Return (GMR) demonstrations. Three Palestinian fatalities were noted on the day, including two 17-year-old boys. The Gaza Strip has witnessed a significant increase in Palestinian casualties, including in the context of these mass demonstrations as well as during hostilities and access related incidents. OCHA report that between 30 March 2018 and 22 March 2019 there have been 29,187 Palestinian injuries in Gaza including 5,778 children (445 girls). Additionally, there have been 271 people killed, including 52 children (2 girls). Exposure of children to violence and lack of protection for medical teams are also of concern. Despite significant assistance provided, addressing the multi-sectoral needs of the casualties remains challenging due to the lack of funds, years of blockade, the internal divide and a chronic energy crisis.

A significant escalation in hostilities was witnessed in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel in March 2019 after a rocket was fired from Gaza damaging a house in central Israel and injuring seven Israelis. Following the incident, the Israeli Air Force struck multiple locations across Gaza, injuring two and displacing sixteen families. Palestinian armed groups fired projectiles towards southern Israel, reportedly causing damage.

With the non-renewal of the mandate of the TIPH which provided observation and protective presence for some 7,000 of Palestinian residents who live in the H2 zone of Hebron city in January 2019, a gap in human rights monitoring and protection has been created, heightening the risk of further serious human rights violations being committed. The H2 area of Hebron is one of the most volatile places in the West Bank, now exacerbated by the removal of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH).

Estimated Population in Need of Humanitarian Assistance (Estimates calculated based on the Humanitarian Response Plan 2019) ¹			
	Total	Male ²	Female
Total Population in Need	2,500,000	1,272,500	1,227,500
Children (Under 18)	1,100,000	559,900	540,100
Total people to be reached	657,900	334,871	323,029
Total children to be reached	429,000	218,361	210,639

The humanitarian impact of the blockade and internal political divisions between the administrations of the West Bank and Gaza continues to be severe deepening vulnerability across Gaza. Children and vulnerable women are particularly hard hit with families applying negative coping strategies such as reducing dietary diversity which affects nutrition rates. The Nutrition sub-cluster working group supported a Nutrition Needs Assessment in most vulnerable areas of Gaza. Results indicated a deterioration of the nutrition situation among women and young children, in terms of variety and daily nutritional intake. In addition, an alarming and unforeseen deterioration was noted where 18% of pregnant women and 14% of lactating mothers were reported malnourished. Furthermore, with the Palestinian Authority depending upon Clearance Revenue taxes for up to 70% of its revenue, collected on its behalf by the Israeli Government, the decision by Israel in 2019 to make deductions from these tax revenues could have a profound impact on basic social services for the most vulnerable segments of the Palestinian population.

Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination

UNICEF is part of the UN Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team and regularly coordinates its action with other organizations and local stakeholders. Within this partnership, UNICEF leads the WASH Cluster and shares some of these responsibilities with the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA). UNICEF in partnership with Save the Children co-leads the Education cluster in Gaza, as well as the Education in Emergencies Sector Working Group in the West Bank. Within the Protection Cluster, UNICEF leads the Child Protection Working Group and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) group. UNICEF co-leads the Nutrition Working Group under the Health Cluster, in Gaza as well as at the national level, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and World Health Organization (WHO).

¹ Disaggregated data based on 2018 PCBS population figures (50.9% male and 49.1% female)

² Disaggregated based on 2017 PCBS population figures (50.9% male and 49.1% female)

Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF and partners continued to foster synergies between humanitarian and development assistance in the State of Palestine, while emphasizing emergency preparedness. For health and nutrition UNICEF supports neonatal emergency health care, postnatal care, and early childhood development, focusing on children with developmental delays and disabilities. With the deterioration of the water and sanitation situation and the ongoing energy crisis, UNICEF provides safe drinking water through solar power, water tank rehabilitation and network upgrades. Households are supported with drinking water taps, latrines, sewage connections and hygiene promotion activities. UNICEF also supports flood preparedness and mitigation activities in high-risk areas. UNICEF regularly delivers critical health and other supplies to the Gaza Strip in response to humanitarian needs.

