



HEALTH CLUSTER

HEALTH CLUSTER BULLETIN
November-December 2019



Caption: Paramedics evacuating an injured person east Gaza
Photo: Palestine Red Crescent Society

occupied Palestinian territory - Gaza

Emergency type: Complex

Reporting period: 01 November - 31 December 2019

2.5 M NEED ASSISTANCE

1.4 M TARGETED

0.7 M REACHED

629 INJURED REACHED

1 DEATH

HIGHLIGHTS

- From 01 November to 31 December 2019, **one Palestinian was killed** and 629 were injured¹ as a result of Great March of Return (GMR) demonstrations in the Gaza Strip.
- 34 Palestinians were killed** (including 8 children and 3 women) **and 111 were injured**, (including 46 children and 20 women) in the Gaza Strip from the 12 to the 14 of November 2019, **during a period of escalated violence**, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH).
- Since the start of the GMR mass demonstrations in March 2018, **33 141 injured people and 322 deaths were verified by WHO**. Of those injured, 7951 people suffered from gunshot wounds, and 88% of those presented limb wounds², putting severe strain on an already overstretched health system.
- In December, **46% out of the essential medications were reported at less than one-month supply** at the MoH Central Drug Store in Gaza, 2% less than in November; with 43% completely depleted.
- Funding status:** The Health Cluster's Humanitarian Response Plan, requires US\$ 42 million, a total of US\$ 20 million has been received (47%), leaving a gap of US\$22m.

HEALTH SECTOR



70 health cluster partners including local and international NGOs and UN agencies

MEDICINES DELIVERED TO HEALTH FACILITIES/PARTNERS*



37 medicine items delivered
71 250 beneficiaries

HEALTH FACILITIES



32 total number of functioning hospitals
149 total number of functioning primary health care clinics

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TEAMS (EMTs)



17 EMTs deployed
159 surgeries conducted
425 consultations conducted

AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES (*Dec. 2019)



46% of essential medicines, less than one-month supply
43% of essential medicines totally depleted

FUNDING STATUS



US\$42M Total HRP requested
47% HRP funded

Public health risks, priorities, needs and gaps

Trauma and injury | Contribution: Trauma Working Group

- **629 Palestinians were injured** during November and December, hospitals reported **388 emergency department consultations** for patients injured during demonstrations, from which, 127 were injured by gunshots. See Figure 1.
- From the cohort of casualties referred to emergency departments in November and December, **156 were children** (40%), 16 (4%) were female and 372 (96%) were male.
- From 30 March 2018 until 31 December 2019, a total of 322 people have been killed and 33 141 injured³. Of those injured, 16 322 were treated at the **Trauma Stabilisation Points (TSPs)** and discharged. This has reduced the burden of casualties arriving at the hospitals **by an average of 49%**. The remaining 19 618 casualties arrived at the emergency departments (ED) of Ministry of Health (MoH) and NGO hospitals. Of them, 4 484 were children. Out of 19 618 casualties presented to emergency departments (ED), 7951 cases were **gunshot injuries**; this accounts for 41% of the total casualties arriving at the hospitals. Of these gunshot injuries, 88% are limb injuries. Figure 3 provides a breakdown by affected body part.
- **Permanent disability** has occurred because of demonstrations, including; 156 amputations, of which 94 (61%) were secondary amputations, including 30 children; 126 were lower limb amputations and 30 upper limb amputations⁴. Twenty-four patients, including three in a coma, are currently paralyzed due to spinal cord injuries and a further 21 people suffered permanent loss of vision because of injuries caused during the demonstrations.

Figure 1: Type of emergency consultations at hospitals 1 November - 31 December 2019

