



unicef 

IMPACT REPORT

Unicefs results in Gaza after 6 months

Overview

Thank you for your strong support for UNICEF's emergency humanitarian response in Gaza. Your support has helped UNICEF transport and deliver large amounts of humanitarian aid to those who are in desperate need. This report sets out the impact which your support has had for families and children in Gaza

In this current conflict more than 13,000 children have been reported killed¹ and over 100,000 Palestinians killed or injured across the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, with 250 Israelis still held hostage, including children. **Yet UNICEF never gives up hope** and will continue advocating for the safety, protection and rights of children affected by violence and conflict in the State of Palestine and globally.

UNICEF will continue to remain on the ground in Gaza.

Palestinian children are experiencing immense suffering throughout Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem. Children make up roughly half of Gaza's population and the conflict is disproportionately impacting them. About 850,000 children have been forcibly displaced from their homes. They are now being pushed further and further south into tiny, overcrowded areas without water, food, protection or any of the essentials needed to survive. Their lives are further threatened by dehydration, malnutrition and disease, and the impact on children is being amplified by restrictions on aid access.

“Now I wish for nothing but to die.... I want to go to my grandmother's house with my aunt and her children. I want to hug her, there I feel safe.... We do not know whether we will survive this war....,” says Alma.

1 in 3 Children are at risk of starvation

IPC Report - 18th March 2024.



Alma is one of these children. She is just 13 years old and has already been displaced five times during this conflict. Having tragically lost her parents, siblings and many relatives, today Alma feels alone and lives in a tent in Rafah.



3.1 MILLION PEOPLE IN NEED

GAZA STRIP	31,923 Palestinians killed and 74,096 injured	1.7 MILLION Palestinians displaced, 850,000 are children	155 health facilities have suffered damage
	78% (386) of schools in Gaza have suffered damage	625,000 students without access to education	
WEST BANK INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM	422 Palestinians killed, thousands injured and 2,900 displaced	364 attacks on health centers	
UN	171 staff killed		

¹According to reports from the Palestinian Ministry of Health

Cover story: Maha, an 11-year-old, is sitting on the rubble of a house in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip. “I wish the war would end soon... I miss all the details of my life before the war”

The delivery of aid is literally a matter of life or death for children in Gaza

The devastation to infrastructure and housing is escalating with 1.7 million people, nearly 80% of Gaza's entire population, displaced from their homes. Overcrowding, inadequate sanitation and hygiene as well as the absence of safe spaces are fueling serious health and protection issues. Women and children, already battling dehydration, malnutrition, and illness, are being forced into cramped spaces and do not have the essential resources for survival.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health reports 410 attacks on health facilities and personnel and with only 10 out of 36 hospitals partially functional, access to health care for the entire population of the Gaza Strip remains precarious. The further destruction of Al Shifa hospital in late March is a tragic testament to the absence of safe places throughout Gaza and the excessive violence seen in this conflict.

On top of the devastation of health infrastructure, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Famine Review Committee is declaring famine as imminent for 1.1 million people in the Gaza Strip, especially in North Gaza and Gaza governorates. **UNICEF plays a critical role in helping children and pregnant women survive catastrophic food insecurity** but unless fighting stops and aid agencies have full access throughout Gaza, then hundreds - if not thousands - more children will die of hunger.

Sadly, the generation of young Palestinians who survive this conflict, who survive the desperate levels of food insecurity, will still face significant challenges in rebuilding their lives and their dreams. As of October 2023, none of Gaza's 625,000 students have had any access to education. Approximately 92% of all school buildings in the Gaza Strip are currently serving as shelters for people who are displaced, or the buildings are too damaged due to the conflict. A shocking 78% of all school buildings have sustained damage, including 212 school buildings having been directly hit.

Amidst continued airstrikes, fuel shortages, communications blocks and attacks on medical and humanitarian personnel and facilities, **UNICEF continues to operate and respond to complex and growing needs**. We persist in delivering aid by being physically present on the ground, coordinating with other humanitarian organizations and a range of trusted partners, working to prevent more deaths with our work on nutrition and child protection, deploying innovative solutions such as cash and multi-purpose high performing tents, and advocating for change constantly and consistently with those who have the power to end this conflict and provide vital access to people and children in need.



