
UN releases US\$22.5 million for rising humanitarian needs in Gaza

(New York, 21 May 2021): Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock today announced the release of US\$22.5 million towards the response to rising humanitarian needs in Gaza. The amount includes a \$4.5 million allocation from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and up to \$18 million from the Occupied Palestinian Territory Humanitarian Fund.

As of 21 May, the escalation of hostilities in Gaza has claimed the lives of at least 242 Palestinians, including 66 children and 38 women, and injured over 1,900 people. In Israel there were at least 12 fatalities, including two children, and hundreds of injuries.

The violence has displaced over 77,000 Palestinians who were seeking protection in 58 UNRWA schools, including in 23 designated emergency shelters. Following today's ceasefire announcement, most of the displaced have returned home. However, about 1,000 people whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged still remain. There is concern about the transmission of COVID-19 between vulnerable people who huddled in crowded shelters and the health-care system's inability to cope.

The hostilities have also caused serious damage to vital civilian infrastructure in Gaza, affecting water, sanitation and hygiene services for hundreds of thousands of people. Electrical power shortages and the damage to the Gaza Ministry of Health Central Laboratory, which processes COVID-19 tests, hinder health-care provision at dozens of centres throughout Gaza.

Hundreds of buildings and homes have been destroyed, damaged or rendered uninhabitable. The ceasefire in place since today is permitting repair teams to begin assessing the damage more accurately.

The funds released today will help provide affected people with essential services and humanitarian assistance and dispose of explosive ordnance.

The UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, said: "Hostilities have exacerbated the needs of 2 million people in Gaza who have been debilitated by 13 years of forced isolation and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I welcome the ceasefire and I reiterate my call on all parties to the hostilities to allow for emergency humanitarian relief distribution, and for civilians to purchase food and water, seek medical care and attend to other emergency needs."

CERF is one of the fastest and most effective ways to help people affected by crises. Since its creation, it has assisted hundreds of millions of people with over \$7 billion across more than 100 countries and territories.

Since its inception in 2013, the Occupied Palestinian Territory Humanitarian Fund has allocated \$132 million to humanitarian partners, including \$58.3 million to international NGOs and \$46 million to local and national partners on the front line of emergencies.

This would not have been possible without generous and consistent donor support.

For further information, please contact:

In New York, Anna Jefferys, [mailto: jefferysa@un.org](mailto:jefferysa@un.org), + 1 347 707 3734

In Geneva, Vanessa Huguenin, [mailto: huguenin@un.org](mailto:huguenin@un.org), +41 79 202 6844