With the deterioration of the security situation, the strengthening of child protection systems continues to remain a top priority in UNICEF action, including case management and referrals, psychosocial support, legal aid and counselling, and focusing on addressing negative coping mechanisms for adolescents. Monitoring and reporting on child rights and other assessments inform evidence-based advocacy for improved child protection. UNICEF supports children crossing checkpoints in the West Bank with accompaniment to ensure safer access to schools. Children also benefit from educational supplies and remedial learning, as well as emergency preparedness activities targeting adolescents.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

UNICEF is working in close collaboration with key partners and stakeholders to protect the rights of children and provide needed services for children and their families. These areas include WASH, child protection, education and adolescents, as well as health and nutrition.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Between January and March 2019, UNICEF and partners supported improved access to water for 29,955 people in Gaza. In the reporting period, UNICEF facilitated the distribution of potable water tanks to 2,894 households, and domestic water tanks for 134 households in Gaza. UNICEF and partners collectively continued to support the distribution of chlorine and chemicals for all water facilities in the Gaza Strip, reaching all residents connected to the municipal networks.

UNICEF and partners finalised the assessment of all the communities that are not connected to a water network in the Hebron governorate, and which are not served by a water supply. This assessment covered 818 households in 51 communities, with a total of 5,811 people. The objective of the assessment was to identify strategies to better serve these vulnerable communities to access quality water and to support them with behavioural change activities. Based upon the assessment UNICEF will work with partners to roll out support interventions. UNICEF also supported the distribution of nine household water treatment and safe storage units to a selected vulnerable community.

UNICEF supports partners in providing WASH services in Al Zaitoon and Bani Suhaila health centers in Gaza through the ongoing rehabilitation of sanitation facilities, provision of a water well and a small-scale desalination unit. In addition, UNICEF is supporting partners for urgent rehabilitation works of the old water network in Al Shifa Hospital, upgrading for the Al Zahra water well and Khan Younis wastewater treatment plant which will be powered by solar energy to ensure prolonged operating hours. These interventions will increase the access of vulnerable households in Al Zahra and Khan Younis to essential WASH services, while the use of renewable energy will improve the level of wastewater treatment by reducing contaminants from the effluent that is discharged into the sea. During the reporting period, UNICEF engaged two local contractors to rehabilitate sanitary facilities for 1,380 households. In addition, one contractor was responsible to upgrade wastewater networks in Rafah and connect 800 households to sewage networks.

To support vulnerable families in Gaza through winter 2018/19, including those at risk of flooding, UNICEF provided 6,000 families with hygiene items and hygiene promotion. This support was provided through World Food Programme (WFP) e-vouchers, and items redeemed included diapers, sanitary items and cleaning materials.

UNICEF jointly with a local partner assessed the WASH status of health facilities to inform the WASH and Health Clusters on priority WASH preparedness and response interventions and establish a surveillance mechanism as an emergency triggering system. UNICEF also contracted another local partner and completed a needs assessment, to identify the most vulnerable households to benefit from distribution of tanks and the rehabilitation of sanitary facilities.

While the WASH programme has a good funding level overall, there remains a shortage of funding for WASH in the West Bank with concerns for programming to respond to seasonal needs in the summer.

Child Protection

During first quarter of 2019, 13 Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR) partners reached 9,220 children (4,624 girls and 4,596 boys) with child protection services including MHPSS, life skills education and counselling support services. This included

408 children with disabilities (220 girls). Additionally, 1,268 children (434 girls) accessed individual case management support services. Structured psychosocial support services were also provided to 22,358 caregivers (20% male). In the West Bank, the CP AoR/MHPSS cluster members reached 71 children (62 girls) with structured psychosocial support including individual and group counselling. In this period UNICEF and local Gaza partners reached 2,695 children (49% girls) with targeted interventions including individual counselling, group counselling, life skills, child/parent interaction sessions and other psychosocial support group activities. In total 634 children (213 girls) were reached with urgent individual case management support. UNICEF supported awareness raising sessions on protection of children which benefited 1,392 caregivers. In addition, 2,452 children and their caregivers were reached with risk education sessions on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).

