

# Israel-Gaza Conflict

## Situation Report #4

December 11, 2023

*A young boy surveys the airstrike damage in his community in southern Gaza. Photo by Motaz Al Aaraj for Project HOPE, November 2023.*

### Situation Update

Since the October 7 attacks on Israel by Hamas, which killed at least 1,200 civilians, fighting has continued and humanitarian conditions in Gaza have significantly deteriorated. The Israeli military has launched thousands of airstrikes and initiated a ground invasion in both northern and southern Gaza, killing at least 17,700 Palestinians, including more than 7,000 children.

At least 2,700 people, including 1,500 children are missing, buried underneath rubble, or presumed dead. Communications blackouts in Gaza and the chaos of conflict are making it hard to calculate the number of missing persons, death tolls, and injury counts.

On October 7, Hamas took approximately 240 Israelis and other third-party nationals hostage. During a four-day ceasefire starting November 24, 81 Israeli women and children were freed in exchange for the release of Palestinian women and teens in Israeli prisons. An additional 24 foreign nationals were also freed during this ceasefire.

### Quick Facts

- Project HOPE has established a primary health care clinic in Deir Al Balah and is building a medical team in Rafah to conduct medical outreach clinics.
- Project HOPE has established a supply chain into Gaza, with an initial shipment in Rafah that has not yet been distributed due to fuel shortages, communications blackouts, and heavy bombing.
- After Hamas attacks in Israel killed at least 1,200 people, Israeli forces have killed over 17,700 civilians in Gaza — about 1 in every 150 Palestinians in Gaza.
- At least 60% of housing units in Gaza have been destroyed by airstrikes.
- With drinking water in Gaza polluted and brackish, water consumption has decreased to 2-3 liters a day, roughly 90% of what humans need to survive.

Since October 21, just over 3,100 aid trucks have entered Gaza from the Rafah crossing, bringing just a fraction of the medicine, medical supplies, fuel, food, and water that is needed. Because of this and the ongoing hostilities, more than 35 hospitals in Gaza are no longer operational, creating a severe shortage of health facilities able to respond to increasing health care needs. Even in facilities that are currently functional, health workers are operating in impossible conditions, providing trauma care without the anesthesia, blood, medicine, materials, staff, supplies, or space needed to provide proper care to the patients lining the halls. Gaza's two largest hospital complexes, Al-Shifa and Al-Quds, temporarily suspended operations in November due to these shortages.

At least 50,000 women are pregnant in Gaza, with approximately 5,000 expected to give birth monthly. With little to no access to health care, these women will be forced to give birth in shelters, homes, and amidst rubble. An estimated 15% will endure birthing complications with minimal support for medical interventions.

Hospitals are past their breaking point, with reports of 190% occupancy rates at the remaining facilities in northern Gaza and doctors at Al-Aqsa and Nasser Hospitals in southern Gaza forced to prioritize patients based on the severity of their life-threatening conditions, leaving many without medical care.

International humanitarian law protects health care facilities from becoming targets during war, making them a common place for displaced families and communities to seek shelter, whether in hallways, empty rooms, or in encampments near the exterior. Despite this reality, the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations (UN) Agencies have documented nearly 140 attacks on health care, resulting in 521 deaths and 686 injuries. Since October 7, an estimated 250 health workers have been killed in Gaza.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that up to 1.9 million people — over 85% of Gaza's population — is displaced, with hundreds unable or unwilling to flee decimated communities in northern Gaza for southern Gaza where Israeli forces are now conducting military operations as well. Project HOPE's partner, Anera, has reported that they are using livestock and trolley carts to transport humanitarian goods, although livestock have been a target of Israeli forces. Additionally, cash is unavailable as banks are not working and most money transfer apps are not functional in Gaza. There are limited goods available in markets and the cost of fuel, food, and cooking gas have surged.



*Medical and pharmaceutical supplies being organized at one of Project HOPE's new primary health clinics in Gaza. Photo by Project HOPE staff, 2023.*

Despite the ongoing Israeli counter-offensive and ground incursion into both northern and southern Gaza, both Hamas and Hezbollah have continued to launch attacks against Israel with more than 10,000 rockets launched in the last two weeks. In addition, skirmishes near Israel's northern border have been consistent since the conflict erupted. Because of this, more than 250,000 Israeli civilians have been displaced from towns near the country's northern and southern borders. These communities have been living in temporary housing across the country, including in dormitories and hotels, and are unable to return to their homes due to security concerns.



