

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

6 May

Israeli forces **ordered around 100,000 Palestinians to evacuate a 31km² area of eastern Rafah**. Civilians were ordered to move to a 60km² area extending from Mawasi, an Israeli-declared humanitarian zone on Gaza's coast, to the coast north of Deir al-Balah. Mawasi was already sheltering up to 450,000 Palestinian IDPs, with no space for an IDP influx from Rafah.

7 May

Israeli forces began a ground operation in eastern Rafah and seized control of Rafah Crossing between Gaza and Egypt.

Israeli forces conducted heavy non-stop shelling of central and eastern Rafah, including the populated Salam and Al-Jnaina neighbourhoods, hitting homes and IDP camps.

8 May

Israel announced that it had opened the Karam Abu Salem-Kerem Shalom border crossing, but insecurity and logistical challenges prevented supplies from entering.

10 May

By 10 May, an estimated 110,000 people had fled Rafah to locations including Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis, and Mawasi. Up to 1.4 million IDPs remained in Rafah, where fighting and casualties were escalating.

Humanitarian assistance was still unable to pass through Karam Abu Salem-Kerem Shalom because of fighting and a lack of fuel and humanitarian staff.

There were reports of Israeli tanks along the road dividing eastern and western Rafah and of shells landing in western Rafah.

Sources: OCHA (06/05/2024, 08/05/2024 a and 10/05/2024); UNICEF (09/05/2024); AJ (06/05/2024, 08/05/2024, and 10/05/2024); Independent (07/05/2024); BBC (07/05/2024); BBC (accessed 09/05/2024); Reuters (08/05/2024).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Aim: this report analyses the multisectoral impact of Israel's operations in and forced evacuation of Rafah since 7 May 2024. It emphasises pre-existing needs in Rafah, in locations to which the population of Rafah is being displaced, and across Gaza, all of which will face the impact of the disruption to humanitarian operations in Rafah and the closure of Rafah Crossing.

Methodology and limitations: this report is based on a secondary data review. Israeli operations and evacuation orders have significantly disrupted the already constrained humanitarian activities in Gaza, leading to information gaps. This report distils the information available and identifies key gaps.

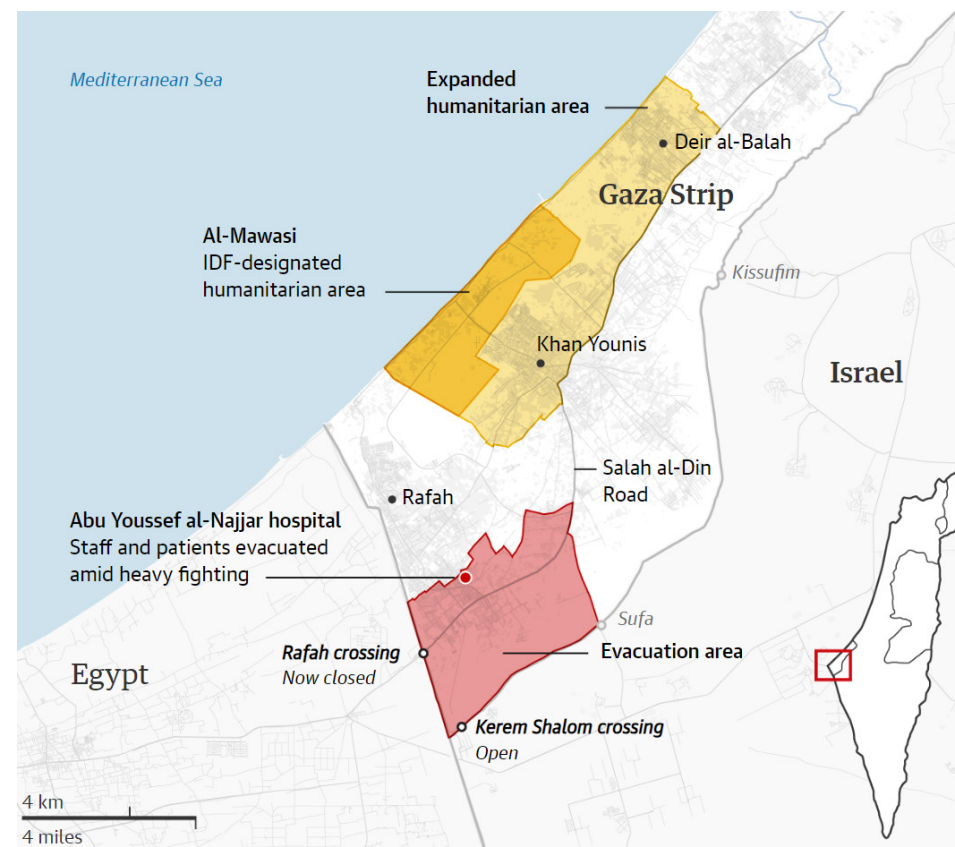
KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