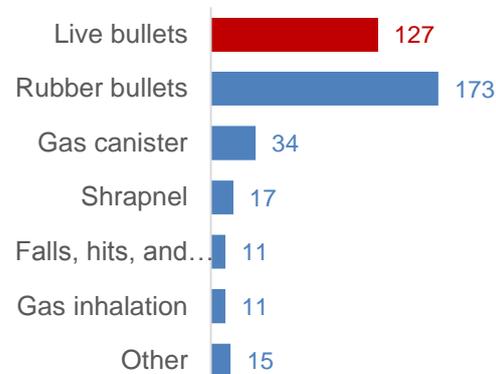
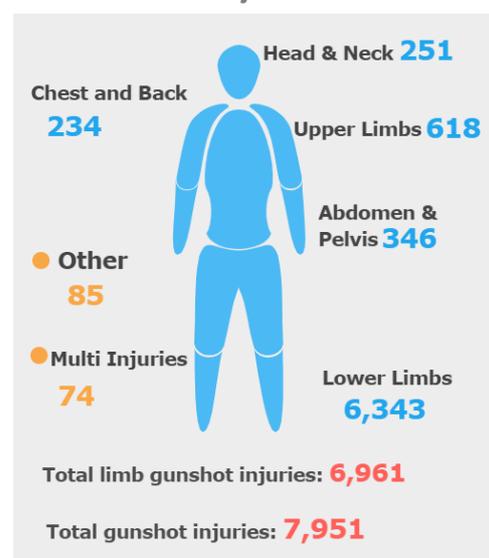


Figure 2 Live ammunition gunshot injuries



Reproductive health | Contribution: UNFPA

- During November – December 2019, another maternal death took place, raising the total registered cases to 16 since the beginning of 2019. Comparatively, the total cases registered in 2018 was 11. Access to essential sexual and reproductive health services continued to be hindered with chronic stock outs of essential drugs and disposables, including micronutrients, despite some improvement in iron and folic acid supplies. Needs remain significant, with 48% of MCH drugs reported at less than one-months' supply at MoH, showing no improvement from October. Meanwhile, in November, UNRWA received its awaited shipment of male condoms.

³ Although the MoH report 35,940 injured, WHO was able to verify 33,141 patient records.

⁴ According to Assalama Charitable Society

Non communicable diseases (NCD) and mental health | Contribution: WHO

- Key challenges for NCD care in Gaza include **supply gaps of essential medicines**, particularly in MoH facilities, compounded by service providers not always using the same treatment protocols.
- The escalation of violence since March 2018 has led to an increased number of people exposed to violence or armed conflict experience and consequently there is an elevated risk of **psychological distress and morbidity**.
- There is anecdotal evidence to suggest an increasing number of patients showing signs of addiction to psychotropic drugs. This is acutely problematic in patients who are suffering from chronic pain, as a result of an injury caused during the mass demonstrations.

Availability of medicines, disposables and laboratory reagents

- In December, 236 items (46%) out of the **essential drugs** list, were reported at less than one-month supply at the MoH Central Drugs Store (CDS) in Gaza. Out of the 236 items, 225 items are totally depleted, representing 44% from the essential drugs list. Additionally, 248 items (29%) of the essential medical disposables were reported at less than one-month supply.

Attacks against health and health access for patients injured during demonstrations

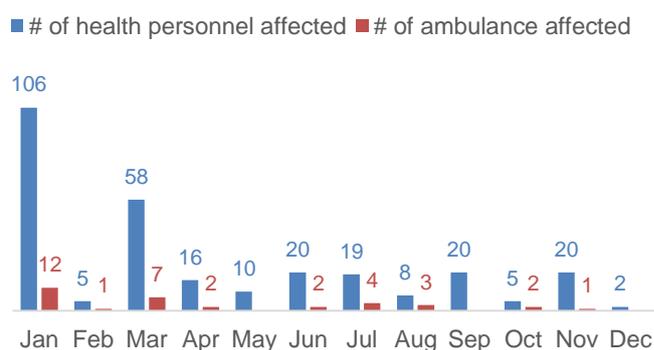
Contribution: WHO

- At least **six health workers were injured** in the Gaza Strip in November and December, while two ambulances damaged in eight **attacks against healthcare**. All health workers injured were hit with rubber bullets⁵.

Figure 3 illustrates the monthly trend of affected health personnel and ambulances.

- From March 2018 to 31 December 2019, **three health workers have been killed** and 845 injured in 567 recorded incidents against health staff and facilities in the Gaza Strip. A total of 119 ambulances have been damaged, in addition to 10 other forms of health transport and seven health facilities.
- As of 31 December 2019, according to Gaza's Coordination and Liaison Office, there had been 604 **applications to Israeli authorities by those injured in demonstrations** to exit Gaza via Erez/Beit Hanoun crossing to access health care. Of those applications, 17% were approved, 28% were denied and 55% were delayed

Figure 3: Attacks on health care in Gaza 2019



⁵ This is according to data reported by the MoH, PMRS, PRCS, UHWC and other health providers.

