

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

On 21 and 22 August 2024, Israel issued evacuation orders covering 15 neighbourhoods of Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis in central and southwestern Gaza, respectively. Based on initial estimates, around 30,000 people lived in 146 IDP sites in the affected areas as of 21 August (OCHA 23/08/2024; MSF 21/08/2024). Many of the 1.9 million internally displaced Palestinians in Gaza (90% of its population) had moved to shelter in Deir al-Balah following Israel's invasion of Rafah in May 2024 (MEE 21/08/2024; OCHA 14/08/2024).

**This set of evacuation orders was the 13th issued in August alone; throughout the month, these orders have displaced around 250,000 Palestinians, many for up to the tenth time.** By 19 August, Israel had subjected around 86% (314km<sup>2</sup>) of Gaza's territory to evacuation orders (OCHA 23/08/2024 and 19/08/2024). Israel is directing evacuated civilians towards Al-Mawasi, an Israeli-designated humanitarian zone whose area has decreased to just over 41km<sup>2</sup> (11% of Gaza's territory) from 50km<sup>2</sup> in July (OCHA 22/08/2024). By 16 August, the estimated population density in Al-Mawasi was around 35,000–40,000 people/km<sup>2</sup>, compared with around 1,200 people/km<sup>2</sup> pre-7 October 2023 (OCHA 19/08/2024; Health Cluster 16/08/2024). For comparison, the population density in Israel is 433 people/km<sup>2</sup> and from 43–48 people/km<sup>2</sup> across the Middle East and North Africa (WB accessed 23/08/2024 a).

**The most recent evacuation orders have significantly disrupted humanitarian operations in Deir al-Balah,** which was previously part of an Israeli-designated humanitarian safe zone and is one of the last areas in Gaza that has the infrastructure and warehouses required to store humanitarian supplies (ACF et al. 22/08/2024; AJ 22/08/2024).

### HUMANITARIAN IMPACTS OF EVACUATIONS

#### Shelter and NFIs

**There is a severe shortage of shelter materials and NFIs** for evacuating people (who are only able to carry items necessary for basic survival, usually empty water cans and mattresses) (UN 12/08/2024; OCHA 21/08/2024).

**There is no space left in Al-Mawasi for new arrivals,** forcing people to stay in the open air on the fringes of designated safe zones (The Guardian 21/08/2024). Overcrowding was already severe prior to the most recent evacuation orders, with an average of 1.5m<sup>2</sup>/person in shelters by mid-August 2024, well below the international minimum standard of 3.5m<sup>2</sup>/person (OCHA 14/08/2024).

People sheltering in the open air or overcrowded, poorly ventilated shelters are exposed to high summer temperatures and associated health impacts (UN 12/08/2024; CNN 23/08/2024). The average maximum temperature in Gaza in August is close to 35° C (WB accessed 23/08/2024 b).

#### WASH

**Evacuations disrupt access to WASH services, which are already minimally available.** An evacuation order issued on 16 August alone disrupted access to 12 groundwater wells, three reservoirs, one sewage pumping station, and one temporary solid waste dump site (OCHA 21/08/2024). There is minimal WASH infrastructure in Al-Mawasi, which has no water sources and where untreated sewage runs through the streets (Health Cluster 16/08/2024; Oxfam 18/07/2024; UN 12/08/2024). Displaced Palestinians are forced to drink contaminated water and forego personal hygiene, significantly increasing the transmission of skin, waterborne, and other diseases discussed below (CNN 23/08/2024).

## Health

**Overcrowded shelters and minimal access to WASH among evacuating Palestinians have increased the spread of diseases, including skin diseases** (e.g. scabies) and gastrointestinal problems (MSF 21/08/2024). People lose healthcare access with each evacuation, challenging treatment for those with these diseases. The evacuation orders issued in Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah between 8–17 August disrupted access to 17 health facilities, including five primary healthcare centres (OCHA 21/08/2024). By 22 August, Israeli operations were approaching Al-Aqsa Hospital, where displaced people were sheltering (NYT 22/08/2024). Healthcare operations are already limited, with less than 45% (16) of Gaza's 36 hospitals and 42% (53) of Gaza's 126 primary healthcare centres partially functional by 14 August (OCHA 14/08/2024).