- **Key needs include shelter, WASH, health, and food assistance for the 1.1 million Gazans facing famine-like conditions.**
- By 7 October, up to **1.5 million displaced Palestinians** – nearly 90% of the 1.7 million displaced people in Gaza and 65% of all Gazans – **were sheltering in Rafah** in densely concentrated makeshift shelters. Many had been multiply displaced since 7 October 2023, before which Rafah governorate was home to only 275,000 residents (UNICEF 06/05/2024; TNH 06/05/2024; CARE Australia 07/05/2024; OCHA 08/05/2024 b).
- **Rafah has been serving as the primary hub for humanitarian assistance**, which the Israeli incursion will severely compromise. Rafah Crossing is also the only entry point for fuel, which powers generators, water pumps, and aid delivery trucks (UN 07/05/2024; OCHA 06/05/2024).
- **Without fuel, five hospitals, five field hospitals, 17 primary healthcare centres, 28 ambulances, and 23 medical points across Gaza will cease functioning by 12 May.** Fuel is necessary to run generators that are keeping patients in intensive care units alive, including newborns in neonatal intensive care (OCHA 10/05/2024; BBC accessed 09/05/2024; AJ 10/05/2024).
- Without fuel and other supplies, humanitarian organisations cannot prepare the sites to which Palestinians are being displaced in Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis, and Mawasi. The

movement of staff and supplies is expensive and often not logistically possible (OCHA 08/05/2024 a).

- The logistics of Israel's intended evacuation process are unclear. The UN has stated that it will not take part in involuntary evacuations or the setting up of any displacement zones and has emphasised that there is nowhere safe for Palestinians in Rafah to go (BBC 07/05/2024). People are being forced to pay up to USD 400 for transport out of Rafah (The Guardian 09/05/2024 a). Since 8 May, repeated shelling has hit neighbourhoods in Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah that Israeli forces had declared as 'safe zones' (Euro-Med Monitor 08/05/2024).
- On 9 May, **humanitarian responders reported that there was no more space to accommodate new arrivals in Mawasi** (STC 09/05/2024). Prior to Israel's operations in Rafah, around 450,000 Palestinians were already sheltering in Mawasi, which lacks electricity, transport, WASH, and other key infrastructure, services, and assistance necessary to meet basic needs. Civilians sheltering there in recent months have also not been safe from attacks (TNH 11/04/2024).
- **Children comprise close to half of Rafah's population of 1.4 million** (UNICEF 06/05/2024). These 600,000 children are at high risk of health, protection, and other needs in Rafah and during the displacement process.
- Between 6 and 8 May, the Gaza Health Ministry reported 109 Palestinians killed and 296 injured across Gaza. Between 8 May and 9 May, 60 Palestinians were killed and 110 injured. In total, between 7 October and 9 May, the Gaza Health Ministry has reported that nearly 35,000 Palestinians have been killed and around 78,500 injured, around 70% of whom were women and children (OCHA 10/05/2024; AJ 10/05/2024; UNRWA 07/05/2024).