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On 19 March 2024, following the recent escalation of violence in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, a UNICEF - marked vehicle is seen travelling on the road, past collapsed buildings impacted by the recent conflict in the area.

UNICEF'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR CHILDREN

PROGRAMME	TARGET POPULATION	KEY RESULT	% OF TARGET REACHED
 NUTRITION	341,524	36,866 children aged 6-59 months received preventative, lipid-based supplements, micronutrient supplementation and high energy biscuits	11%
 HEALTH	780,000	609,785 people supported though UNICEF delivered medical supplies	78%
 EDUCATION	155,000	69,289 affected school aged children provided with recreational activities to support their well-being	45%
 CHILD PROTECTION	852,076	151,802 children and caregivers affected by conflict related violence received emergency and child protection services including psycho-social support	18%
 SOCIAL PROTECTION	88,305	83,890 households reached with UNICEF funded humanitarian cash transfers	95%
 WASH	2,050,000	1,601,178 people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs	78%



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Lama 4-year-old, sits in front of her tent at UNRWA shelter camp in Khan Younis, southern the Gaza Strip.

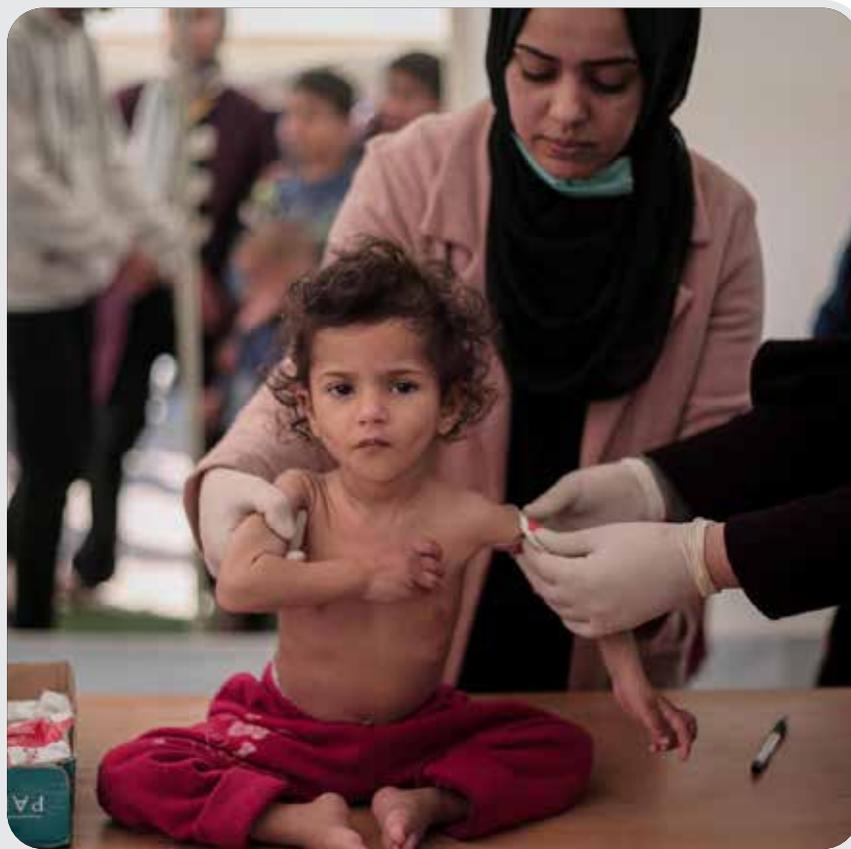
“I am here with my family sleeping in this tent, I do not know when I will be back home, but I miss sleeping in my bed, I want this situation to end very soon.”

UNICEF life saving action on nutrition

© UNICEF/UNI519947/EI Baba

Two-year old Leen, is getting her middle-upper-arm-circumference (MUAC) measured, her MUAC reads less than 10, indicating severe acute malnutrition, drastic weight loss and muscle atrophy. Before the conflict, she was receiving medications and physical therapy, which helped her weight reach 11 kilograms and showed signs of health improvement.

