



People being displaced from Rafah. Photo by OCHA

Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #166

15 May 2024

The OCHA oPt Flash Update is published every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, with a comprehensive update on the West Bank included every Wednesday. The next update will be issued on 17 May.

Key Highlights

- A UN staff member was killed and another injured when their vehicle was struck while en route to the European Gaza Hospital in Khan Younis.
- Access to critical health services continues to shrink and displacement is on the rise as additional evacuation orders are issued and military operations intensify.
- The Palestinian Civil Defense teams report facing enormous challenges in conducting their work and saving lives amid significant resource shortages.
- Israeli settler attacks displace the last two remaining families in Ein Samiya herding community in Ramallah governorate.

Gaza Strip Updates

- Israeli bombardment from the air, land, and sea continues to be reported across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure. Ground incursions and heavy fighting also continue to be reported in Jabaliya, Deir al Balah, and eastern Rafah. As of 15 May, Rafah Crossing remains closed. Kerem Shalom Crossing is operational, but the prevailing security and logistical conditions are hampering humanitarian aid deliveries at scale.
- Between the afternoons of 13 and 15 May, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 142 Palestinians were killed and 314 were injured, including 60 killed and 80 injured in the last 24 hours. Between 7 October 2023 and 15 May 2024, at least 35,233 Palestinians were killed and 79,141 were injured in Gaza, according to MoH in Gaza.
- The following are among the deadliest incidents reported on 13 May:
 - On 13 May, at about 0:50, four Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit in Al Brazil neighborhood in eastern Rafah.
 - On 13 May, at about 11:15, four Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit in Jabaliya, North Gaza.
 - On 13 May, at about 17:30, four Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when a house was hit on Yaffa Street, in Gaza city.
 - On 13 May, at about 2:25, 11 displaced Palestinians were reportedly killed when Al Awala School was hit in An Nuseirat Refugee Camp, in Deir al Balah.
 - On 13 May, at about midnight, at least 29 Palestinians were reportedly killed and others injured when a three-floor residential building sheltering at least 50 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the vicinity of Jam'iya Mosque in An Nuseirat, in Deir al Balah, was hit. Many people remain under the rubble.