Health Cluster Action

Provision of essential drugs and supplies

Essential drugs

WHO

- ✓ 41 600 patients attending Ministry of Health (MoH) emergency departments, and 250 patients reporting to the MoH mental health facilities, expected to benefit from 21 drug items (including emergency services and mental drugs)
- ✓ 25 000 patients reporting to Primary Healthcare Centers also expected to benefit from Glucometer Strips (Blood Glucostix)

UNICEF

- ✓ 10 000 pregnant and lactating mothers attending primary healthcare centres expected to benefit from one drug item provided
- ✓ 1 000 pregnant and lactating mothers expected to benefit from 11 essential drugs provided to Near East Council of Churches Committee for Refugee Work (NECCS)
- ✓ 6 000 children and 10 000 high risk pregnant and lactating mothers expected to benefit from 3 drug items (supplements) provided to MoH
- ✓ 3 000 pregnant women at MoH hospitals to benefit from one drug item
- ✓ UNICEF delivered PCV and MMR vaccines on behalf of PA to benefit 232 000 children.

Total benefitted: 318 600

Medical equipment and facility upgrades

WHO

- ✓ 90 000 patients attending emergency departments per month expected to benefit from the delivery of 9 medical equipment items by WHO, in addition to the delivery of 25 items to furnish and refurbish the emergency departments of Gaza's seven public hospitals
- ✓ 3 700 newborns per month expected to benefit from the delivery of three equipment items by WHO, in addition to five supply items at six public maternity hospitals. Two items of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment also delivered to the Directorate of General Hospitals to strengthen and enhance the health information system and its management
- ✓ 26 items of ICT (including 20 laptops) delivered to local health partners to help monitor attacks on health and strengthen monitoring access to health care

Al Ahli Arab Hospital (AAH)

- ✓ Patients to benefit from the renovation of AAH's outpatient department which has expanded the

number of clinics available in preparation for health emergencies.

Total benefitted: 27 3700

Trauma and injury care

Trauma care – GMR injuries

The following support was provided by partners from 1 Nov – 31 Dec 2019 to people injured in the Great March of Return (GMR) demonstrations:

Al Ahli Arab Hospital (AAH)

- ✓ Supported 9 Limb Reconstruction patients
- ✓ Provided assistance to 54 outpatients who benefitted from 82 visits
- ✓ Provided services for 100 burns patients that benefitted from a total of 322 visits.

Baitona Society

- ✓ 22 physiotherapy interventions; 47 wound dressing management and three assistive devices provided for injured patients.

Hayfa Charity Hospital

- ✓ 43 injured provided with medical drugs and consumables; 57 medical dressings provided for injuries
- ✓ 7 patients provided follow up through surgery outpatient's clinic
- ✓ 21 injured patients transported via ambulance from the field to the medical points and 43 people provided with first aid in the Malaka area
- ✓ 46 patients provided with laboratory services; 88 with x-ray services, two with physiotherapy services, one with minor surgery.

MAP-UK

- ✓ 12 clinics for limb reconstruction outpatients were conducted and 223 clinical assessments and 22 surgeries were provided
- ✓ Scrub nurse training and a trauma symposium was conducted.

Medicins du Monde - France

- ✓ Finalization of the refurbishment of Al Aqsa hospital emergency department, including provision of non-medical equipment, on-job training and the finalization of the emergency medical and mental health flow chart

Medicins Du Monde (MdM) Spain

- ✓ 62 patients (under 16 years old) were screened and 13 orthopaedic surgeries performed at Nasser Hospital during a medical mission which targeted children and paediatric patients suffering from bone problems (genetic and/or from previous trauma).

Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS)

- ✓ 277 people provided with first aid, of which 36 were shot with live ammunition
- ✓ Continued with postoperative care services, following up with 146 of 1 409 registered as injured with PMRS since the beginning of GMR

- ✓ 54 injured provided with assistive devices; seven injured with lower limb amputations to be provided with artificial limbs; 141 injured provided with medications.

Qatar Red Crescent

- ✓ 152 advanced, life-saving thoracic surgeries provided; 275 patients at thoracic surgery departments provided with services at European Gaza Hospital and Shifa hospital

Red Crescent Society for Gaza Strip (RC4GS)

- ✓ Improved access to advanced medical imaging and diagnostic tests and provided 329 MRI examinations, 184 CT scans and 161 histopathological tests.