However, after her family was displaced from Khan Yunis for 130 days, Leen's health sharply declined. Without access to necessary medications or adequate food, she gradually lost weight, eventually weighing just 7 kilograms. Recognizing the severity of her situation, UNICEF intervened, and Leen was transferred to Al Awda Hospital for treatment and specialized care; her condition is anticipated to improve within two weeks.



Your generous support allows UNICEF to treat the high levels of malnutrition in children and prevent more deaths.

Since the start of this conflict UNICEF has provided specialized, nutrient rich food to 36,866 children and 5,962 infants as well as 21,000 pregnant women.

UNICEF is also leading the nutrition cluster collaborating with over 30 partners to monitor and address the dire nutrition crisis in the Gaza Strip. We are scaling up aid for mothers and children through preventive and curative measures including training programs that focus on MUAC screening, a vital tool to identify acute malnutrition cases. We continue to deliver lifesaving supplies of high-energy biscuits, ready-to-use therapeutic food, infant formula, and micronutrient supplements. A Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) Stabilization Centre in Rafah has begun admitting and providing care for children with medical complications with further services planned by the nutrition cluster partners at other stabilization centres under construction.

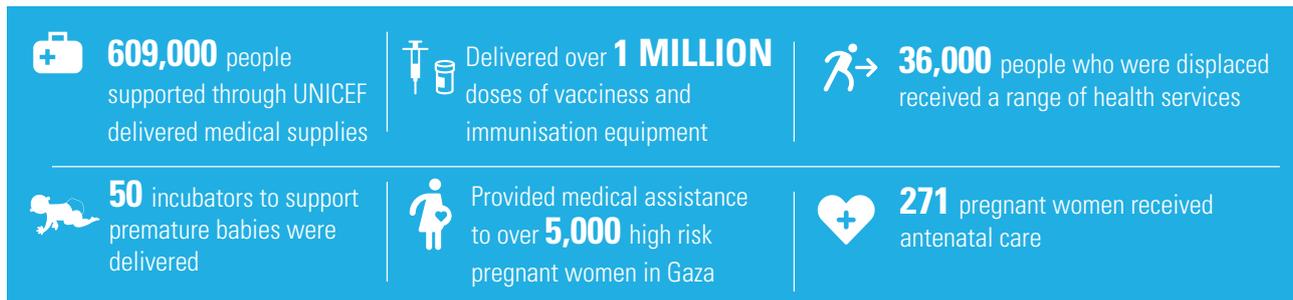
UNICEF is needed more than ever, with one in six children in Northern Gaza suffering from severe, acute malnutrition. Even in Rafah, where there is relatively more access to aid, the percentage of acutely malnourished children has doubled from 5% to 10% between January and February. These deaths are man-made, predictable, and entirely preventable but this tragedy extends beyond hospital walls. The numbers are staggering and with famine looming for over 1 million people, 50% of the entire population of the Gaza Strip is grappling with catastrophic food insecurity.

 **555,311** women received micronutrient supplementation

 **36,866** children 5-59 months received preventative lipid-based supplements, micronutrient supplementation, and high value biscuits

 **5,962** infants 0-6 months received ready-to-use therapeutic food

UNICEF's critical health response



Despite humanitarian access being continuously challenged and health care facilities and personnel too frequently under attack, **your generous support has enabled UNICEF to scale up efforts with a focus on expanding healthcare services and stockpiling essential medical supplies at primary health care centres.**

Since the beginning of the conflict, we have been able to reach 609,785 people across Gaza and the West Bank with lifesaving medical supplies. We are boosting immunization programs for over 337,057 children under five and continue to support the Expanded Immunization Programme delivering over 1 million doses of vaccines, allowing for routine vaccination to prevent disease.

In the first week of March, UNICEF brought 50 incubators for newborn babies into the Gaza Strip to improve the neonatal intensive care units in hospitals. These incubators are already helping save the lives of dozens of premature babies in the Gaza Strip.