- On 13 May, a UN staff member was killed, and another was injured when their UN vehicle was struck while en route to the European Gaza Hospital in Khan Younis. Expressing sorrow about this incident, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Martin Griffiths, [emphasized](#): “Parties must take all feasible precautions to spare civilians, including UN personnel and humanitarian workers.” Since the onset of hostilities, at least 262 aid workers have been killed in Gaza, including 193 UN staff.
- Between the afternoons of 13 and 15 May, one Israeli soldier was reported killed in Gaza. As of 15 May, 273 soldiers have been killed and 1,712 soldiers have been injured in Gaza or along the border in Israel since the beginning of the ground operation, according to the Israeli military. In addition, according to the Israeli media citing official Israeli sources, over 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, including 33 children, have been killed in Israel, the vast majority on 7 October. As of 15 May, it is estimated that 132 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including fatalities whose bodies are withheld.
- On 13 May, according to preliminary information received by OHCHR from UN and NGO partners, as well as media sources, two buses carrying 76 Palestinian detainees from Gaza were released in Al Qarara area in northeastern Khan Younis. The detainees were instructed to continue their journey on foot and reportedly reached different locations in Deir al Balah and Khan Younis, including Al Aqsa and Nasser hospitals.
- On 14 May, the Palestinian Civil Defense (PCD) [stated](#) that its teams continue to face enormous challenges in conducting their operations in Gaza gripped by resource shortages. The lack of essential equipment, vehicles, and fuel has made it difficult for PCD to retrieve thousands of bodies trapped under rubble and reach people in need of rescue. The PCD appealed for an immediate intervention by the UN, the International Red Cross, and the international community to put pressure on Israeli authorities to facilitate PCD operations and ensure they have the necessary fuel and heavy equipment for rescue operations to save lives. PCD warned that existing reliance on primitive tools to recover thousands of bodies would take about six years to be complete.
- On 14 and 15 May, the Israeli military issued two new evacuation orders for all or part of 19 neighbourhoods in northern Gaza, bringing to five the number of orders issued since 6 May in Rafah and northern Gaza. As of 15 May, according to the UN, nearly 600,000 people have been displaced from Rafah, including about 150,000 people in the past 48 hours. Another about 100,000 people have been displaced in northern Gaza, the UN estimates. To date, 285 square kilometres, or approximately 78 per cent of the Gaza Strip, have been placed under evacuation orders by the Israeli military; this encompasses all areas north of Wadi Gaza, whose residents were instructed to evacuate in late October, as well as specific areas south of Wadi Gaza designated for evacuation by the Israeli military since 1 December. As families continue to be displaced, many for the fifth time since the onset of hostilities, Israeli-designated “humanitarian zones” for the displaced remain unsafe, according to Save the Children ([SCI](#)); medical personnel at the SCI Emergency Health Unit in Al Mawasi have been treating children wounded in airstrikes taking place in such zones. All parties must respect international humanitarian law, at all times. This means that civilians must be protected, and their essential needs – including food, shelter, water and health – must be met, wherever they are in Gaza and whether they move or stay.
- Access to critical health services continues to shrink as additional evacuation orders are issued and military operations intensify in areas where these services are found. On 14 May, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) [announced](#) that it had withdrawn from the Indonesian Field Hospital after providing post-operative care for injured patients at the facility since December 2023. The NGO reported taking this decision following the “advancing offensive” in Rafah and the “pattern of systematic attacks against medical facilities and civilian infrastructure” it had witnessed since the beginning of the conflict, adding that its teams have endured 26 violent incidents since October 2023, including “airstrikes damaging hospitals, tanks being fired at agreed deconflicted shelters, ground offensives into medical centres, and convoys fired upon.” While downsizing its footprint in Rafah, MSF has now resumed operations at the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, providing orthopaedical surgery and care for burns, among other services.
- According to the Health Cluster, as of 15 May, the Indonesian field Hospital in Rafah is now out of service and there are eight functional field hospitals. These include a field hospital that has been newly established by the International Committee of the Red Cross ([ICRC](#)) in coordination with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) to help address the “overwhelming” scale of medical needs in Rafah. The 60-bed facility, which has mass casualty management and triage capacities, will be able to provide emergency surgical care, obstetric, maternal, newborn and pediatric care, as well as outpatient services. Referring to the increasingly dire health situation in Gaza, the ICRC warned that patients with serious and chronic illnesses, including diabetes, pneumonia or other infectious and non-communicable diseases, are not receiving the attention they need as overstretched doctors and nurses must constantly prioritize the treatment of the critically wounded.
- On 13 May, Oxfam [warned](#) about the rising risk of deadly epidemic outbreaks in Gaza, including cholera, as new forced displacement and intensified military activity in Rafah compound the “lethal cocktail” of over-crowding, waste and sewage accumulation, malnutrition and heat. Highlighting the scale of devastation of water and sanitation infrastructure, Oxfam reported that five of its WASH projects in Gaza - including three wells, a desalination plant and a sewage pumping station that served over 180,700 people a day - have been severely damaged or destroyed since 7 October 2023, with another seven projects also believed to have been impacted.
- Destruction of infrastructure for the management of solid waste in Gaza, fuel shortages and access constraints have severely hampered effective waste management in Gaza, heightening health and environmental risks. According to [UNDP](#), crucial facilities have sustained extensive damage, including: the administrative buildings of the two Joint Service Councils (JSCs) in northern and southern Gaza; about 100 waste collection vehicles and landfill machinery; a microwave for medical waste disposal; and two medical waste collection vehicles in North Gaza’s Juhr Al-Deek area. The medical waste treatment device (microwave) was a UNDP project funded by the oPt Humanitarian Fund in 2020 at a cost of US\$750,000 and had helped protect against COVID-19 contamination through proper waste management of 1.5 tons of medical waste per day, benefiting patients, health workers, and waste handlers at healthcare facilities. In Khan Younis, the medical waste treatment building and a microwave for medical waste

management with operating capacity of one ton per day have also sustained damage. Additionally, only two out of 12 autoclaves at hospitals and central medical labs are still operational, at Al-Aqsa and European hospitals. In response to these challenges, UNDP and UNRWA have recently initiated fuel distributions to support solid waste management in Rafah, Khan Younis, and Deir al Balah and have facilitated between January and April the collection of approximately 45,000 tons of waste by the JSCs. UNDP estimates that at least 270,000 tons of waste have accumulated at temporary dumping sites recently established by municipalities adjacent to residential areas due to the lack of viable options, including the inaccessibility of Johr ad Deek landfill east of Gaza city and Al Fukhari (new Sufa) landfill east of Khan Younis; these include 170,000 tons in the south and 100,000 tons in northern Gaza. Rising temperatures are exacerbating the impact solid waste accumulation is having on people, such as generating insects and attracting wild animals, which is particularly severe at IDP sites. UNDP warns: "If the issue of solid waste, including medical waste, is not adequately addressed and resolved, it will exacerbate the suffering of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip....and severely impact public health, particularly with limited access to healthcare services. Moreover, it will contaminate agricultural lands and the aquifer as pollutants seep into the soil."

