



Health Situation in Gaza

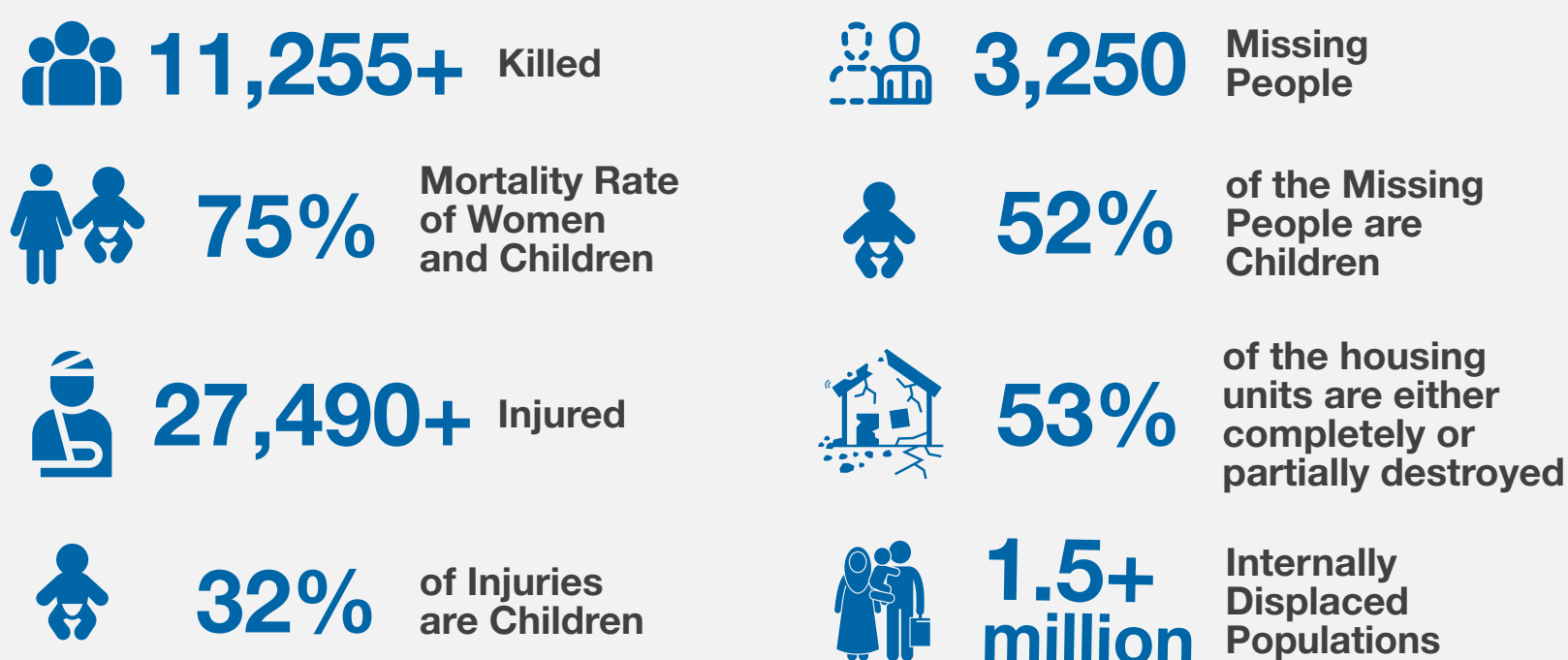
Updates and Technical Recommendations

November 16, 2023

Situation Overview

The Gaza Strip has been under siege and continuous bombardment by the Israeli Army for 41 consecutive days. The persistent attacks have caused thousands of deaths and injuries to civilians with the majority of casualties being women and children. In addition to the destruction of medical facilities, shelters, residences, schools, and water and sanitation infrastructure. The blockade enforced by the Israeli Army has heavily impacted the health status of the Palestinians and severely weakened the health system.

In Numbers since October 7, 2023



* Information source: Palestinian Ministry of Health/Gaza, Palestinian Red Crescent Society

* The information is based on data available as of November 13, due to the communication interruptions in Gaza.

As a result of the current hostilities, the Gaza strip has been split into two parts, the North and the South region.

Mass Displacement

The Israeli army has ordered Palestinians to evacuate Northern Gaza for extended military ground operations. More than 50% of the Gaza populace, which is around 1.2 million, reside in Northern Gaza and the Gaza City governorates.

