

Alert note

Palestine – Gaza War - October 2023

Completed by: George Stephan/ DSPR ACT Palestine forum coordinator.
 Date completed: 13 October 2023
 Forum: ACT Palestine forum

Type of emergency: Conflict
 Date of emergency (if rapid onset): 7 October 2023

1. The nature of the emergency

On October 7, the Government of Israel declared war, after Palestinian armed groups breached the security barrier at several points resulting in significant loss of life while simultaneously launching a barrage of rockets into Israel. The declaration of war has initiated a series of airstrikes on the densely populated Gaza Strip. This offensive has led to the loss of thousands of Palestinian lives, with over five thousand individuals sustaining injuries. The ongoing hostilities have created a dire humanitarian crisis, with homes, schools, medical facilities, and critical infrastructure being extensively damaged or destroyed.

The impact of this conflict has forced approximately 400,000 of Gaza's 2.2 million residents to flee their homes, either out of fear for their lives or due to the destruction caused by airstrikes. Many have sought refuge in UNRWA schools and churches even though some of these shelters have also been damaged by airstrikes. The number of those affected by the hostilities is anticipated to rise. The Israeli government on 13 October, has requested the Palestinians to 'relocate to southern Gaza immediately' without any guarantee for their safety or their return, this concerns almost 1.2 million people residents in the northern parts of Gaza.

Furthermore, Israeli authorities have cut off the water supply to Gaza, exacerbating an already severe shortage of potable water. A complete siege ordered by the Israeli government has severed access to electricity, food, and fuel, further aggravating the dire humanitarian situation. Gazans now have access to electricity for only 3-4 hours per day, hindering the functioning of health facilities and the treatment of the injured.

As a result of the war in Gaza there has been an escalation of tension and this has led to increased violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including confrontations, casualties, settler-related violence, and attacks on healthcare, for the seventh consecutive day.

2. The impact and scale of the emergency (please include your source of information)

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, there have been more than 2,000 people killed including 447 children and 248 women, and 6,268 injured in the past 6 days. Furthermore, at 9:00 am on 12 Oct, Israeli media sources report that over 1,300 Israelis including foreign nationals have lost their lives and 3,192 individuals have sustained injuries.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 33 Palestinians, including five children, lost their lives during recent confrontations. Among them, five were killed by settlers, while 28 were killed by Israeli security forces. Additionally, 500 Palestinians, including 81 children, sustained injuries inflicted by Israeli forces. The majority of these injuries (426) occurred during demonstrations expressing solidarity with Gaza residents, with over 35 percent of all injuries resulting from live ammunition (**OCHA Flash Update, Oct-2023**). Movement and access restrictions continue to be in place in the West Bank. Most of the checkpoints in the West Bank remained closed, further exacerbating movement restrictions on the population putting more strains on their livelihoods and are severely impacting access to essential services.

Based on the initial assessments, the ongoing war is considered a large-scale emergency. The significant number of casualties, both in terms of fatalities and injuries, as well as the extensive impact on the

region, indicate the magnitude of this crisis. The large number of people affected by the hostilities and the widespread humanitarian and medical needs in addition to the very high number of building and home destruction and people displacement further affirm the classification of this situation as a large-scale emergency.

The ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip has led to a significant and alarming mass displacement of people. In the past 24 hours alone, the cumulative number of displaced individuals has increased by 30 percent, reaching a total of 338,934 IDP's. Of this total, more than two-thirds have sought shelter in UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) schools. This underscores the diverse range of places people are turning to for safety and protection amid the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip.

This mass displacement is indicative of the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, with a substantial portion of the population forced to leave their homes in search of safety and refuge.

According to the Gaza Ministry of Public Works and Housing as of 12 Oct, 752 residential and non-residential buildings, comprising 2,835 housing units, have been destroyed, and another 1,791 housing units have been damaged beyond repair and rendered uninhabitable. Since the beginning of the escalation that started on 7th of Oct Israeli airstrikes have damaged five WASH facilities in the north of Gaza and Gaza city, which previously provided water and sanitation services to over 500,000 people. In Beit Lahia and the rest of the Northern Area, sewage and solid waste are accumulating in the streets due to damage to sewage lines and infrastructure.