- Humanitarian aid missions aimed at delivering life-saving interventions continued to encounter varying levels of facilitation and hindrance, underscoring the ongoing complexity of the operating environment in Gaza. Between 1 and 14 May, 39 (59 per cent) humanitarian aid missions to northern Gaza were facilitated by Israeli authorities, 5 (8 per cent) were denied, 14 (21 per cent) were impeded, and 8 (12 per cent) were cancelled. Moreover, 79 (69 per cent) aid missions to areas in southern Gaza that require coordination were facilitated by Israeli authorities, 19 (17 per cent) were denied, 4 (3.5 per cent) were impeded, and 12 (10.5 per cent) were cancelled. Facilitated missions encompassed the delivery of food, medical supplies and fuel.

West Bank Update (7-13 May)

Latest development: On 15 May, Israeli forces shot and killed a 20-year-old Palestinian man and detained another injured Palestinian at Beit El DCO checkpoint at the northern entrance of Al Bireh city in Ramallah governorate. The man was shot during a demonstration marking An Nakba Day.

- On 12 May, Israeli forces shot and killed a 27-year-old Palestinian man and injured a 16-year-old boy during an operation by Israeli forces in Balata Refugee Camp in Nablus governorate. According to a local human rights organization, citing eyewitnesses, the killed man was unarmed and a bystander. During the operation, Israeli forces bulldozed the main entrance of the camp, causing minor damage. Another 23 Palestinians sustained injuries, including four by live ammunition, during search-and arrest operations by Israeli forces, mainly in Tell (Nablus), Azzun (Qalqiliya) and Birzeit (Ramallah), and during the demolition of a house in Beit Ummar (Hebron) that belonged to a Palestinian prisoner. In addition, on 8 May, a member of Israeli forces died of wounds sustained during the 4 May operation by Israeli forces in Deir al Ghusun.
- Since 7 October, 480 Palestinians have been killed, including 116 children, of whom 463 were killed by Israeli forces, ten by settlers, and seven where it remains unknown whether the perpetrators were Israeli settlers or soldiers. In addition, around 5,040 Palestinians have been injured in the same period, 34 per cent of whom by live ammunition. Ten Israelis have also been killed and at least 105 have been injured in the West Bank since 7 October; these include six members of Israeli forces killed and 70 injured.
- During the reporting period, Israeli settlers perpetrated 23 attacks against Palestinians that led to injury and/or damage to property. Thirteen (13) other settler incidents were reported that did not result in property damage, including intimidation of herders and entry into Al Aqsa Mosque compound where tensions have remained high. Overall, since 7 October, 848 Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians resulted in Palestinian casualties (87 incidents), damage to Palestinian-owned property (669 incidents), or both casualties and damage to property (92 incidents).
 - On 9 May, Israelis threw Molotov cocktails toward the offices of UNRWA headquarters in Sheikh Jarrah, in East Jerusalem, following the occurrence of several other attacks in recent weeks including stone throwing and chanting racist slogans. As a result, extensive damage to the outdoor areas was reported but there were no casualties. In the aftermath of the attack, UNRWA temporarily closed its offices in East Jerusalem.
 - On 13 May, a group of Israeli settlers attacked and caused damage to several trucks carrying food items en route from Hebron to Gaza at Tarqumiya Barrier checkpoint near Beit 'Awwa village in Hebron governorate. Some of the trucks were attacked upon crossing the checkpoint and others when directed by Israeli forces at the checkpoint to take an alternative route along the Barrier. Settlers threw stones, punctured tires, and dumped goods on the ground. According to eyewitnesses, one of the trucks was also burnt completely.
 - On 12 May, Israeli settlers physically assaulted and injured a Palestinian farmer in Khalet An Nahla in Bethlehem governorate and injured a sheep in Al Hathroua herding community in Jericho governorate. In another incident in N'lin village in Ramallah governorate, Israeli settlers attacked a Palestinian farmer and called in Israeli forces, who arrived at the scene and seized the farmer's tractor for two days.
 - On 12 May, Israeli settlers set fire to 20 dunums of Palestinian-owned land in Al Mughayyir village in Ramallah governorate. As a result, 11 olive trees were completely burnt and ten others sustained damage. Earlier on 8 May, Israeli settlers grazed their sheep on five dunums of Palestinian land cultivated with barley also in Al Mughayyir village, damaging the crops. In addition, Israeli settlers burnt at least 600 hay bales in Duma village, in Nablus governorate, and vandalized a donor-funded, under-construction residence in Umm at Tiran community in Hebron governorate.
- On 9 May, a number of families from Mantiqat Shib al Butum in the firing zone of Masafer Yatta were granted access by Israeli forces to their agricultural land located near the settlement of Mitzpe Yair for the first time since February 2024 but found that 600 olive trees planted on 60 dunums of land had been vandalized due to sheep grazing by Israeli settlers. A fence was also destroyed and a shed erected, also presumably by Israeli settlers. On 7 May, Israeli settlers cut a wire feeding electricity to 50 houses in Al Mazra'a al Qibliya village, in Ramallah governorate, causing a blackout for ten hours.

