

Gaza Ceasefire Response Plan

UNICEF Palestine, October - December 2025



After two years of devastating conflict, the situation for children and families in the Gaza Strip is catastrophic. Many are facing severe hardship after multiple and prolonged displacement and the widespread destruction of vital infrastructure. In the aftermath of the ceasefire, **UNICEF's 3-month Response Plan** focuses on urgent life-saving support while catalysing early recovery. The approach integrates interventions in nutrition, health, water and sanitation, education and child protection, prioritizing famine prevention, winterization and community recovery. The overarching objective is to ensure the **rapid delivery of essential supplies and services and to strengthen recovery systems for children and their families**.



Nutrition

Gaza is facing an ongoing famine, and UNICEF is leading an accelerated and scaled-up nutrition response as part of an integrated effort with water and sanitation, health, cash assistance and child protection programmes. The response aims to contain and reverse the spread of famine and to reach children most severely affected by acute and chronic malnutrition. UNICEF's approach prioritizes life-saving treatment, prevention, and sustained support to restore essential nutrition services across the Gaza Strip.

Across the Strip, nutrition centres are being equipped with essential supplies and trained personnel to expand screening, detection and treatment for all children at risk of malnutrition. UNICEF and partners are rapidly scaling up nutrition service points to at least pre-ceasefire levels, with a particular focus on reaching the hardest-hit areas in the north.

Prevention programmes target pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under 5, while services for malnourished children over 5 are being expanded. Specialized and therapeutic milks for children with specific nutritional needs, along with essential nutrition supplies for children in hospitals with extremely limited access to food, are being delivered urgently.

Key priorities include the rapid expansion of assessments such as SMART surveys, activation of a nutrition surveillance system, and identification of children at highest risk of chronic malnutrition to ensure sustained support for them and their families.

The targeted nutrition programme aims to improve the nutrition status of children under 5 at risk - with an estimated 42,000 malnourished children receiving treatment, 60,000 children benefiting from prevention services, and 36,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women receiving nutrition support.

The funding requirement is \$24 million, including essential life-saving nutrition supplies and cash assistance to support acutely vulnerable families.



Water and Sanitation (WASH)

With the ceasefire now in place, restoring safe and reliable access to water and sanitation is critical both to the famine response and to preventing further public health risks, particularly as Gaza enters the winter season when flooding and disease outbreaks become more likely. UNICEF is implementing an accelerated and coordinated WASH response as part of the broader integrated effort with health, nutrition and child protection programmes.

Water supply and distribution systems across Gaza are being restored, including the rehabilitation and operation of public and private desalination plants through the provision of fuel, chemicals and critical spare parts. Priority is being given to systems where rapid repairs can immediately increase water production and distribution. Energy stabilization, including repairs to electric feeder lines supplying public water and wastewater facilities such as the Southern Gaza Seawater Desalination Plant, is essential to maintaining operations.

Wastewater management is being restored through urgent repairs to pipelines, pumping stations and drainage networks. These efforts include re-establishing connections to wastewater treatment plants, improving solid waste management, and expanding access to emergency household latrines - reaching an estimated 2.1 million people across the Gaza Strip.

UNICEF is also prioritizing the uninterrupted entry of fuel and specialized WASH equipment and supplies, including generators, spare parts, consumables and dewatering pumps for flood prevention.

In the coming months, UNICEF and partners will work towards gradually phasing out emergency water trucking while restoring regular pipeline networks and community-level water and sanitation systems.

The funding requirement is a minimum of **\$39 million** for the coming three months.



Winterization

After two years of conflict and repeated displacement, children and their families in Gaza are living in extremely precarious conditions. Many have endured multiple displacements and are now sheltering under tarpaulins, light tents, makeshift structures or heavily damaged buildings that offer no insulation, heating or protection from the elements. The widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure, coupled with rising malnutrition rates, has left large numbers of children physically weakened, with compromised immune systems and heightened vulnerability to disease.

As the winter season approaches, the risk of hypothermia, respiratory infections and waterborne diseases will rise sharply, particularly among infants and young children. Unless a large-scale winterization campaign is launched immediately, it is likely that child mortality - especially among newborns and infants - will increase due to exposure and preventable illness.