The Israeli authorities announced a total halt of food, fuel, electricity and water supplies into the Gaza Strip. Since the evening of 7 October, the Israeli authorities have ceased selling and supplying electricity to the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Power Plant is currently the only source of power, and it will reportedly run out of fuel by midday 11 October. As of 12 October, most residents in the Gaza Strip no longer have access to drinking water from service providers or domestic water through pipelines. The water supply to Gaza was closed on the 8th of October. This decision affects over 610,000 people in Gaza and will result in a shortage of drinkable water. **(OCHA Updates, Oct-2023).**

According to the Education Cluster, at least 88 education facilities have been struck. This includes 18 UNRWA schools, two of which were used as emergency shelters for IDPs, and 70 public schools. For the sixth consecutive day, there has been no access to education or safe spaces for more than 600,000 children in Gaza¹.

ACT Alliance member in Gaza DSPR NECC's main building has suffered severe damage due to the ongoing war. Many rooms, including critical medicine storage facilities, ceiling, graphic design center, each room and store have been directly affected.

Since October 7, 2023, the referral of patients and their companions from the Gaza Strip to scheduled medical appointments in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has ceased due to the closure of Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings amid ongoing armed conflict. Consequently, 71 individuals from Gaza, comprising 36 patients and 35 companions, have had to stay in hotel accommodations in East Jerusalem, which are being provided by LWF - Augusta Victoria Hospital. In addition, 97 patients and their companions are currently residing in hotels, while 15 have completed their treatment and await the reopening of border crossings to return to Gaza.

3. Local and national capacity

The recent war on Gaza comes to add the pressures on already fragile economy and humanitarian situation and affect populations who in majority rely on UN organizations and INGOs to address their humanitarian and recovery needs resulting from continued contextual challenges.

In Gaza the local structures and resources are strained by the ongoing war. The situation has led to significant challenges in responding to the needs of the population. Some key local structures and resources including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) of whom are playing a crucial role in providing assistance to Palestinian refugees in Gaza, offering services like education, healthcare, and relief. The Local NGOs and Civil Society and church related organizations also play a vital role in addressing the crisis. They often focus on specific issues like healthcare, education, and providing

1 [OPT-2023-Flash-Appeal-Escalation-Oct-2023.pdf \(ochaopt.org\)](#)

humanitarian and needed assistance. All the educational services are stopped now due to the ongoing shelling on Gaza and no safe place, the same for the health care services which is almost starting by electricity cuts and lack of medication, in addition to the targeting of hospitals and ambulance services. During the ongoing conflict in Gaza, several UN clusters are operating to provide humanitarian assistance and support, those clusters are specialized groups within the United Nations system that focus on specific areas of aid and response, like the Health Cluster, which coordinates efforts related to healthcare services, medical supplies, and support for healthcare facilities in Gaza, especially during the crisis and the Protection Cluster that is responsible for safeguarding the rights and well-being of affected populations. ACT Alliance members are part of these clusters, coordinate their plans and activities with the cluster members and other service providers and report back of updates received.

DSPR member of ACT Alliance has a long experience in responding to emergency interventions, including health services and providing medicines and supplements for sick children and mothers, psychosocial support, cash relief, and cash vouchers, distribution of food and non-food items and vouchers. DSPR -NECC operates in Gaza since the year 1952 and coordinates its work with local partners and stakeholders, and with community-based organizations and community entities and with the ACT Palestine forum and uses their premises for awareness and community related activities. In addition to that, DSPR coordinates with the UN-led health and nutrition clusters in order to ensure complementarity and exchange lessons learned with different players.

ELCJHL has long experience in distributing humanitarian aid to the local communities. Through their Diaconal centre/ministry and local churches located in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, and Beit Jala, the ELCJHL has built strong connections with the local communities, the civil society organizations, and local & municipal councils. This has proved to be very instrumental during the COVID-19 crisis, where through churches and diaconal ministry, managed to reach out to all the needy families in a timely manner.

Lutheran World Federation (LWF), owns and operates the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), a medical centre of excellence in East Jerusalem, provide high quality, life-saving services for an estimated 5 million Palestinians. On average, 40% of patients are coming from Gaza, primarily for cancer treatment that is not available in Gaza. Of these 40%, around 15% are children under the age of 18 years.

The requesting members for the appeal, both DSPR, LWF and ELCJHL will use Appeal fund to meet the urgent needs with special focus on people who have been directly affected by the current war.