**At the same time, the evacuations are disrupting a vital polio vaccination campaign**, initiated in response to the identification of poliovirus circulating in Gaza in July and confirmation of the first active case, found on 16 August in a ten-month-old baby in Deir al-Balah (OCHA 21/08/2024 and 19/08/2024). For more information, see [Anticipated Impacts of a Polio Outbreak in Gaza](#).

## Food security and nutrition

In mid-August, **evacuation orders in Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah forced more than 30 kitchens to suspend or relocate their operations**, disrupting food access. At the same time, 50% of Gaza's 12 functioning bakeries are in Deir al-Balah; it is unclear how the latest orders have affected their operations (OCHA 21/08/2024). The evacuation orders have also impeded humanitarian access to warehouses, including WFP's warehouse in central Deir al-Balah (AP 23/08/2024; ACF et al. 22/08/2024).

Disrupted food supply will aggravate already high food insecurity in Gaza, where an estimated 96% of the population is projected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse food insecurity levels through 30 September 2024 (IPC 25/06/2024). Repeated evacuations also disrupt the detection and treatment of malnutrition, which is prevalent among children and pregnant and lactating women (OCHA 21/08/2024).

## Protection and impact on specific groups

**People moving through Gaza in response to the evacuation orders risk injury and death from constant shelling and aerial bombardments** (AJ 21/08/2024). Risks continue when people arrive in formal and informal IDP sites, where overcrowding and competition for scarce resources have led to violence at water and aid distribution points (CNN 23/08/2024). Despite being designated a humanitarian safe zone, Al-Mawasi has also repeatedly come under attack since 7 October 2023, including a mid-July 2024 shelling that killed nearly 100 and injured over 300 others (AJ 13/07/2024).

**These risks have led some Gazans to stay in their homes despite the recent evacuation orders**, leaving them exposed to escalating fighting and serious protection risks (The Guardian 21/08/2024). Between 20–22 August, separate incidents in Deir al-Balah, including an attack on IDP tents and in the central market, killed 27 Palestinians, including women, children, and a journalist. Threats to their security prevent people from accessing essential services (OCHA 23/08/2024).

**Each evacuation contributes to rising numbers of unaccompanied and separated children**, many of whom lose contact with their families when displaced. These children are exposed to heightened humanitarian needs, including a lack of access to food and shelter, and protection risks, including child labour and exploitation (IRC 16/08/2024). Evacuation orders issued between June–August have also forced over 31 temporary learning centres to close, depriving around 4,000 children not only of education access but also of an essential source of protection and psychosocial support (OCHA 23/08/2024).

**Older people, people with disabilities, and people recently injured from fighting face heightened barriers to evacuation**, as damage and destruction prevent them from using mobility aids and assistive devices (UN 12/08/2024). Older people and people with disabilities are also less likely to receive vital information on where and how to evacuate because of less access to telecommunications and physical mobility restrictions (CARE 15/05/2024; HRW 01/11/2023).

**Repeat displacement increases pressures on women**, who often bear the task of making and maintaining makeshift homes for their families in shelters and finding food and water. They also face the risk of growing gender-based violence in increasingly overcrowded shelters (CARE 15/05/2024).