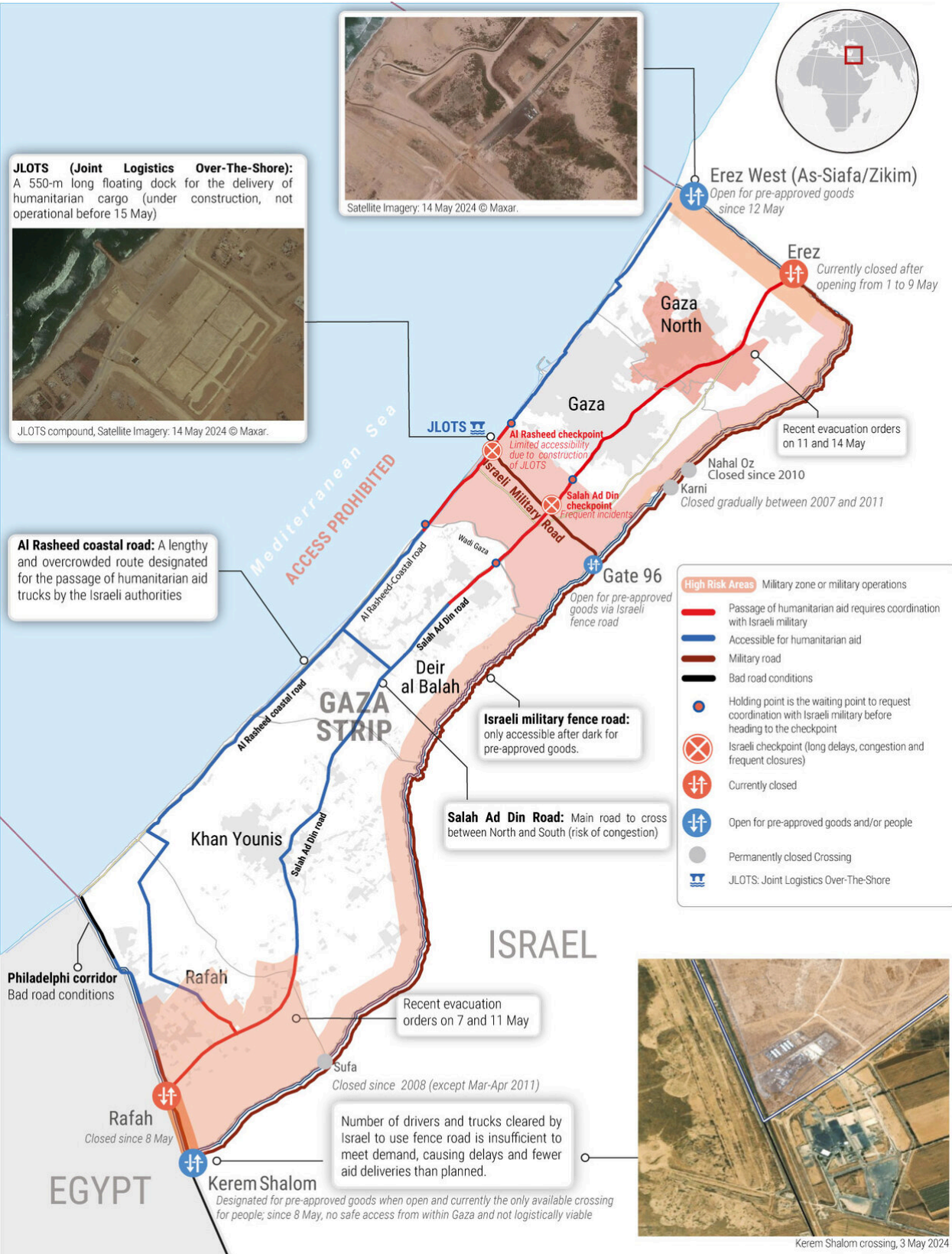
- On 13 May, the last two remaining families Ein Samiya herding community (Ramallah), comprising 19 people including 11 children, were forced to leave their community amid attacks by Israeli settlers and moved to Kafr Malik village. Settlers stole the empty tents, a vehicle and fodder and have remained in the area, prohibiting the families from returning. As of today, all 29 households in the community (156 people) have become displaced. Across the West Bank, since 7 October, some 233 Palestinian households comprising 1,385 people, mostly herding families, including 654 children, have been displaced amid settler violence and access restrictions.
- Between 7 and 13 May, the Israeli authorities demolished 18 Palestinian-owned houses due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits in Area C of the West Bank, including in Azzun (Qalqiliya), Furush Beit Dajan and Duma (Nablus), Al Jiftlik herding communities (Jericho), Al Jwaya (Hebron). As a result, at least 82 Palestinians, including 50 children, were displaced. These include 28 who were displaced in one incident in Duma village on 9 May, when five homes and five livelihood structures were demolished. In total, 17 agricultural and other structures were demolished for lacking building permits in Area C during the reporting period, affecting 89 people.
- On 9 May, five Palestinians were displaced, and one girl was injured by shrapnel, when Israeli authorities detonated explosives in a house in Shu'fat Refugee Camp in East Jerusalem on punitive grounds. The apartment, located on the eighth floor of a nine-story building, belonged to a Palestinian who was shot and killed by an armed Israeli civilian after shooting and killing two Israeli men and injuring four others on 16 February 2024 in Kiryat Malachei in Israel. The house was immediately sealed off following the incident.
- An inter-agency damage assessment in the aftermath of the 6 May operation by Israeli forces in Tulkarm Refugee Camp and its adjacent areas shows that ten homes have been rendered uninhabitable and 250 other houses sustained damages either by military bulldozers or various types of explosives. As a result, 69 people, including at least 20 children, were displaced.
- Since 7 October, over 1,950 Palestinians have been displaced as a result of home demolitions carried out or ordered by Israeli authorities. Since the beginning of the year, about 850 Palestinians have been displaced compared to 463 displaced during the same period in 2023. While levels of displacement due to the lack of building permits or on punitive grounds remained the same, there was a significant increase in displacement in the course of operations carried out by Israeli forces, mainly in refugee camps in and near Tulkarm and Jenin cities.