UNICEF also delivered 17 obstetric kits to health facilities in Rafah for quality life-saving and high impact maternal and neonatal health services. The kits are estimated to cater for up to 1,700 pregnant women, (supporting 1,700 deliveries, including 425 cesarean-sections in total), in the southern Gaza Strip where there is a high population of internally displaced people.



'What we need at this time is a ceasefire, for those children to be protected. We need those families to be reunited, and we need these children to have the best possible start in their life.' UNICEF Special Representative, State of Palestine, Lucia Elmi.



UNICEF is also setting up medical points and bolstering its response to potential disease outbreaks, preparing UNICEF health and logistics teams to respond to a range of scenarios. We continue to support the scale up of primary healthcare interventions. In Northern Gaza in the second half of January, around 36,000 people who had been displaced benefited from services such as post trauma, communicable and non-communicable diseases management, and maternal and child health care services. This included 271 pregnant women who received antenatal care.

Health facilities in the Gaza Strip continue to be overwhelmed, with only 12 out of 36 hospitals partially functioning and facing shortages of basic supplies and fuel. Nearly 90% of children under five are affected by infectious diseases due to disrupted immunization services, resulting in over 105,000 cases of diarrhoea and nearly 400,000 cases of acute respiratory infection. Pregnant women, estimated at 50,000, struggle to access obstetric services, leading to unsafe childbirth conditions and a growing number of premature births.

UNICEF provides access to safe water for 1.6 million people

UNICEF as the WASH cluster lead is working so that over 2 million people can access quality water for drinking, hygiene and domestic needs. To date UNICEF has provided over 245,035 litres of fuel, enabling water wells and desalination plants to produce **clean water for over 1.6 million people, more than half the population of Gaza, including 670,000 children.**

In Rafah, we are supplying fuel for wastewater treatment in overcrowded shelters and have been able to reach over 275,000 individuals. Furthermore, over **600 mobile latrines have been built**, benefiting over 20,000 people, including people with disabilities. UNICEF has also initiated cleaning services in over 22 crowded shelters benefiting more than 259,000 people.



1.6 million people have accessed a sufficient quality and quantity of water for drinking and domestic needs



495,187 people accessed improved sanitation and hygiene services



472,381 people reached with critical WASH supplies



"My dream is that safe drinking water is available, and that there is no sewage on the road, so it doesn't overflow while we are playing."



81% of households lack safe and clean water

The situation in the Gaza Strip is desperate with 81% of households lacking access to sufficient clean water. Recent reports show that on average only 3 litres of water is available per person per day across 75 shelter sites. This is far from the minimum standard of 15 litres per person per day. Assessments in Rafah found that there is just one toilet in use per 850 people, in contrast to global standards of 1 per 20 people, and that most places hosting people who have been displaced rely on water trucking. Desalination plants are barely operational, which is why UNICEF provides fuel for these, and only 17% of groundwater wells are working.

Inadequate access to safe drinking water and insufficient water for essential needs is contributing to a staggering 90% of children under five being affected by infectious diseases, including a 70% increase in diarrhoea cases. **Urgent action is needed as children's lives hang in the balance.** Despite UNICEF having generators, plastic pipes, and construction materials ready at the border crossings, limited quantities of these vital supplies have been allowed into Gaza. UNICEF continues to advocate for their clearance and for the access of life saving supplies so that damaged water systems can be repaired immediately.

UNICEF prioritizes child protection

UNICEF along with the UN Resident Coordinator on the ground, plays the vital role of monitoring grave violations against children as part of the UN's Monitoring Reporting Mechanism. Through this work we know that the ongoing conflict is taking a devastating toll on children's lives, wellbeing and mental health, with many experiencing symptoms of trauma such as anxiety, fear, nightmares, and withdrawal.

Of serious concern to UNICEF are children who have lost their entire families and either remain alone in the Gaza Strip, unaccompanied and at high risk of violence and disease, or who are part of the estimated 3,000 children who have been medically evacuated out of Gaza but were not able to be accompanied by a family member and so remain, for now, separated from loved ones. We must step up and support these children to receive the care and protection they are entitled to and to help them reunite with their families.