UNICEF's winterization programme aims to prevent this by providing urgent protection and warmth to children and families across Gaza. The response will provide winter clothing for every child under the age of 10 (554,000 children), blankets for approximately 900,000 children, tarpaulins for all affected families, and family tents for 10,000 of the most vulnerable large households with children.

The funding requirement for the winterization and shelter response is **\$32.5 million**.



Education and Learning

After over two years without formal schooling, most children in Gaza have been deprived of their right to education and of safe spaces for learning and social interaction. The prolonged conflict and repeated displacement have left 97 per cent of schools destroyed or severely damaged, while the psychological toll on children has been profound. Education has consistently emerged as one of the most urgent priorities for children and their families, representing a vital step towards recovery, healing and a return to normalcy.

With the ceasefire now in place, UNICEF is leading efforts to restore learning opportunities for all 658,000 school-aged children in Gaza through an accelerated scale-up of Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS). As the largest provider of face-to-face learning in Gaza at present, UNICEF's education response is central to helping children regain a sense of stability, hope and belonging. TLS provide safe, inclusive and supportive environments that integrate mental health and psychosocial support into daily learning, enabling children to begin to recover emotionally while resuming their education.

Ensuring that children with disabilities can learn alongside their peers is a core priority. UNICEF is expanding access to inclusive education by equipping TLS with disability-accessible materials, assistive devices and adapted learning resources, while training teachers and facilitators to support diverse learning needs.

UNICEF is also preparing to launch a large-scale school construction and rehabilitation programme as a matter of urgency, recognizing that the restoration of permanent education facilities is essential to Gaza's long-term recovery and social cohesion. In the medium term, UNICEF will work with local communities and education partners to re-establish statutory education services and provide non-formal learning, including catch-up and remedial education, for at least 200,000 children who have missed years of schooling.

The funding requirement for the education and learning response is \$20 million for three months.



Social Protection

Expanding social protection is essential to reduce the extreme vulnerability of children and their families and to help prevent further deterioration of living conditions in Gaza. Multi-purpose cash assistance will play a critical role in enabling families to meet their basic needs such as food, medicine, hygiene and transportation, while reducing the risk of famine and preventing further malnutrition among children.

As part of UNICEF's wrap-around package of support for the most vulnerable, cash assistance complements interventions in health, nutrition, education and child protection, ensuring that families can access the full range of essential services. Priority will be given to households with children recently treated for malnutrition, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children with injuries or disabilities, and other families facing critical vulnerability.

UNICEF will provide digitally delivered multi-purpose cash assistance to reach approximately 250,000 people (45,000 families) in close coordination with the Cash Working Group and partners to ensure effective targeting and avoid duplication. Over the next three months, UNICEF will continue this life-saving support while gradually transitioning towards universal child grants as part of early recovery efforts. The programme will focus on children under 3, children with disabilities and other critically vulnerable groups, helping to strengthen family resilience and stability.

The funding requirement for social protection interventions over the next three months is \$30 million.



Child Protection and Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS)

With the ceasefire now in place, there is an urgent need to scale up child protection and mental health interventions to prevent the long-term psychological and physical impacts of two years of extreme violence, displacement and loss. Every child in Gaza has been exposed to extreme levels of fear, violence and often loss of family members, sustained injuries or been separated from their caregivers. Protecting all children from further harm and addressing their mental health needs at scale are among UNICEF's highest priorities.

UNICEF is implementing an accelerated and integrated child protection and MHPSS response as part of the broader humanitarian and recovery effort. To prevent and limit long-term effects, MHPSS interventions are being launched at scale from the first phase of the ceasefire through education and community-based activities, both in person and remotely so that every child in Gaza has access to MHPSS. These initiatives aim to help children cope, rebuild a sense of safety and stability, and reconnect with supportive family and community networks.

Child protection services are providing an essential wrap-around package of holistic support for children and their families, combining psychosocial assistance, case management, in-kind support such as winter clothing, cash assistance for the most vulnerable households, and referrals to health, education and specialized services, including for children with disabilities. UNICEF and partners are expanding these services for children most at risk, such as those who have lost parents or caregivers, unaccompanied and separated children, and survivors of violence, neglect or exploitation.