Map 1. Evacuation zone declared by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in eastern Rafah, IDF-designed 'humanitarian area', and key border crossings



Source: The Guardian (08/05/2024)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

Since 7 May 2024, humanitarian assistance has been unable to proceed through the two main crossings in the south: Rafah, which Israeli forces have occupied, and Karam Abu Salem-Kerem Shalom, which was temporarily closed and is now inaccessible to humanitarians because of fighting and a lack of fuel and staff (The Guardian 09/05/2024 a; OCHA 06/05/2024; Reuters 08/05/2024). Despite Israel's announcement that it would open Karam Abu Salem-Kerem Shalom on 8 May, on 10 May, the UN reported that no supplies were passing through any crossings in southern Gaza (The Guardian 10/05/2024). The US attributed the delay to

“logistical and security” concerns (BBC 09/05/2024). On 10 May, there were reports that Israeli settlers had blocked a road near Karam Abu Salem-Kerem Shalom, further complicating access (AJ 10/05/2024).

While the Beit Hanoun-Erez Crossing in northern Gaza was open throughout April 2024, few convoys were allowed in. Prior to 7 October 2023, this crossing was used for the movement of Palestinians from Gaza to West Bank. It is not equipped for the movement of goods (ACAPS 08/03/2024; CARE et al. 07/05/2024). In the first week of April 2024, Israeli settlers blocked and damaged two humanitarian convoys on their way to Erez Crossing (Reuters 07/05/2024). For more details on these crossings, see ACAPS’ Palestine: Humanitarian Access to and within the Gaza Strip.

Leaflets distributed by Israeli forces have advised Palestinians in Rafah that aid services are present in central Gaza, from Deir al-Balah to Khan Younis (Independent 07/05/2024). However, it is not known how or by whom these services will be managed. Since 7 October 2023, military operations and bombardment have been affecting even Israeli-declared ‘safe zones’, putting people seeking assistance at risk (TNH 11/04/2024; Euro-Med Monitor 08/05/2024).

Attacks on humanitarian responders continue. Between 7–10 May 2024, fighting killed at least one humanitarian responder and his family in Rafah (AJ 10/05/2024). Between 21 April and 5 May, UNRWA recorded ten incidents involving shooting at aid convoys or the bullying and harassment of UN staff (UNRWA 07/05/2024). As of 8 May, the conflict has killed at least 260 aid workers in Gaza since 7 October 2023 (OCHA 08/05/2024 c).

By 9 May 2024, 70% of the telecommunication infrastructure in Gaza had been destroyed (WFP 09/05/2024).

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

Following Israel’s evacuation order, Hamas announced that it would accept an Egypt-Qatar ceasefire proposal. Israel did not accept the proposal, which its Government described as “very far” from Israel’s demands. By 10 May, Israel and Hamas negotiating teams had left Cairo without reaching a ceasefire agreement (AJ 10/05/2024; AP 07/05/2024; BBC accessed 09/05/2024).

Gaza is entering summer, when high heat will increase health risks for IDPs in overcrowded, poorly ventilated shelters with insufficient access to WASH facilities. These conditions will increase the likelihood of infectious disease transmission, which occurs more easily in hot weather, and dehydration. An early heatwave during the last week of April contributed to the deaths of two children and one woman in Gaza (NPR 27/04/2024; Climate Centre 07/05/2024). On 9 May, seasonal forecasts indicated more than an 80% likelihood of above-normal

temperatures across Gaza through July (WMO accessed 09/05/2024; IRI accessed 09/05/2024).

In February, experts projected that an escalation in conflict would be associated with between 74,290–85,750 excess deaths (LSHTM et al. 19/02/2024).

KEY NEEDS (CURRENT AND ANTICIPATED)

Food insecurity

Israel’s operations in Rafah are aggravating the famine-like conditions across Gaza, where 1.1 million people are projected to face Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) food insecurity levels through July 2024 (OCHA 08/05/2024 b).

- **In Rafah**, between 7–8 May alone, the prices of some basic food items doubled. As of 10 May, eight of the 12 bakeries in southern Gaza were unable to operate. The remaining four, in Rafah and Deir al-Balah, were only partially operational and will run out of fuel and supplies by 13 May unless humanitarian supplies are allowed to enter southern Gaza (OCHA 10/05/2024; Independent 07/05/2024).
- The evacuation order in Rafah has prevented aid organisations from providing food assistance (Independent 07/05/2024; CNN 08/05/2024). By 9 May, fighting had rendered humanitarian warehouses in Rafah inaccessible. Responders providing food aid will run out of food supplies by 16 May or earlier (OCHA 08/05/2024 a; WFP 09/05/2024).
- **In Mawasi**, most IDPs cannot afford the limited amounts of food being sold at high prices (AP 08/05/2024).
- Even before Israel’s operations in Rafah, as of 30 April, around 30% of under-two children in Gaza were acutely malnourished (WFP 09/05/2024). WHO recorded 28 malnutrition-related deaths from 7 October 2023 to 30 April 2024 (WHO 07/05/2024).