Whilst over ten thousand children are reported killed in the Gaza Strip, young people in the West Bank are also suffering with more than 100 children reported killed in conflict related violence and numerous young people still detained as a result of the hostilities. In addition 12,434 children in the West Bank have received emergency child protection services.

Official estimates suggest that before the start of this conflict, approximately 50% of children required mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), but now it's estimated that almost all children are in need of such assistance.

Furthermore, in the Gaza Strip, around 17,000 children are currently unaccompanied or have been separated from their families. In the West Bank, 2023 was the deadliest year for Palestinians, since UN OCHA began recording casualties in 2005. Violence has reached unprecedented levels with a reported 700 children injured and others detained since 7 October. In the West Bank for children to be able to live without fear and access education, violence must stop.

It is not just a humanitarian crisis; it is a moral one. It is a test for our humanity and ability to save the children's lives."

UNICEF Regional Director for Middle East and North Africa, Adele Khodr



151,082 children and caregivers provided with emergency and child protection services, including psychosocial support (PSS)



160,205 children reached with winterization items



16,210 children received explosive weapons related risk education



This continuous exposure to violence and fear that children are experiencing in this conflict is unprecedented, leading to profound concerns about the long-term impact on their mental and psychosocial well-being. Only when children are safe can the full extent of the long-term impact be assessed and addressed.

UNICEF is on a mission to protect children, strongly advocating for an immediate, long-lasting ceasefire and simultaneously supporting children to navigate their emotions in a safe space, ensuring they know they are not alone in their struggles. UNICEF is dedicated to providing mental health support, especially in hard-hit areas. Together with the Child Protection Area of Responsibility, UNICEF and its partners have reached over 267,511 boys and girls, along with 27,307 women and men in the Gaza Strip, delivering specialized child protection services. Frontline workers are tirelessly lending a hand, despite their own hardships.



UNICEF keeps young people's learning dreams alive



164,000 students and teachers provided with psychosocial assistance, emergency learning, recreational supplies and activities



Distributed stationery kits to nearly **20,000** children in the West Bank

Since the beginning of the conflict, UNICEF and its partners within the education cluster have reached over 164,000 students and teachers with psychosocial assistance, emergency learning, recreational supplies and activities, as well as awareness sessions.

Through the education cluster, UNICEF is also exploring opportunities to establish spaces for non-formal education, including literacy and numeracy programmes, alongside mental health and psychosocial support initiatives, building upon existing recreational activities. These efforts will equip children with social, emotional, and learning skills to navigate their challenging circumstances, starting with a pilot program in shelters with children who are displaced before expanding further. In the West Bank, UNICEF has also distributed stationery kits to children in the affected areas. Schools in the Gaza Strip previously catered to approximately 433,000 children and over 16,200 teachers.



Layan is a senior year student. Once excited about her journey to success in life, she now dreams about resuming her education.



▶ WATCH

Over 625,000 students have missed school in Gaza since the beginning of the crisis.

At least 55% of schools across Gaza will require either full reconstruction or significant rehabilitation to become functional again.



UNICEF was able to deploy 100 of its High-Performance Tents into the Gaza Strip in March 2024, despite the restrictions. They provide temporary housing for families who have been displaced, serving as vital shelters in times of crisis.

The tents can also be repurposed as medical facilities, education centres, or temporary clinics, ensuring crucial needs are met in affected areas.

UNICEF empowering cash transfers reach more than half a million people



555,311 people (83,890 households) reached with UNICEF funded humanitarian cash transfers



211,499 people accessed nutrition top-up payments

Despite connectivity challenges in the Gaza Strip, which are constraining network capacities and presenting significant hurdles for cash transfer delivery, UNICEF is empowering families and children with **humanitarian cash transfers**, ensuring access to vital items like food, water, and hygiene products.

UNICEF's "cash-plus" response combines child-sensitive humanitarian cash transfers with referrals of vulnerable children to health and MHPSS services.