## RESPONSE AND CONSTRAINTS

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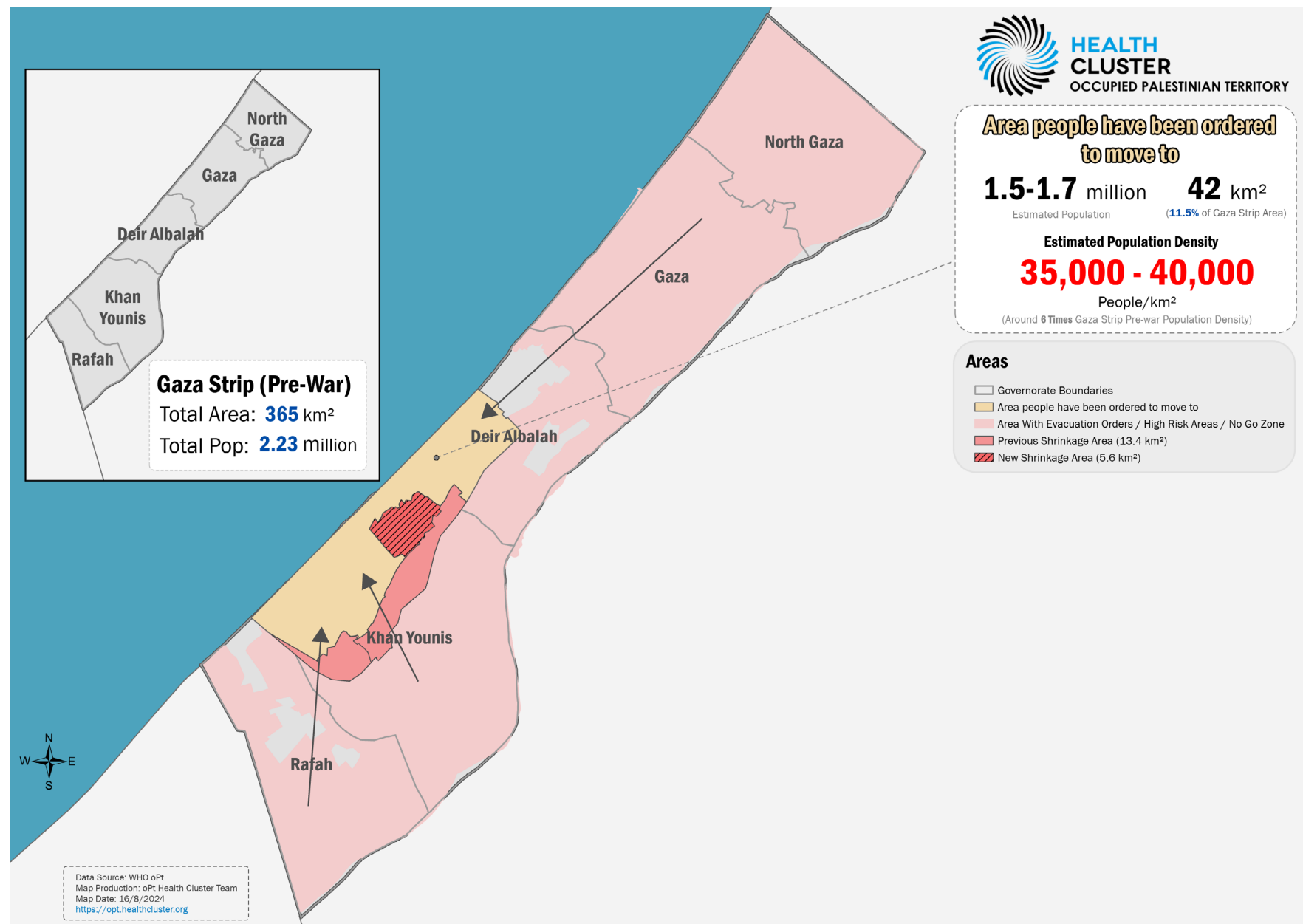
**Evacuation orders issued between 16–22 August affected at least 24 NGOs**, displacing their staff and disrupting operations and access to essential supplies (ACF et al. 22/08/2024). Each evacuation requires humanitarian responders to readjust their programming, consuming already scarce time and resources (UNICEF 16/08/2024).

**Evacuations also prevent humanitarian responders from locating and reaching people** in their new locations, preventing the timely delivery of essential supplies (ACF et al. 22/08/2024). The 21 August evacuation order included parts of Salah ad-Din Road, a key route for transporting humanitarian supplies. The coastal road, which provides an alternative route, is crowded with displaced people, preventing the movement of humanitarian goods (UN 21/08/2024). Repeated displacement because of evacuation orders and conflict also prevent proper case management for gender-based violence and child protection (OCHA 21/08/2024).

**Severe fuel shortages are disrupting the humanitarian response** and health operations. By 19 August, surgeries were suspended at Al Awda Hospital, and Kawal Adwan Hospital was almost nonfunctional because of fuel and supply shortages (OCHA 19/08/2024). Even with fuel, transporting assistance throughout Gaza is difficult and dangerous because of widespread fighting and the destruction of at least 65% of the road network damaged by the end of May (OCHA 14/08/2024).

By 21 August, Rafah Crossing remained closed (OCHA 21/08/2024). Throughout August, conflict, threats to law and order, damaged roads, checkpoints, and other access constraints have prevented the collection of humanitarian supplies from Kerem Shalom crossing and transport between the crossing and Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis, leading to critical food shortages (OCHA 23/08/2024 and 21/08/2024; UNRWA 21/08/2024).

## EVACUATION ORDERS BY 16 AUGUST 2024



Source: Health Cluster (16/08/2024)