Funding

- As of 15 May, Member States have disbursed about US\$765 million out of \$3.4 billion (22 per cent) requested to meet the most critical needs of 2.3 million people in Gaza and 800,000 people in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between January and December 2024. This includes about \$623 million out of \$600 million (104 per cent) requested for January-March 2024 and about \$142 million out of \$2.8 billion (5 per cent) requested for the new [Flash Appeal](#) launched on 17 April to cover the period between April and December 2024. For funding analysis, please see the Flash Appeal Financial Tracking [dashboard](#).
- The [oPt HF](#) has 118 ongoing projects, for a total of \$72.5 million, addressing urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (85 per cent) and West Bank (15 per cent). In light of the updated Flash Appeal, the HF has allocated an additional \$22 million to bolster prioritized HF-funded projects in Gaza. Since 7 October, the oPt HF has mobilized \$90 million from Member States and private donors, designated for programmes throughout Gaza. A summary of the oPt HF activities and challenges in April 2024 is available through this [link](#) and the 2023 Annual Report of the oPt HF can be accessed [here](#). Private donations are collected directly through the [Humanitarian Fund](#).

For the Gaza Humanitarian Response Update for the period between 6 – 12 May, please visit: [Gaza Humanitarian Response Update | 6–12 May 2024](#). It is updated throughout the week to reflect new content.

Access restriction on Humanitarian aid map



* Asterisks indicate that a figure, sentence, or section has been rectified, added, or retracted after the initial publication of this update.