WHO

- ✓ WHO fully equipped two operation rooms at the Limb Reconstruction Unit at Nasser hospital, in addition to equipping the unit with the needed IT equipment. The unit started functioning on 12 November 2019. A total of 33 patients were admitted and 29 limb reconstruction surgeries were conducted by the local team. Admitted patients received 230 physiotherapy sessions and 57 psychological sessions.

Assalama Society

- ✓ Provided 243 injured patients with assistive devices 113 medical supplies and 743 with medication, Assalama also performed Physiotherapy (107 patients / 1237 session), wound dressing (96 patients / 424 sessions), Psychosocial Support (70 wounded persons) inside their clinic, in addition they provided 231 patients with physiotherapy and 334 patients with wound dressings, 352 medical examinations through the outreach team.
- ✓ An educational lecture was hold on winter diseases for people with disability
- ✓ In addition to doing free medical days with KRITAS Al-Quds Foundation for wounded people

UNRWA

- ✓ 52 surgical dressings and 74 medications provided; 26 patients received both surgical dressing and medication
- ✓ 650 physical therapy session performed and 25 new admissions.

Total benefitted: 2 307

Vaccinations and disease

- ✓ infants aged from 6 to 12 months will be targeted under a supplementary immunization campaign taking place from 5-9 January 2020 in response to the recent measles outbreak which WHO has provided technical support to MoH for.

Reproductive and Child Health

UNFPA

- ✓ In November, UNFPA has organized a mission to Palestine by its Regional Advisor for reproductive health, Dr. Shible Sahbani. Dr. Sahabni has delivered an orientation session on the Minimal Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health in Crisis "MISP" to Health Cluster Members. Dr. Shible also got the chance to meet and discuss priorities and challenges of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) with high level experts, key informants and influential stakeholders on SRH from UN, international agencies, Academia, MOH and NGOs.



- ✓ As part of increasing preparedness and orientation of health professionals on MISP, UNFPA in cooperation with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) conducted 3 days training for 16 Medical graduates (8 males and 8 females) from Azhar University.
- ✓ UNFPA and partners have launched the assessment of (in Vitro Fertilization Services "IVF") in Palestine, in cooperation with MOH and the Italian Agency for development Cooperation "AICS", attended by 50 participants from MOH, NGOs and health experts, the workshop shed light on the situation, gaps and recommendations to improve IVF services.

Al Ahli Arab Hospital (AAH)

- ✓ 795 children were supported for malnutrition management; of these 200 were put on a three-month management program

Caritas Jerusalem

- ✓ Provided 544 gynaecology and obstetrics services to patients

Qatar Red Crescent

- ✓ Delivered medical equipment including bilirubin meter, led phototherapy and ventilators to Neonatal Intensive Care Units, in addition to providing medical equipment (e.g. CTG machines) to benefit four gynaecology and obstetrics departments

RC4GS

- ✓ 2 306 beneficiaries received sexual and reproductive health services, from them 475 beneficiaries received family planning /contraceptives means

- ✓ 100 participants from partner groups engaged in three training workshops on Gender based-violence

WHO

- ✓ Conducted three training workshops to introduce new newborn registries (to improve health information systems) for approx 90 staff including nurses, midwives and obstetricians in Shifa, Tahreer and Aqsa hospitals
- ✓ In coordination with Gaza Neonatal Network, WHO conducted a workshop to set the quarterly plan for five major maternity hospitals, which focused on vulnerable newborns not receiving quality care, preterm babies, and babies born by caesarean section
- ✓ Coached 32 maternity staff from Shifa, Al-Aqsa and Tahreer hospitals on essential newborn care during caesarean section, which constitute around 27% of total births



WHO consultant coaching Shifa operating theatre team on EENC during Cesarean section
Photo: WHO

UNRWA

- ✓ Conducted training for more than 700 staff at UNRWA on sexual and reproductive health package for children and youth as well as outreach activities on the same topics which included more than 2 900 youth beneficiaries.