Mine risk education and Explosive Remnants of War awareness are also vital as children and their families begin to return to their homes. These activities are being integrated across community outreach and education initiatives to reduce the risk of injury and loss of life. In addition, UNICEF is supporting frontline responders through mental health debriefing and counselling under the "caring for carers" approach. Parenting programmes and community awareness sessions complement MHPSS interventions to promote safer environments and strengthen positive caregiving practices.

Advocacy for urgent medical evacuations remains a priority, particularly for children requiring advanced treatment unavailable in Gaza. In collaboration with WHO and partners, UNICEF continues to support efforts to secure medical evacuation corridors through the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and where necessary, to Egypt or third countries.

Over the next three months, UNICEF aims to reach 500,000 children with MHPSS services and at least 20,000 children with specialized child protection interventions.

The funding requirement for MHPSS and critical child protection services over this period is \$18 million, including essential materials, assistive devices and MHPSS supplies.



Health

The collapse of Gaza's health system has had devastating consequences for children. After two years of intense bombardment, displacement and the near-total destruction of medical infrastructure, many children have been left without access to even the most basic care. Routine immunization has been interrupted, maternal and newborn services have been severely disrupted, and preventable diseases are rising rapidly.

With the ceasefire now in place, restoring essential health services is critical to prevent further loss of life and to lay the foundation for recovery. **UNICEF's health response focuses on re-establishing primary healthcare for all children in Gaza, restoring immunization coverage, and ensuring the availability of life-saving neonatal and pediatric care as part of an integrated health, nutrition and child protection response.**

A key priority is improving the immunization status of children. UNICEF is conducting a rapid assessment of the cold chain to determine damage and urgent needs, prioritizing restoration of cold chain integrity in Gaza City and the North, where systems have been destroyed or dismantled since August. The first phase of a catch-up vaccination campaign covering all antigens will target 120,000 children under the age of 3, reaching 40,000 within the first month.

To expand access to primary health care, UNICEF is supporting the deployment of mobile health teams as an immediate service delivery mechanism while partners assess reconstruction needs. Over the next three months, UNICEF and partners will work to restore the functionality of 31 primary health care facilities and medical points, ensuring they can deliver essential services with adequate staffing, supplies and basic infrastructure in place.

UNICEF is supporting the re-establishment of life-saving neonatal and pediatric intensive care in functioning hospitals by providing essential equipment, reliable power and oxygen supplies, and critical medicines. A comprehensive assessment of neonatal and pediatric services across the Gaza Strip will guide longer-term recovery efforts. Building on its technical expertise and long-standing presence, UNICEF is prepared to lead the large-scale rehabilitation and reconstruction of health care facilities to restore essential services for children and their families.

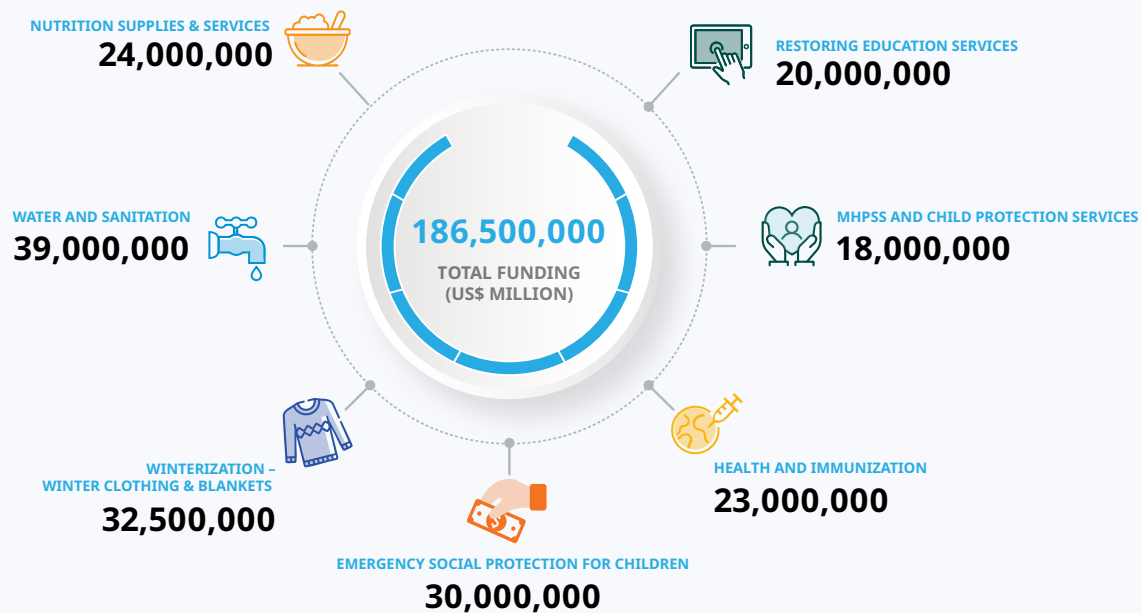
The funding requirement for all health interventions over the next three months is **\$23 million**, covering immunization, mobile health delivery, restoration of primary health facilities, and neonatal and pediatric intensive care support.