Responding to the growing food insecurity and nutrition concerns, UNICEF has initiated nutrition top-up cash payments benefiting over 211,499 people. While formal markets are struggling to obtain resources, UNICEF has found that informal markets are playing a crucial role in providing essential goods. Whilst prices of most basic goods are grossly inflated due to high demand and limited availability, providing cash means families have more choice and autonomy over what they can buy and are able to maintain some level of control and dignity over their lives whilst having access to both formal and informal markets and therefore indirectly supporting the broader community and economy.



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In a shelter for internally displaced persons in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, Eman, makes her 9-year-old daughter Dalia's hair as her other daughter, 4-year-old Maria looks on.

"We used the money to get crucial supplies for the children: milk, diapers, medicine for my sick child and flour for making bread," says Eman. "I long for an end to this conflict, yearning for the certainty that my children will be safe with me."

Amidst the hardship in the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian cash assistance becomes a lifeline, offering a renewed sense of resilience. UNICEF takes a targeted approach to ensure the cash assistance reaches those who need it most. The people who receive this support include families with many children, those with a person with a disability, pregnant and lactating women, and female-headed households. Since the start of the conflict, 84,000 households including 295,753 children have benefited from UNICEF's humanitarian cash assistance.

As a support to social welfare UNICEF also prioritizes the well-being of adolescent girls and has supplied 3,700 personal care packages to girls through women-led organizations. Each package includes three sets of sanitary pads, underwear, skin wipes, a multipurpose cloth, feminine wash, a whistle, and informative booklets on mental health and gender-based violence to support them.

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UNICEF and its partners distribute 3,700 Adolescent Girl's Wellbeing kits to five different women-led organizations in Rafah city.

These kits help girls maintain their personal hygiene, contributing to their dignity, self-esteem, and confidence. These kits focus on promoting mobility and safety of girls by providing age, gender, and culturally appropriate items.



UNICEF staff are here and will stay despite the violence and suffering

UNICEF has been supporting Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank since the early 1980's. More than 40 years on, UNICEF staff in Jerusalem and in Gaza, continue today, on the ground, working to protect children's rights and provide them with critical services and care.



"I remember I was in Khan Younis. I faced in front of my eyes two airstrikes. Only like 30 meters far away from me.... It was very difficult. But despite all these things, we are here as UNICEF, and we will continue."



▶ WATCH

A long-time UNICEF staff member in the Gaza Strip recounts that in this conflict alone he is not only displaced with his family, having already moved six times, but he has not seen his brothers or his sister in months. This is the fifth conflict in Gaza he has experienced and yet his dedication to the people affected and to UNICEF is unwavering.

Since the start of the conflict six months ago, UNICEF has increased its staff presence on the ground from 92 to 126 people, quickly readjusting to work in the perilous conditions, with staff continuing to turn up despite many of them being displaced and affected by the current conflict themselves. As of 3 April, 35 surge needs are identified and of these, we have 27 colleagues either already active and deployed or in the process of finalizing their deployment and UNICEF continues to scale up to meet increasing needs. Our people are our greatest strength in an acute humanitarian situation, as is our ability as an organization to quickly deploy experts from all over the world to support our country offices and the children who need us most.

To ensure efficiencies and the effectiveness of the limited humanitarian aid and support in the Gaza Strip, UNICEF is aligned with the [inter-agency contingency plan](#) for all of Gaza and is leading efforts in WASH, nutrition, child protection, as well as co-leading on education. We are working closely with other UN agencies and our partners to ensure an efficient lifesaving response that also monitors child rights violations as part of our work to protect children from the extremely high levels of violence in this conflict.

Going the last mile despite tough restrictions

Limited access and though screening procedures, through just two highly regulated entry points, Rafah (Egypt border) and Kerem Shalom (Israel border), means the overall humanitarian response in the Gaza Strip is struggling to keep pace with people's escalating needs as the conflict reaches the six-month mark. Whilst the capacity of the Kerem Shalom crossing before hostilities was 500 trucks per day into Gaza, both the number of trucks has drastically reduced, and the number of UN / INGO trucks being allowed to pass is decreasing with the decision as to which trucks are allowed to enter not based on humanitarian needs alone.