*A damaged car and makeshift structures on the side of the road in Rafah, Gaza. Photo by Project HOPE staff, 2023.*

The violence has also spread to the West Bank, with reports of Israeli forces killing 266 people and arresting more than 3,600 Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Tensions in the West Bank have escalated, with at least 610 attacks on Palestinians by settlers, according to the Palestinian Authority. According to UN-OCHA, this has resulted in hundreds of Palestinians in rural communities abandoning their homes and villages over safety concerns.

In Israel, the Project HOPE team reports that those affected by the October 7 Hamas ground offensive, particularly civilians in evacuated communities, need mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and hygiene supplies. In addition, Project HOPE staff have been working with several hospitals in southern Israel, including Barzilai Medical Center and Shamir Medical Center, which have expressed an urgent need for critical medical supplies and equipment. Barzilai Medical Center sustained significant damage from the Hamas attacks, including the destruction of the OB/GYN wing, an operating room, and a children's development center.

## Project HOPE's Response

As the Israel-Gaza conflict enters its third month and the number of civilian deaths continues to climb at an alarming rate, Project HOPE has deployed staff to the region to address urgent needs and has emergency response personnel in Israel, Gaza, and Egypt working with local authorities, UN agencies, and civil society to coordinate the delivery of aid into both Israel and Gaza.

Project HOPE's team in Israel has delivered hygiene supplies to displaced people now located in and around Jerusalem and has procured additional essentials for several hundred more. Displaced families need basic items after fleeing their homes, with some families rebuilding their entire lives after their homes were destroyed in the October 7 attack. Project HOPE is also providing mental health and psychosocial support services to displaced families through local partners. One partner, the Yuri Shtern Center, has been supporting displaced families in Jerusalem since early November.

Project HOPE is also working to support hospitals near Israel's southern border by providing urgently needed medical equipment and supplies and repairing damaged medical structures. The team has delivered a mobile ultrasound machine to Shamir Hospital in Be'er Ya'akov, which will be used to treat patients more effectively, and procured five clinical defibrillator monitors for Barzilai Medical Center. At Barzilai, Project HOPE is looking to support the rehabilitation of the Children's Developmental Institute, which was destroyed in October and provides support to children with developmental challenges.

Additionally, Project HOPE is working with Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem to support the equipment needs of one inpatient department at the Gandel Rehabilitation Center, which will serve those injured in the conflict. Our team is also in the process of procuring specialty wheelchairs for patients with spinal cord injuries at Sheba Medical Center. Project HOPE's staff continues to work with local health facilities to determine the highest-priority needs, including medical supplies, equipment, and rehabilitation needs. Our team is exploring additional avenues to provide MHPSS services to those affected by the conflict.



*Project HOPE's medical assessment team sorting and organizing medical supplies and pharmaceuticals at one of Project HOPE's new primary health clinics in Gaza. Photo by Project HOPE staff, 2023.*

In Cairo, Project HOPE staff have been working closely with UN agencies, the Egyptian Red Crescent, and several partners operating in Gaza to provide both medical and humanitarian relief supplies to those enduring the unimaginable scale of violence in Gaza.

Project HOPE has established a supply chain into Gaza, with an initial shipment of 750 family hygiene kits, 4,000 blankets, and 9,000 mattresses that have arrived in Rafah but have not yet been distributed due to fuel shortages, communication blackouts, and heavy bombing in the city. An Interagency Emergency Health Kit (IEHK) is expected to cross into Gaza soon. Project HOPE has also initiated the shipment of five additional IEHKs and seven Trauma and Emergency Surgery kits (TESKs) for movement into Egypt this week and onward travel into Gaza. Additional IEHKs, TESKs, hygiene kits, and other needed health and hygiene items are on standby.

In Gaza, Project HOPE has established a primary health care clinic in Deir Al Balah. The clinic saw about 50 patients the first weekend it was open and is able to both prescribe and dispense medications. Project HOPE is also establishing a medical team in Rafah to provide outreach medical care to three schools housing internally displaced people and families on a twice-weekly basis. With 1.9 million displaced in Gaza, access to essential care at these shelters is necessary save

lives. Our team is also working to build our capacity to provide antenatal care at the clinics and we are assessing if existing health facilities require surge staff support and/or medical supplies.

Project HOPE's partner in Jordan, the Jordanian Health Aid Society (JHASi), are on standby to deploy Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) into Gaza and/or to support surge staffing for injured Gazans in Egypt, as needed and if access permits.

Project HOPE continues to act in coordination with partners in Israel, Gaza, Egypt, the West Bank, Jordan, and Lebanon to assess how and when we can best support the health and humanitarian needs of impacted communities, while remaining committed to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

For further information, contact [media@projecthope.org](mailto:media@projecthope.org).

