

UNICEF says that its latest available data indicates that:

- An estimated 90,000 people have been displaced, including 50,000 children.
- Fewer than 500 displaced people were seeking refuge in three UNRWA emergency shelters, compared to 51,000 people, including 28,560 children, during the peak of displacement (OCHA). Since the resumption of schools on 24 January, the shelters are now in youth centres and other non-school facilities. Most of the displaced are staying with host families, many of whom are overstretched and face shortages of food, non-food items, such as mattresses and blankets, as well as water and electricity.
- The number of people in Gaza dependent on food assistance is now at 1.3 million or 91 per cent of the population, including 714,168 children (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - OCHA).
- This situation has now been seriously compounded and affected the social and emotional wellbeing of 840,000 (approximate) children in Gaza.
- Some 40 per cent of households remain without electricity and only intermittent supplies are being received by the remaining 60 per cent. In northern Gaza, households receive power only six hours a day (according to Gaza's power distribution utility).
- Over 400,000 people remain without access to piped water throughout Gaza. The water and sewage systems have been damaged, posing a public health risk.
- Preliminary findings from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) indicate the complete destruction of over 4,000 residences, partial destruction of 17,000 buildings, and 25 schools, hospitals and universities.
- The Ministry of Health (MoH) and WHO report that 34 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed in direct or indirect shelling.
- 16 ambulances have been damaged and 21 attacks targeted and damaged health facilities through direct or indirect shelling (MOH/WHO)
- 49 UN buildings have sustained damage (OCHA)
- The water and sanitation system is under extreme duress.

The psychological impact of the conflict on children:

The psychological needs of children in Gaza are great and it is expected that many will experience long term psychological problems as a result of what they have witnessed. In order to help children return to some form of normality, education is a key priority, as it not only provides children with the opportunity to continue with their academic studies but provides a much needed routine, the chance to socialise with other children. Education materials are therefore urgently required.

Access to Gaza

UNICEF is able to send goods such as medicines, hygiene kits, and blankets into Gaza. However there are ongoing difficulties in getting injured children out of Gaza to receive the medical help they need. There are items for which UNICEF has repeatedly requested access without success. Examples of items that UNICEF has not been able to send into Gaza include:

- Stationery items for students and teachers including pencils, rulers and erasers;
- Geometry sets;
- Sports and recreational kits containing balls, chalk, crayon, frisbees;
- Water colour set, games and toys;
- Sports equipment (volleyball poles, hoola hoops, dumbbells stand, table tennis equipment, basket ball racks;
- Solar freezers used for vaccine storage plus spare parts;
- Computers and electric equipment (desktops, monitors);
- Board, data loggers and software, air conditioners and generators.

Some of these items have been stored in UNICEF's warehouse since end of 2007.

UNICEF says it needs regular, sufficient and facilitated access in order to bring humanitarian goods and workers into Gaza. It is also imperative that supplies for children, particularly education materials, should be considered humanitarian goods.

Water and sanitation

Gaza residents do not yet have access to safe drinking water. Materials for water and sanitation systems are desperately needed however parts including plastic pipes, generators and repair parts are not being allowed through. UNICEF is distributing basic hygiene kits, water purification tablets, water jerry cans and basic family water kits.