Shelter and NFIs

Palestinians in Rafah are living in inadequate makeshift shelters that lack privacy, protection, and space (UNICEF 06/05/2024; TNH 06/05/2024; UN Women 16/04/2024). Israel’s operations in Rafah have damaged and destroyed homes, killing and injuring their inhabitants, and displaced Palestinians to overcrowded areas with few available shelters (Euro-Med Monitor 08/05/2024).

- **Across Gaza**, 41% of shelters lacked adequate ventilation and 57% lacked protection from rain and water infiltration by 8 May 2024 (OCHA 08/05/2024 b). Exposure to the elements in these shelters increases the risk of health conditions, including dehydration and waterborne diseases.

- The evacuation of Rafah and movement of IDPs to new areas will aggravate this shelter situation. It will constitute the fourth or fifth displacement of many people, who lose resources, including shelters and NFIs, with each move (AJ 08/05/2024).
- **In Mawasi**, shelters are inadequate, and there is little space for new arrivals (AP 08/05/2024; TNH 11/04/2024).
- **In Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis**, people are arriving without shelters and sleeping on the streets, in rubble, and in other open and unsafe spaces (OCHA 10/05/2024; AJ 10/05/2024).
- By 8 May, humanitarian organisations were already running out of tents, shelter supplies, and tools (OCHA 08/05/2024 a).

WASH

Fighting since 7 October has destroyed over 50% of WASH infrastructure across Gaza, depriving people of drinking water and contributing to a dangerous accumulation of solid waste (BBC 09/05/2024). Israel's operations in Rafah will aggravate this situation, displacing people to sites with inadequate WASH facilities and hampering humanitarian efforts to restore infrastructure.

- **In eastern Rafah**, damage from fighting has stopped water pumps from functioning or being repaired (Euro-Med Monitor 08/05/2024). The current lack of fuel, previously delivered through Rafah Crossing, will prevent water and sewage pumps from functioning across Gaza and will result in the accumulation of around 1,400 tons of solid waste daily in southern Gaza (OCHA 08/05/2024 a; AJ 08/05/2024).
- **In Mawasi**, an IDP influx from Rafah will aggravate an already dire WASH situation, with no sewage infrastructure and few toilets, forcing many families to create makeshift latrines or practise open defecation. People are already being forced to queue for hours for running water (AP 08/05/2024; CNN 08/05/2024).
- **Across Gaza**, by 16 April, the water supply was only at 7% of pre-7 October 2023 levels. These pre-7 October levels already left around 1.1 million Gazans without adequate access to water and sanitation (UN Women 16/04/2024). People have resorted to drinking contaminated or salty water from wells that do not meet safety standards because sewage and water desalination facilities are not functional. This increases the possibility of the spread of bacterial infections, such as typhoid, polio, and dysentery (Daraj 29/04/2024; Euro-Med Monitor 24/04/2024; Reuters 16/10/2023).
- In May 2024, the Union of Gaza Municipalities reported the presence of around 270,000 tons of solid waste in Gaza (OCHA 06/05/2024). This will contaminate water and increase the transmission of health conditions, including diarrhoea, described further in the Health section below.

Health

Israel's operations in Rafah have caused the evacuation of multiple health facilities, which were already operating at limited capacity because of restricted staff and supplies. This has left people without the health services required to treat casualties from fighting and growing cases of hepatitis A, diarrhoea, jaundice, and other diseases spreading because of inadequate shelter conditions, minimal WASH access, and catastrophic food insecurity (BBC accessed 09/05/2024; OCHA 08/05/2024 a).