All Ten Hospitals in the North have Received Evacuation Orders from the Israeli army. (Source: World Health Organization)

The majority of hospital beds and 80% of the dialysis capacity are situated in the North. Hence, the mass displacement of the population will inevitably risk the lives of patients, which include patients on life support, critically injured patients, pregnant women, elderly, and premature infants in incubators. Moreover, the scarcity of fuel and limited capacity of ambulances providing lifesaving services will hinder the safely transfer of patients.



* According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "mass displacement refers to the forced movement of a large number of people from their usual residence due to the effects of war, armed conflict, generalised violence, violations of human rights, natural disasters or human-made disasters. Displacement can be acute or protracted, and within or across international boundaries"

Health System

The health system is currently overburdened and overwhelmed by the large numbers of deaths and injuries of civilians.

160% of Hospital Beds are Currently Occupied in Seven Major Hospitals. (Source: World Health Organization)

From the onset of the recent attacks, only minimal and insufficient amounts of fuel have been allowed into the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Border Crossing. The largest hospital in Gaza, Al-Shifa Hospital, which has sustained damage to its solar panels, cardiac war and intensive care unit (ICU), was forced to halt its operation due to lack of fuel and continuous bombardment. Moreover, a pediatric hospital has halted operation due to significant damage. 23 out of 35 hospitals and 51 out of 72 primary health clinics have ceased operations due to damage or lack of available fuel. (Source: Palestinian Ministry of Health)

26 out of 35 hospitals and 52 out of 72 primary health clinics have ceased operations due to damage or lack of available fuel. (Source: Palestinian Ministry of Health, World Health Organization)

Only one hospital in the North remains functional.



* The Rafah border is the only crossing border between Egypt and Gaza. Prior to the escalation of hostilities, it was the main border of which goods entered Gaza.

Service Delivery

The delivery of healthcare services is significantly impeded by shortages of fuel and essential medical supplies. According to the Palestinian MoH, medical staff are unable to navigate between different departments and buildings within hospitals, as they risk being targeted by drones if they move. Furthermore, the collapsed buildings and damaged roads make it impossible to reach injured and wounded civilians.

The severely interrupted and restricted service delivery has resulted in:

- Dialysis-dependent patients dying in their homes.
- At Al Shifa hospital, 32 patients, including three premature babies died due to fuel shortages.
- Approximately 10,000 cancer patients undergoing treatment in Al-Rantisi and Turkish hospitals being evacuated by the Israeli army.
- The blood bank being no longer operational due to the electricity outage.

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Health

Health Staff

The healthcare staff are working around the clock in hospitals and health facilities under inhumane conditions. Several health staff have been killed and injured.

Since October 7:



198
Health Personnel
have been killed



135
Attacks on the
Health Sector



55
Ambulances
Damaged

* Information source: Palestinian Ministry of Health/Gaza, Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

Health Clusters

According to WHO, 55% of the Health Cluster partners stopped or limited operations because of the insecurity and mass infrastructure damage inflicted by the Israeli army.

55% of the Health Cluster partners stopped or limited operations in the Gaza strip

Surveillance

The decomposition of dead bodies in hospitals and the accumulation of medical waste is risking patients, health staff and IDPs' lives. The overcrowding of shelters, health facilities and other residential infrastructure and damage to water and sanitation infrastructure will undoubtedly lead to the spread of infectious diseases. The limited food supply and malnutrition will result in weakened immune systems which in turn will lead to a higher susceptibility of infectious diseases.

Since mid-October, there have been several cases of infectious diseases in Gaza:



61,000
cases of acute
respiratory
infections



36,000
cases of diarrhea
of which 18,000
are children under
five years of age



700
cases of
chickenpox



15,000
skin infections
and infestations
including scabies,
lice, and others

* (Source: Palestinian MoH and UNRWA)

Nevertheless, these numbers do not accurately represent the situation in the Gaza Strip, because some areas are inaccessible to surveillance staff. In addition, shortages of surveillance health staff and diagnostic equipment will hinder the effective process of disease detection and outbreak response. The Gaza Strip is also facing telecommunication blackouts which hinder the reporting of infections to relevant parties. Ideally, a robust early warning alert and response system should be implemented.

We reiterate the cruciality and urgency of a humanitarian ceasefire and the endorsement of the International Humanitarian Law under all circumstances. Humanitarian corridors should be opened for the safe and continuous passage of humanitarian aid and international support. Telecommunication should be restored, and fuel should be provided immediately to Gaza's healthcare facilities in order to sustain their service delivery. Furthermore, adequately equipped shelters and sanitation infrastructure should be rebuilt to avert the spread of infectious diseases.

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