Total benefitted: 7 427

Mental health and psychological support (MHPSS)

Al Ahli Arab Hospital (AAH)

- ✓ 2018 children each has received 10-12 sessions in MHPSS and their caregivers received psychological support sessions as part of the psychosocial intervention for PTSD cases

Baitona Society

- ✓ 37 individuals MHPSS sessions were provided; in addition to 89 group counselling services and 1 500 recreational activities in kindergartens

MdM Spain

- ✓ Rehabilitated and equipped two play room therapy facilities in East and West Community Mental Health Centres and delivered sessions on playroom therapy and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in these centres



Children receiving post-traumatic psychological support at AAH
Photo: AAH

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) France

- ✓ Targeting the patients at MSFs outpatient clinics (Gaza, Beit Lahia, Khan Lunis and Middle Area) and Dar Essalam Hospital, MSF provides psycho-social counselling to patients and their families, and psycho-social support, referral and case management.

QRC

- ✓ QRCS is funding an ongoing master program of community mental health at Al-Quds University for 19 students working at international and local NGOs and MoH

RC4GS

- ✓ 374 clients received individual mental health and psychological support (MHPSS) and 2 310 beneficiaries attended different MHPSS activities including workshops, lectures and training

War Child

- ✓ 216 parents (166 females and 50 males) participated in group psychological support sessions for caregivers; 1 457 children (aged 7-17 years) participated in group psychological support sessions for children and 358 children and youth (aged 11-14 years) participated in group psychological support sessions
- ✓ 34 children (aged 7-17 years) benefited from case management services and 34 children of the same age group benefited from individual psychological counselling services
- ✓ 10 families received psychological counselling services
- ✓ 21 facilitators trained in a workshop on IDEAL methodology; 32 facilitators trained in a workshop on risk management including emergency preparedness, psychological first aid; and 60 participants participated in five stress management workshops
- ✓ 117 participants engaged in 2 Care for Care Providers Days and 5 Community (Protection) Initiatives were organised

WHO

- ✓ 90 health workers in emergency departments participated in three training workshops on the mhGAP Humanitarian Intervention Guide (mhGAP HIG) in Ministry of Health (MoH) general hospitals to enhance their capacity to respond to mental health needs in light of the emergency.

UNRWA

Integrated MHPSS services in the primary health care service continued. Counsellors carried out 73 sessions with 1 203 adults (69 males and 1134 females) during the 16 days of activism against Gender-Based Violence.

Total benefitted: 3,545

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) and Palliative Care

Al Ahli Arab Hospital (AAH)

- ✓ 143 women were screened for breast cancer by mammography, 53 had fibrocystic disease and a number of interventions were carried out; and 494 women received education about breast self-examinations
- ✓ Conducted 10 free medical days in coordination with 11 community based organisations and 511 patients from many areas in Gaza Strip

Caritas Jerusalem

- ✓ 313 patients with NCDs (43 with diabetes, 145 with hypertension and 125 with both diseases) received medical care

QRC

- ✓ 310 patients at Nasser Hospital benefitted from pulmonology (respiratory) medical interventions

RC4GS

- ✓ 1 186 patients with NCDs (196 with diabetes, 900 with hypertension, 26 with epilepsy, 64 with cancer) received medical care and drugs

UNRWA

- ✓ 94 616 NCD consultations were provided with services
- ✓ Continued retinal screening for diabetic patients in co-operation with St. John hospital.

WHO

- ✓ Provided training to 150 Ministry of Health (MoH) primary healthcare physicians and nurses via five training workshops on NCDs to strengthen the early detection of NCDs and surveillance systems at primary healthcare centers in the Gaza Strip.

Total benefitted: 97,410

Resilience and preparedness

WHO

- ✓ As part of the World Antibiotics Awareness Week in November, WHO supported the MoH in conducting a series of awareness activities in Gaza public hospitals, primary healthcare centers, schools and universities benefitting around 2,295 health staff and 5,970 of students, patients and their companions. Activities included a seminar at Shifa hospital, several workshops and lectures in 11 hospitals, three universities, five public schools, and public healthcare centres



Plans for future response

- Health Cluster Flood Contingency Plan will be revised with the most updated information. Health Cluster working with Ministry of Health is also looking at emergency stockpile for response.
- On the 27 November 2019, the Health Cluster conducted a joint OPT Health Cluster meeting (West Bank and Gaza). Meeting minutes can be found [here](#).
- The Trauma Working Group conducted a meeting on the 21 November 2019 in Gaza. The new Emergency Medical Team Coordination Cell (EMT-CC) was presented to all partners. Meeting minutes can be found [here](#).

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