4. Key needs and gaps

Food and Non-Food Distribution:

DSPR Gaza recognizes the urgent need for food assistance even before the recent war. As part of our intervention, we plan to provide nutrition and food support through the distribution of food vouchers and hygiene kits. This assistance is targeted at families who struggle to meet the basic nutritional needs of their children. Our focus will encompass families affected by the recent war in Gaza, those with limited economic resources, children suffering from anemia and malnutrition, as well as persons with disabilities.

Health Support:

It is expected to have an increase in the number of individuals seeking medical and health services at DSPR NECC clinics. This increased caseload, combined with chronic shortages of essential medications and medical supplies in government-run primary healthcare centers, highlights the pressing need for additional health support services. This includes covering medical fees and ensuring the availability of vital medicines and supplies.

Psychosocial Support:

DSPR Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) initiatives encompass a wide range of activities. These include psychosocial First Aid sessions, debriefing sessions, relaxation techniques, stress release, and resilience-building exercises for children, women, staff, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students. Additionally, DSPR will organize recreational trips and open fun days mainly for children and selected care givers, to create a balance in their psychological status and reduce further

development to psychosocial problems. DSPR team also provides case management services to support and assist women, children, and TVET students who have been affected and traumatized within NECC catchment areas.

Shelter and Rehabilitation of Partially Damaged Homes:

In the aftermath of war in Gaza, there will be a pressing need to rehabilitate partially damaged homes to provide safe and secure living conditions for affected families. Many homes suffered partial damage during the last war including the Main Building of DSPR NECC in Gaza. In addition to providing rent expenses, the Rehabilitation efforts will involve, Structural Repairs, Electrical and Plumbing work, doors and window repair in addition to Roof and Wall Repairs. These rehabilitation initiatives are crucial in the broader context of rebuilding communities and supporting the resilience of Gaza's population, and to help reduce the possible deterioration to the social fabric of the community.

Cash Relief:

Multipurpose cash distribution is needed, both for Gaza and WB, as many families lost their income.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	X

If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

Capacity details of forum members with the intention to respond are given below.

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise	Support required	Estimated Budget range
DSPR	Gaza strip / Jerusalem and West Bank	Health Food and Non Food Protection Cash Relief	Financial Support	1,800,000USD
ELCJHL	Jerusalem and West Bank	Education Cash Relief	Financial Support	250,000USD
LWF -AVH	Gaza strip / Jerusalem and West Bank	Health	Financial Support	200,000USD

5. Potential responses

Interested forum members DSPR Gaza (NECC), DSPR West Bank (ICC) and LWF all work in the different affected areas of the West Bank and Gaza.

DSPR Gaza Based on initial needs and expertise our intervention will include unconditional cash handout (small cash amounts to households to ensure coverage of the most urgent needs); health Support: medications, medical follow up of medical cases affected by the conflict; Home / premises renovations affected: providing small amounts of cash to families to be able to make their household liveable again, including rent ; Psychosocial components include support and professional counselling to traumatize individuals to family members and friends injured and /or killed in the war; Emergency job creation schemes for unskilled laborers. The scope of the intervention is to target the areas where DSPR Gaza works (Gaza City in the north, Khan Younis in the centre and Rafah in the south mainly through its clinics in Al-Shijaeya, Al-Daraj, and Khirbet Al-Adas.)

In the Jerusalem, DSPR Jerusalem and West Bank will coordinate its efforts with three local hospitals in Jerusalem to address the most urgent needs of individuals from Gaza who are currently hospitalized. Their focus will include the provision of cash relief to support these individuals during their hospitalization. This collaborative effort between DSPR and the local hospitals aims to ensure that essential financial assistance is provided to patients and their accompaniers from Gaza who may be facing financial difficulties due to their medical treatment and hospital stay.

ELCJHL Based on its initial assessment, plans on working to provide unconditional cash throughout the West Bank and Jerusalem to help people that has been affected by the war in Gaza. This was based on previous experience, and on feedback from beneficiaries, cash advances for humanitarian aid are the most effective method to provide immediate and emergency respond in timely manner. During emergencies, people lose their source of income and the cost of commodities goes up drastically. So, the commodities are available, but people lack the financial resources to buy what they need. Also, the needs of the beneficiaries vary: some might need medications, or food or other home supplies. This would give the beneficiaries the freedom to use the cash advances according to their urgent needs.

LWF- (AVH) as a specialized hospital will be provide treatment for patients from Gaza Strip primarily for cancer treatment that is not available in Gaza, including facilitation of entry permits, transportation, accommodation, dignity kits and meals for patients, and their companions.