On 23 January 2025, the Al-Basyuni family, displaced from Beit Hanoun, unpack winter clothing distributed for children aged 3 to 5 years old in Al-Zawaida internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in central Gaza in the State of Palestine.

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Funding requirements



Note:

Funding targets remain under the 2025 SOP Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal.

Planning Assumptions

- A temporary cessation of hostilities in Gaza is expected to enable humanitarian access and allow for the rapid restoration of essential services across the Strip.
- While large-scale fighting may cease, the overall security situation will remain unpredictable. The breakdown in governance and law enforcement is likely to continue, with risks of looting, community tensions and disputes over aid distribution, particularly in the early weeks of the ceasefire. Women and girls, especially those with disabilities, are expected to face heightened protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV), in overcrowded and poorly serviced areas.
- Significant population movement is expected as displaced families begin to return from the south to the north. This will create immediate pressure to expand humanitarian services north of Wadi Gaza while maintaining support in the south, where overcrowded shelters and informal settlements are likely to persist. Movement restrictions and checkpoints may continue to limit mobility, slowing the rate of returns.
- The entry of humanitarian goods and materials is expected to improve during the ceasefire period, although internal movement of supplies across Gaza may still face delays. Coordination with partners will remain essential to ensure equitable and transparent distribution of assistance.
- Logistical challenges are expected to continue due to high demand for trucks, congestion on main routes and limited storage space. Fuel and electricity availability are assumed to improve for hospitals, water and sanitation facilities, and humanitarian operations, although distribution will remain uneven and vulnerable to disruption.
- Entry of key logistical and engineering equipment is anticipated to be prioritized to support humanitarian and early recovery operations. Cooperation among relevant authorities and regional partners will be required to facilitate the transfer of essential items such as generators, solar units, prefabricated structures and materials for rubble removal, drainage and solid waste management.
- Gender considerations: access to sexual and reproductive health services, including menstrual hygiene supplies, will remain constrained. The risk of GBV is likely to increase in overcrowded environments and with the absence of functioning law enforcement. Adolescent girls and boys face heightened risks of early marriage, recruitment and mental health distress, which may impede their return to education and community life.
- Children with disabilities will continue to face major barriers in accessing essential services and assistance. UNICEF programmes will ensure that all interventions are inclusive, accessible and responsive to their specific needs across all sectors.

These factors and risks are fully integrated into programme implementation strategy, which prioritizes flexibility, inclusion and community engagement in both planning and delivery. UNICEF will continue to work hand in hand with affected communities, national NGOs, women-led and community-based organizations to ensure that assistance is locally driven, gender-responsive and reaches the most vulnerable children and families across Gaza.

As part of this approach, UNICEF is strengthening Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) mechanisms to ensure that communities have meaningful opportunities to participate in decision-making and provide feedback. Programmes will be continuously adapted based on community priorities, ensuring that UNICEF's response in Gaza remains transparent, responsive and rooted in the needs and voices of children and their caregivers.



Children in Gaza celebrated the announcement of a ceasefire on 9 October 2025.

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for every child

Whoever she is.
Wherever he lives.
Every child deserves a childhood.
A future.
A fair chance.
That's why UNICEF is there.
For each and every child.
Working day in and day out.
In more than 190 countries and territories.
Reaching the hardest to reach.
The furthest from help.
The most excluded.
It's why we stay to the end.
And never give up.