



The escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel comes in the context of ongoing occupation, blockade of the Gaza Strip, political division, and long-term displacement of Palestinian refugees, which have contributed to existing humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities before the current escalation.



413

Estimated number of
Palestinians killed in
Gaza

2300

Estimated number of
Palestinians injured
in Gaza

13

Estimated number of
Palestinians killed in
the West Bank

191

Estimated number of
Palestinians injured
in the West Bank

11

Attacks on Health
Care since 7 October
2023

**Ministry of Health figures*

**According to PRCS*

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- In the early morning hours of October 7, armed Palestinian groups in the Gaza Strip fired thousands of rockets into southern and central Israel. A senior Hamas military commander later announced the launch of Operation “Al Aqsa Storm”.
- Members of Palestinian armed groups entered Israeli towns, cities, and military facilities near the Gaza Strip, resulting in 677 deaths and 2000 injuries as of 20.00 on 8 October; they also claimed to have captured numerous members of the Israeli armed forces and civilians taking them to Gaza.
- The Israeli military declared a ‘state of war alert’ and initiated a large-scale operation called, “Swords of Iron”, which is still ongoing.
- Air strikes on Gaza are ongoing.
- Confrontations among settlers and Palestinians have increased in several locations in the West Bank, including east Jerusalem.
- Israeli authorities have imposed numerous restrictions on movement, including the closure of checkpoints between the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Israel, which hinder essential health services and block referrals outside the affected areas. The Allenby Crossing between Israel and Jordan is closed for Palestinians. Ben Gurion airport is operational, but most flights are cancelled.

- Some 73,538 internally displaced people are sheltering in 64 UNRWA schools in the Gaza Strip.
- Saturday's fighting follows weeks of rising tensions between Israel and Gaza and an unprecedented number of fatalities in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.
- The current situation and the surge in casualties have exacerbated existing humanitarian and health needs in Gaza and put additional strain on the overburdened health system, which is already suffering from a chronic shortage of medical supplies and equipment in the context of 16-years of blockade.

HEALTH NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

- With casualties mounting, there is an urgent need to boost trauma and emergency care within the framework of the trauma care pathway.
- According to the Ministry of Health, the urgent needs of Gaza's hospitals are initially estimated at more than \$10 million.
- A humanitarian corridor for unimpeded, life-saving patient referrals and movement of humanitarian personnel and essential health supplies has not yet been established.

HEALTH ATTACKS

- WHO has so far documented eleven attacks on health care in Gaza, which have resulted in the deaths of six health workers, injured four and affected nine ambulances and six health facilities.

CHALLENGES

- Erez checkpoint remains inaccessible due to the security situation, and no entry of medical supplies to Gaza is permitted through the Karam Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom checkpoint.
- Electricity cuts are severely affecting hospitals in Gaza, which are now heavily relying on generators. WHO is concerned that some hospitals only have fuel to last up to four days.
- Insecurity and damage to infrastructure are hindering timely access to health care for Palestinians in Gaza. From the Gaza Strip an average 60-65 patients per day require access across Beit Hanoun (Erez) checkpoint to essential health care, while approximately 315 patients per day from the West Bank request permits to access health care in east Jerusalem and Israel.
- The closure of checkpoints in the West Bank and the increase in violence have disrupted health services at some Ministry of Health (MoH) medical facilities, UNRWA health centers, and MoH mobile health clinics.

WHO RESPONSE

- WHO is reprogramming \$1 million to procure urgently needed medical supplies from the local market to fill gaps in need.
- Seven major hospitals in the Gaza Strip have already consumed the pre-positioned WHO trauma supplies for the treatment of 100 severely injured people at each hospital. Yesterday, they also activated the hospital emergency plans, prepared with support from WHO, to better manage the surge in casualties.
- Additional stock of WHO trauma kits is being mobilized to support the treatment of up to 500 severely injured people.
- WHO continues to systematically monitor health attacks within the Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care, as well as to document and report on health needs and restrictions on health access.
- The Gaza Emergency Operation Center, established through WHO support, has been activated.

COORDINATION – HEALTH CLUSTER

- The Health Cluster is coordinating with partners and closely monitoring the situation and health needs in Gaza.
- The Health Cluster, with assistance from WHO, has submitted inputs for a Flash Appeal of \$15.4 million to support the humanitarian health response in Gaza and the West Bank.
- MAP, AWDA, WHO and UNICEF have released pre-positioned supplies worth \$800,000 to hospitals in Gaza.

- Care International and Palestinian Medical Relief Society are working to support access to basic health services for families displaced during the ongoing attacks.
- MSF France, MSF Spain and MSF Belgium are consolidating supplies and humanitarian resources to support case management at Shifa and Al Awda hospitals in Gaza.
- UNFPA has activated district-level sexual and reproductive health emergency teams to support access to critical services.

WHO RECOMMENDATIONS

- Immediate end to hostilities.
- Ensure the protection of civilians against attacks, including acts of retaliation.
- Ensure respect and the protection of health care at all times.
- Ensure the injured have immediate and unhindered access to health care.
- Establish safe zones and humanitarian corridors to facilitate immediate access for patients and health supplies in and out of the Gaza Strip and from the West Bank to east Jerusalem.

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