

Statement by the UN Human Rights Office – OPT on Access to Humanitarian Assistance to Gaza

Occupied Palestinian Territory 15 November 2023

We are gravely concerned at the announcement by UNRWA that fuel supplies in the Gaza Strip will be imminently depleted. The catastrophic consequences of this are preventable. We are already seeing a cascading collapse in water, sewage, and sanitation services, telecoms, food shortages, and healthcare.

Fuel underpins access to and provision of all humanitarian services in Gaza. Without it, access by the people of Gaza to life-saving humanitarian assistance will all but cease. With 10 water wells closing in Rafah – the only water source in the city, as well as sewage and desalination plants, Gaza's 2.3 million people will be left with very limited or no access to clean water and will be exposed to overflowing raw sewage, exacerbating the already overcrowded and unsanitary conditions and risking outbreaks of disease of epidemic proportions.

Israel must urgently act to facilitate unimpeded humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza, including ensuring the supply of fuel to support the delivery of humanitarian services, but also to ensure the continued operation of the remaining life-saving civilian infrastructure. It must enable access to humanitarian aid through Israeli crossings into the Gaza Strip, including Kerem Shalom/Kerem Abu Salem, as well as Rafah – in order to meet the needs of the civilian population. Furthermore, the delivery of assistance must be facilitated to all civilians wherever they are located in the Gaza Strip.

The international community must exert maximum pressure on Israel to fulfil its obligations as occupying power and to take urgent steps to avert this disaster.

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