In response to the impact caused by the reactions to the Great March of Return, UNICEF and members of the CP AoR provided child protection services to 2,200 children (140 girls) out of 3,000 injured and referred for hospitalization (73%). Of these, 425 children were referred for specialist case management support and 585 for structured psychosocial support services. Staff in family centres identified and reached 372 injured children through home visits and provision of Psychological First Aid, 156 children requiring structured psychosocial support and 167 who received specialist case management support. The overwhelming needs in Gaza have inundated the capacities of child protection partners, with only 17% of identified injured children being reached with case management support services. Timely case management support, including MHPSS, is needed to prevent later manifestation of mental health illnesses.

UNICEF through a local partner provided integrated child protection services to 54 children including four students who were under house arrest and 50 children at risk of dropping out of schools and marginalized children in East Jerusalem. Remedial educational classes were delivered in five targeted locations for children who may have been in contact with Israeli Forces, child ex-detainees, children with disabilities, children affected by drug abuse, domestic violence, gender-based violence, and those who live in extreme poverty. Towards improving parents' skills and knowledge on parenting methods 50 parents participated in focus group discussions. During the reporting period, 107 children arrested between 12 and 18 years old received legal support through a partnership with a local NGO, this included 78 children from East Jerusalem. Analysis of affidavits collected during the quarter reflected ongoing concerns of ill-treatment of children during arrest, transfer, detention and interrogation. On average 18 out of 26 children arrested (70%) reported being subjected to some forms of ill-treatment or lack of due process.

To support vulnerable families in Gaza through winter 2018/19, including children injured in the demonstrations, UNICEF provided 3,400 families with blankets and children's clothing. This support was provided through WFP e-vouchers.

UNICEF supported consultative workshops with the Ministry of Social Development and partners to revise the Inter-Agency Standard Operating Procedures for Child Protection and Gender Based Violence, Case Management and Referral in Gaza which were developed in 2015-2016. This revision of the SOPs focuses on child protection detection, referral and case management.

Education and Adolescents

During first quarter of 2019, UNICEF with partners supported 6,856 children (2,364 girls) with protective presence on their way to and from schools in Area C and the H2 area of Hebron city in the West Bank. Children face severe challenges in accessing their right to education, including incidents of harassment and violence, as they must cross military check points and go through closed military zones on their daily commute to and from school. Protective presence has helped to reduce such incidents affecting school children.

UNICEF and partners provided 4,503 children (1,856 girls) from grades 3-5 in Gaza, with an opportunity to improve their literacy and numeracy skills through participating in UNICEF supported remedial education programs. The remedial education program in Gaza targets children at substantial risk of dropping out of school, including to support them to catch up with their peers.

To support vulnerable families in Gaza through winter 2018/19 UNICEF provided 2,000 children with school uniforms, including children with disabilities. This support was provided through WFP e-vouchers.

The Gaza emergency education response plan was updated by the Cluster, and under this plan UNICEF has a role to rapidly deliver education support to affected students in case their education is disrupted due to escalation of violence. UNICEF supported the purchase and pre-positioning of school supplies including school bags and stationary kits to be ready for the response in case of an escalation.

Health & Nutrition

UNICEF continued to support partners to improve vulnerable children and women's access to post-natal care services. UNICEF supported the provision of medical supplies for a total of 74,974 women and children. In addition, 1,773 neonates received quality lifesaving services. UNICEF also provided 300 first aid kits to five implementing partners in Gaza, including the Ministry of Health, to ensure health and nutrition services are accessible, available and acceptable for high-risk pregnant and lactating women, new-borns and young children.

UNICEF with partners provided ante-natal and postnatal care including needed treatment and follow-up to 4,539 pregnant and lactating women who visited four targeted primary health care centers. In the same period 530 women delivering babies received facility-based counselling sessions on post-natal care and breast-feeding counselling before discharge from the maternity hospital. Additionally, 400 pregnant and lactating mothers received psychosocial counselling services through a qualified psychologist. UNICEF is also supporting the review of the protocol and guides for the provision of Post Natal Home Visit (PNHV) services. Upon completion PNHV services will be provided to high risk pregnant and lactating women and children.

Procurement is in progress for the medical consumables for a total of 11 maternal and neonatal health facilities that are facing stock-out of medical supplies. The distribution of the medical consumables will commence in May 2019. International procurement of 270 wheelchairs is also underway, to support those who are injured from the mass demonstrations, and distribution of 135 crutches procured from the local market commenced in March 2019.