- **In Rafah**, the only large health facility, Al Najjar Hospital, was evacuated on 7 May. Remaining field hospitals in eastern Rafah will only be able to provide around 30% of the services previously provided in Al Najjar Hospital and will not be able to cope with an influx of people injured by shelling (OCHA 08/05/2024 a; CNN 08/05/2024; AJ 08/05/2024).
- Al Kuwaiti Hospital, also operating in eastern Rafah, has called for medical backup because of an overwhelming influx of patients (CNN 08/05/2024).
- Fighting has forced the Al Emirati Maternity Hospital, the only source of care for around 30,000 pregnant women in Rafah, to stop admitting patients (The Guardian 09/05/2024 b; OCHA 08/05/2024 a).
- The Israeli blockade of Rafah Crossing has prevented the entry of any medicine and the exit of patients who need to leave for urgent, serious medical treatment (OCHA 08/05/2024 a; AJ 08/05/2024). Between 7–9 May, around 160 critically ill patients were unable to leave through Rafah Crossing to seek treatment (OCHA 10/05/2024).
- **Deir al-Balah** only has one hospital functioning at limited capacity (AJ 10/05/2024).
- **Across Gaza, access to health services was already limited before Israel's incursion into Rafah**, with only 12 (33%) of the enclave's 36 hospitals and 26 (30%) of its 88 primary healthcare centres at least partly functional as of 3 May. The functioning hospitals were at 246% bed capacity. There were also only seven functioning field hospitals (WHO 03/05/2024 and 07/05/2024).
- People were already facing hepatitis A, diarrhoea, scabies, and lice outbreaks before Israel's operations in Rafah (UN Women 16/04/2024). Between 16 October 2023 and 22 April 2024, there were almost 712,000 cases of respiratory infection, 382,000 diarrhoea cases, and 88,000 scabies and lice cases (WHO 07/05/2024). Poor WASH conditions are contributing to the increasing incidence of acute jaundice syndrome and bloody diarrhoea (OCHA 08/05/2024 c).
- One or more infectious diseases affect 90% (around 175,000) of children under five (UNICEF 06/05/2024).

Impact on specific population groups

- **The 600,000 children in Rafah are at high risk of becoming unaccompanied or separated** when displaced or because of casualties in their families. By 16 April, there were already an estimated 19,000 orphaned children across Gaza (UN Women 16/04/2024). Until early May, the Gaza Health Ministry estimated that over 14,000 children had been killed since October 2023 (UNICEF 06/05/2024). Over one million children in Gaza are estimated to be in need of mental health and psychosocial support (OCHA 08/05/2024 b).
- **Older people and people with disabilities**, who have lost mobility aids that cannot be replaced because of Israel's restrictions on items entering Gaza, will have a difficult time evacuating Rafah and will experience higher mortality and morbidity rates in the coming weeks (HelpAge 08/05/2024).
- More than 10,000 **women** have been killed and more than 19,000 injured in Gaza since 7 October 2023. An estimated 63 women, including 37 mothers, are being killed daily. Around 155,000 pregnant women and new mothers are struggling to survive, with limited access to basic healthcare (UN Women 09/05/2024; OHCHR 06/05/2024; UNFPA accessed 09/05/2024). Israel's incursion in Rafah is likely to aggravate the situation for women who need urgent healthcare access.

RESPONSE CAPACITY

On 7 May, UNRWA stated its intention to not evacuate Rafah and to continue providing essential assistance to people where possible (Independent 07/05/2024). UNRWA did not prepare for arrivals into Mawasi to avoid encouraging people to flee there, but it will provide assistance to new arrivals in the coming weeks (AP 08/05/2024).

Significant aid restrictions are preventing humanitarian responders from scaling up the response in Mawasi and other parts of Gaza to prepare for an IDP influx from Rafah (TNH 11/04/2024). By 3 May, however, WHO was setting up a new field hospital in Mawasi and establishing primary healthcare centres and health points in northern Gaza, Khan Younis, and Middle Area. WHO has also transferred its medical supplies from a Rafah warehouse to a new warehouse in Deir al-Balah (WHO 03/05/2024). As of 9 May, the European Gaza Hospital in Khan Younis was still accessible and operating *asas*

By 9 May, the US had finished constructing a temporary set of piers designed for aid delivery into Gaza (CNN 08/05/2024).