Despite all these obstacles, UNICEF is going the extra mile, persistent in delivering aid. To date 594 trucks and 43 charter flights have crossed into Gaza and UNICEF has been **able to support over 1 million** affected people, with a diverse range of aid. We have also repositioned three months of supplies with USD \$7 million for the Jordan corridor and USD \$15.4 million of urgent aid for the Egypt corridor and have trucks on standby ready to scale up from four to thirty immediately should access increase or there be a cease fire.



The situation in Gaza is bad and getting worse. Nowhere in Gaza is safe and the rate of death and injury amongst children is staggering.



▶ WATCH

UNICEF taking accountability and safety seriously

UNICEF maintains efforts to ensure communities have accessible and confidential channels for feedback in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and in East Jerusalem. Since 7 October 2023, a total of 23,091 feedback and complaints were received through various channels mainly comprised of requests for cash assistance, information inquiries, and issues related to cash redemption. Through the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse network, UNICEF is strengthening inter-agency feedback channels, advocating for the use of the hotline which receives complaints and provides MHPSS and referrals. Deeply concerning is that the majority of calls received to date, highlight the dire situation, including reports of starvation.

UNICEF ongoing priorities in the State of Palestine

Of the utmost importance is an immediate and enduring ceasefire that ends the killing and injury of children and civilians, and so UNICEF will continue unwaveringly to advocate for this with States and partners who have influence to end this conflict.

UNICEF's dynamic humanitarian response to the conflict continues to evolve with the rapidly developing situation on the ground. Over the next three months, we have built contingency plans to address the potential of a ceasefire or an intensified ground invasion in Rafah.

With a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, UNICEF will prioritize improving access to goods and aid for more than 2 million people, including to previously inaccessible areas. We will focus on reducing trauma, injuries, diseases, and malnutrition, with initiatives such as expanding immunization programmes, the provision of medical supplies, enhancing newborn care capacity, conducting nutrition screenings and treatment, distributing essential nutrition and food supplements, repairing infrastructure, establishing safe learning spaces, and implementing child protection measures. UNICEF's pre-positioned stocks in the Jordan and Egypt corridors are critical to this response.

Should there be an intense ground offensive or intensified military operations in Rafah, this scenario would have devastating humanitarian consequences, with grave safety and security concerns affecting aid delivery in the Gaza Strip, potentially forcing refugee outflow to neighbouring countries and creating a more intense regional dynamic. UNICEF stands ready to urgently scale up procurement and the deployment of additional humanitarian staff should such a scenario seem likely, with the aim to be able to support an additional 500,000 people.

Despite daunting challenges, UNICEF remains resolute in its commitment to delivering wide-reaching humanitarian programmes encompassing WASH, Health, Nutrition, Child Protection, Education, and Cash for Basic Needs. Our key priorities include:

1. A holistic nutrition response for the prevention, protection, early detection, and treatment of children with wasting.
2. Expansion of water provision across the Gaza Strip while bolstering sanitation and hygiene support for displaced households.
3. Scaling up child protection interventions through the provision of mental health and psychosocial support, as well as identifying and reuniting unaccompanied and separated children.
4. Addressing education gaps by expanding learning opportunities.
5. Offering multi-purpose cash assistance to vulnerable households, with additional support for pregnant and breastfeeding women and children with disabilities.
6. Social and behavioural change strategies to foster positive and sustainable changes within communities.

As the conflict goes beyond six months, UNICEF's capacity to remain agile and prepared to respond to changing needs reflects the importance of flexible funding and ensures that **funding** spent has a direct impact on enhancing the lives of children who continue to endure the devastating effects of the conflict. Flexible funding ensures timely preparedness for any additional internal displacements and refugee movements. It enables UNICEF to provide, sustain and expand critical services in health, nutrition, child protection, gender-based violence, water and sanitation, and social protection.



**Thank you for
supporting
UNICEF's work.**

**Your support has been and
will continue to be
essential to our
humanitarian mission in
Gaza.**