In March 2019, UNICEF facilitated the distribution of 11 solar refrigerators for UNRWA primary health care clinics, where 70% of vaccines for the immunization programme in Gaza are stored. This intervention was critical to ensure the continued supply of electricity for vaccines in the cold chain, to avoid jeopardizing the effectiveness of the vaccines and minimize threats to the immunization programme for around 40,000 children under the age of five.

During the reporting period, UNICEF in partnership with WFP and a local partner completed the nutrition barrier analysis in vulnerable communities in the West Bank, in Hebron (H2), Area C (north and middle) and East Jerusalem. The analysis looks at six³ nutrition behaviors related to the infant and young child responsive feeding, diet diversity and behaviors that contributes to anemia among pregnant and lactating women and school-age children. The main findings of the analysis emphasized that several determinants are influential to the behaviors such as perceived self-efficacy, cues of action, and perceived culture. The three main recommendations were to design and implement community-based interventions focusing on high risk groups of pregnant, lactating mothers and young children, to invest in strengthening the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative and enforcing the breast-milk substitutes code implementation. UNICEF and WFP with partners will design the intervention plan and framework for behavioral change to target these behaviors and promote the appropriate nutrition practices. A barrier analysis is planned in Gaza by the end of June 2019 by UNICEF, WFP and a local NGO.

Media and External Communication

Communication and advocacy initiatives during the first three months of 2019 focused on the right to education and WASH. A joint [press release](#) with WFP was issued highlighting the winterization assistance provided to vulnerable families in Gaza. UNICEF, UNESCO, and the Humanitarian Coordinator issued a [joint statement](#) on the right to education.

In February, the UNICEF Regional Director in MENA, Geert Cappelaere visited the State of Palestine to advocate with key stakeholders for the promotion and protection of the rights of Palestinian children. The mission also recognized UNICEF SoP key achievements, strengthened partnerships and the impact of violence on children. The Regional Director issued a [Press Statement](#) at the end of his mission.

In March 2019, UNICEF supported the national campaign, “My Rights, Our Power”, to celebrate International Women’s Day with focus on the family protection law in the State of Palestine and the UN issued a [joint statement](#). In the same period, UNICEF commemorated International Water Day by running a social media campaign showcasing the WASH programme to improve access to water for children and marginalized communities.

UNICEF supported the official release of a song “[A Dream Alone Is Not Enough](#)” with Arab Idol winner Yacoub Shaheen and children from Palestine. The song was released through the UNICEF State of Palestine web-based platforms, and Yacoub Shaheen’s social media pages. The song was also broadcast at the 2019 Palestine Marathon held in Bethlehem City.

In late March 2019, the UNICEF State of Palestine Special Representative, Ms. Genevieve Boutin, issued a [statement](#) on the arrest of a 10-year-old boy from his school in H2 area in Hebron in the West Bank, highlighting the impact that interference in schools has on the psychosocial wellbeing of children. The UNICEF Regional Director in MENA in late March also released a [statement](#) expressing concern about the impact of the escalation in hostilities on children and of the involvement of children in demonstrations at the security fence between Israel and Gaza.

The communications team also officially launched the new [UNICEF State of Palestine Website](#).

³ List of nutrition behaviors assessed under the barrier analysis 1) Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF), 2) Continued Breastfeeding, 3) Minimum Dietary Diversity, 4) Feeding Frequency, 5) Consumption of High Heme Foods, and 6) Spacing of Coffee and Tea consumption.

Supply and Logistics

During the reporting period the UNICEF State of Palestine office received and dispatched to the Ministry of Health, in Nablus and Gaza, US\$ 4.3million worth of vaccines and antiretroviral drugs. The arrival of the drugs was delayed in 2018 due to the introduction of new approval requirements by the Israeli Ministry of Health. This had created a backlog in the procurement and shipping of needed vaccines.

As part of emergency preparedness, UNICEF continued to follow-up with the Israeli authorities on pending customs approvals, which include supplies for the pre-positioning of emergency Health and Nutrition medical drugs and equipment.

