

# Israel-Gaza Conflict

## Situation Report #5

January 3, 2024

*Mattresses and blankets being distributed to Al Ta'ef School in Rafah, Gaza, by Project HOPE's local partner, Anera. With 85% of Palestinians in Gaza displaced by the ongoing conflict, the school has become a refuge for displaced families. Photo by Motaz Al Aaraj for Project HOPE, December 2023.*

## Situation Update

Israel's military incursion into Gaza continues to have a severe impact on the lives of Palestinians in Gaza, limiting civilian access to food, water, electricity, and essential health care services.

The Ministry of Health in Gaza reports that more than 22,000 people have been killed and 57,000 have been injured in less than three months. Women and children are estimated to make up 70% of deaths. Beyond this tragic loss of life, the humanitarian situation on the ground continues to become more and more fatal, with little relief reaching the 2.3 million people of Gaza.

Nearly all of Gaza is at imminent risk of famine and 16% of people are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity. Right now, 335,000 children under five years of age, which is 100% of children under five in Gaza, are at a high risk of severe malnutrition and preventable death. In northern Gaza, there is no access to clean water, and the ongoing fuel shortage has also hindered access to clean water in southern Gaza.

## Key Updates

- Project HOPE's primary health clinic in Deir Al Balah, Gaza has **provided direct medical care to more than 1,000 patients** since it opened on December 9, 2023.
- Through our local partner, Anera, Project HOPE has delivered **hygiene kits, mattresses, and blankets** to shelters housing displaced people in Gaza.
- Project HOPE's first Interagency Emergency Health Kit (IEHK) has arrived in Rafah. This IEHK will **equip health workers** at our clinic in Deir Al Balah and our outreach team in Rafah **with the supplies and medicines they need to save lives**.
- Project HOPE is working with local partners to implement **mental health care programs** in Gaza and West Bank.

No sector has been immune to this humanitarian crisis. Over 60% of Gaza's housing units have been damaged or destroyed, and only 13 of Gaza's 36 hospitals remain functional. Health workers are attempting to provide lifesaving care despite critical shortages of medicines, blood products, essential supplies, and the electricity and fuel that powers their equipment. In addition, the complete electricity blackout in Gaza is causing significant communication disruptions.

Humanitarians and health workers continue to be under attack in Gaza, with 144 United Nations staff members, 106 journalists, and 312 health workers killed since the beginning of Israel's response to the October 7 Hamas attacks.

In addition, Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank are enduring acute stress, processing unimaginable trauma, and grieving lost friends, family, and community members. The violence and worsening humanitarian crisis are increasing the need for Psychological First Aid, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and protection services.

On the evening of January 2, 2024, an explosion in Beirut injured 11 people and killed six others, including a Hamas leader and two Hamas commanders. In the past three months, skirmishes between Hezbollah and Israel have displaced thousands along Lebanon's southern border. However, this is the first attack in the capital city, which has renewed concerns about the threat of a wider, regional conflict.

Hamas's October 7 attacks on Israel killed 1,200 people, including 33 children. 128 hostages from Israel, including foreign nationals and soldiers, remain in Gaza.

## Project HOPE's Response

Three months into the Israel-Gaza conflict, Project HOPE's teams in Egypt, Gaza, and Israel continue to work with local authorities, UN agencies, and civil society to coordinate the delivery of aid to those impacted by the fighting.

In Gaza, Project HOPE's health staff have provided direct primary health care services to more than 1,000 people in Deir Al Balah. Services are being supported by delivery of Project HOPE's first Interagency Health Kit (IEHK) into Rafah and a coordinated donation of medicines and supplies from the United Nations Population Fund. Project HOPE has also been working closely with our local partner, Anera, to distribute blankets, mattresses, and hygiene kits to displaced people and families living in shelters, camps, and schools.



*Project HOPE, in coordination with our local partner, Anera, distributed family hygiene kits to displaced Palestinians in Rafah. Photo by Motaz Al Aaraj for Project HOPE, December 2023.*

On December 20th, an attack in Rafah damaged a building where Project HOPE was setting up a clinic and base for broader health operations across Gaza. At the time, Project HOPE's advance team was en route to this location. While all team members are safe and accounted for, the advance team returned to Egypt and plans on re-entering Gaza in the coming weeks. As a result of this attack, Project HOPE is working with local authorities to identify outreach sites where gaps in access to primary health care persist.

In Gaza and the West Bank, Project HOPE has partnered with Sharek Youth Forum and Hakini Foundation – two local Palestinian organizations – to provide MHPSS services and activities to women and children in Gaza and the West Bank. As of January 3, Sharek Youth Forum has provided more than 40 psychosocial group sessions in 31 shelters in Rafah, reaching more than 1,050 Palestinian women and children.

Additionally, Project HOPE's partner in Jordan, the Jordanian Health Aid Society, is mobilizing to provide medical surge staff in Gaza with support from Project HOPE.

In Israel, Project HOPE has delivered hygiene supplies to people displaced by the October 7 attacks and the subsequent conflict in Gaza, the West Bank, and along the Israel-Lebanon border. Displaced families require basic essential items after fleeing their homes, with some families rebuilding their entire lives after their homes were destroyed. Project HOPE is also providing MHPSS services to displaced families through our local partners, including the Yuri Shtern Center which has supported 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 and procured five clinical defibrillator monitors for Barzilai Medical Center. At Barzilai, Project HOPE is also looking to support the rehabilitation of the Children's Developmental Institute, which was critically damaged by rocket fire in October, so that it can provide support to children with developmental challenges. Additionally, Project HOPE is working with Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem to support the equipment needs of Gandel Rehabilitation Center, which will serve those injured in the conflict. Our team is also procuring specialty wheelchairs for patients with spinal cord injuries at Sheba Medical Center, as well as generators for the Emergency Dispatch Community Center in Netivot. Project HOPE's staff is continuing to work with local health workers and local health facilities to determine the highest-priority needs, including medical supplies, equipment, and rehabilitation, and we are exploring additional avenues to provide MHPSS services to affected communities.

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.