Funding

UNICEF received significant emergency funding from the Belgium Development Agency, ECHO, Japan, OCHA, SIDA Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the Global Thematic Humanitarian. The [2019 UNICEF Humanitarian Appeal](#) funding requirement is for US\$ 21.1 million, and as of March 2019 US\$ 10.4 million or 49% of the requirements was available. The reason for the positive funding situation is largely due to funding carried forward from 2018 with a significant amount of humanitarian funding received in late 2018. Carry forward funding was particularly significant in the WASH, Child Protection and Health and Nutrition programs.

Appeal Sector	SoP - UNICEF HRP 2019 Funding Requirements				
	Requirements (USD)	Funds Available *		Funding Gap	
		Funds Received Current Year	Carry-Over	USD	%
WASH	11,278,451	1,071,712	5,029,539	5,177,200	46%
Education	3,402,803	373,715	668,204	2,360,884	69%
Child Protection	2,857,931	621,361	1,060,332	1,176,238	41%
Health and Nutrition	2,810,736	447,033	944,569	1,419,134	50%
Cluster Coordination	707,301	164,701	0	542,600	77%
Sub-Total	21,057,222	2,678,522	7,702,645	10,676,055	51%

* Funds available includes funding received against current appeal as well as carry-forward from the previous year

Next SitRep: 20/07/2019

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

UNICEF State of Palestine on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/unicefstateofpalestine>

UNICEF State of Palestine on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UNICEFpalestine>

UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children 2019: https://www.unicef.org/appeals/state_of_palestine.html

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Annex A: SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME RESULTS First Quarter 2019

	Overall needs 2019 ⁴	UNICEF Response			Cluster Response		
		2019 Target	Total Results	Change since last report ⁵ ▲ ▼	2019 Target	Total Results	Change since last report ▲ ▼
WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE							
# of people in humanitarian situation benefited from improved access to water	1,900,635	320,226	29,955	29,955	732,165	254,050	254,050
# of people in humanitarian situation benefited from improved access to sanitation services	1,197,400	14,295	1,380	1,380	116,848	4,285	4,285
# of people with increased access to WASH services in health institutions	NA	284,490	0 ⁶	0	NA ⁷	NA	NA
# of people will benefit from preparedness activities against the risks of floods	NA	360,000	0 ⁸	0	360,000	13,142	13,142
# of people received hygiene materials/kits	380,127	19,699	7,143	7,143	73,137	44,314	44,314
CHILD PROTECTION							
# of children, including the injured, who receive interventions including life skills, group and individual counselling and child-parent interaction programs	339,075	13,250 ⁹	2,695	2,695	35,472	9,220	9,220
# of women and men who receive information on their rights and access legal services.	70,878	1,400	107	107	4,061	107	107
# of people (children and caregivers) receive ERW risk education, including children	106,311	15,606	2,452	2,452	43,606	2,974	2,974
# of children who benefited from structured psychosocial activities in Gaza during the summer months to build their physical and mental health	NA	80,000	0	0	NA	NA	NA
EDUCATION							
# of children benefited from provision of supplies and materials	496,485	33,300	0 ¹⁰	0	316,813	0	0
# of children benefiting from protective presence / accompaniment to school	8,226	6,700	6,856	6,856	6,900	6,856	6,856
# of children benefitting from catch up classes	24,789	5,000	4,503	4,503	24,100	4,503	4,503
HEALTH and NUTRITION							
# of women and children under the age of five (boys and girls) benefited from medical supplies	398,453	94,295	74,974	74,974	NA	NA	NA
# of pregnant and lactating women and lactating mothers receiving health service	213,957	20,390	4,539	4,539	NA	NA	NA
# of neonates receiving quality lifesaving services	12,271	10,420	1,773	1,773	NA	NA	NA

⁴ The overall need per sector is aligned to the needs reflected in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2019 published by UNOCHA

⁵ The change reflected same reported data as this is the first SitRep for 2019.

⁶ Reporting under this indicator will be made available in the second quarter of 2019.

⁷ WASH cluster does not have target for # of people with increased access to WASH services in health institutions.

⁸ All projects related to preparedness activities against the risks of floods are not funded yet as of end of first quarter of 2019.

⁹ The target has been revised to include children who will be benefiting from structured child protection.

¹⁰ All projects related to provision of supplies and materials are not funded yet as of end of first quarter of 2019.