

1.9M

PEOPLE DISPLACED
IN GAZA

1.95M

PEOPLE FACING CRISIS
(IPC PHASE 3) OR
WORSE LEVELS OF FOOD
INSECURITY

92%

OF HOUSING UNITS
(436,000) DESTROYED

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

On 15 January 2025, mediators announced a **ceasefire agreed between Israel and Hamas** that, if fully implemented, would end the 15-month conflict that began on 7 October 2023. The ceasefire is expected to come into effect on 19 January, with Israel's security cabinet approving the agreement on 17 January (AJ 17/01/2025; The Guardian 16/01/2025 and 17/01/2025).

The exact details of the agreement have not been published. The six-week first phase is anticipated to involve a cessation of hostilities, return of around 33 hostages held by Hamas, release of an unconfirmed number of Palestinian prisoners detained by Israel, free movement of Gazans within Gaza, withdrawal of Israeli forces to Gaza's perimeters, and a surge in humanitarian aid. Negotiations around the details of the second and third stages are expected to commence by day 16 of the first phase. It is reported that the second phase will involve a permanent end to the conflict and the full withdrawal of Israeli troops, leaving the long-term reconstruction of Gaza to the third phase (BBC 16/01/2025; AJ 17/01/2025). These details have not been confirmed by the actual text of the agreement, however, only reported by the media.

As of 17 January, fighting remained intense since the ceasefire announcement, with nearly 113 Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza, including women, children, and humanitarian and healthcare workers (AJ 17/01/2025; RI 16/01/2025; Christian Aid 16/01/2025).

OVERVIEW: NEEDS AND RISKS

While an influx of aid and a cessation of hostilities will reduce threats to Gazans, humanitarian needs will remain severe, access will likely remain limited, and deaths will continue to occur throughout the first phase of the ceasefire. After years of conflict and blockade, humanitarian needs were already high in Gaza prior to 7 October 2023, with 45% unemployment and 81% of Gazans reporting challenges meeting their basic needs according to the 2022 Multisectoral Needs Assessment (OCHA 25/01/2023; FAO 02/12/2024). 15 months of conflict has significantly aggravated needs across all sectors, leaving 1.9 million people (90% of Gaza's 2.1 million inhabitants) displaced, 1.95 million (95% of the population) facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse levels of food insecurity, and 92% of housing units (436,000) destroyed (OCHA 14/01/2025).

Between 7 October 2023 and 14 January 2025, Gaza's Ministry of Health (MoH) reported that at least 46,645 Palestinians in Gaza, including between 14,500–17,820 children, had been killed. Given constrained MoH capacity and the thousands of bodies buried under rubble, a recent study estimates that the likely death toll from traumatic injury alone is around 40% higher than MoH estimates, bringing this toll to over 70,000 people (OCHA 14/01/2025; UNICEF 15/01/2025; STC 15/01/2025; Jamaluddine et al. 09/01/2025). This figure does not include indirect deaths from conflict-related health problems, which are conservatively estimated to be up to five times higher than direct deaths (Khatib et al. 10/07/2024). Even with an influx of assistance, indirect deaths will continue throughout the ceasefire.

Once the ceasefire begins, priority aid includes food, nutrition, WASH assistance, shelter materials, NFIs (particularly cold weather NFIs), and medical supplies and equipment. Fuel is urgently required to restore the functioning of health facilities, WASH infrastructure, bakeries, humanitarian aid delivery, and other life-saving operations. Needs will be particularly severe in North Gaza, where an estimated 10,000–15,000 people remain under siege with effectively no access to assistance or basic services (ACLEDD 14/01/2025; UNRWA 12/01/2025).

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

- Media sources have reported that the first phase of the ceasefire deal will involve the opening of the Rafah border crossing, but the exact timeline has not been confirmed (TNA 14/01/2025). By 15 January, the Kerem Shalom/Karem Abu Salem, Kissufim, and Gate 96 crossings into southern and central Gaza were operational, but with extremely constrained capacity as a result of insecurity, including looting. The West Erez Crossing in the north was open, but only provides access to Gaza city. There remains effectively no access to North Gaza governorate (WFP 15/01/2025).
- The complete breakdown of law and order in Gaza means that **looting by armed gangs will likely continue to impede aid delivery and distribution** after the ceasefire comes into effect.
- **Significant damage to telecommunications infrastructure will continue to hinder aid delivery after the ceasefire commences.** By 13 January, two mobile service operators were providing voice services in Gaza, with limited capacity because of a lack of fuel and spare parts. Two satellite phone voice services were functional across Gaza, and one internet service provider was offering limited service in unspecified locations (ETC/WFP 15/01/2025). Restoring connectivity will require extensive repairs.
- In October 2023, Israeli authorities cut off the electricity supplied to Gaza through ten Israeli pipelines. Gaza has remained under an electricity blackout since then, with no diesel fuel to power its sole power plant, complicating humanitarian communication and aid delivery (ETC/WFP 15/01/2025; CSIS 21/11/2023). While it is unknown when Israel will resume electricity provision under the ceasefire, significant damage to Gaza's electrical grid will continue to limit electricity availability.
- **Humanitarian access will also be limited by physical access constraints resulting from damage and destruction to infrastructure and buildings.** By 1 December 2024, 68% of the total road network and 70% of all structures in Gaza had been damaged or destroyed (OCHA 08/01/2025). There is also unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination across Gaza, posing a safety risk to humanitarian responders and affected communities (Health Cluster 26/09/2024).

PRIORITY NEEDS AND RISKS

Shelter and NFIs

1.9 million IDPs in Gaza (over 90% of Gaza's 2.1 million inhabitants) are living in severely overcrowded, inadequate shelters. A November–December 2024 assessment of 565 displacement sites hosting around 842,000 people, or around 45% of IDPs in Gaza, found that 95% of sites (537) had no lighting and 36% (194) saw people sleeping in the open with no shelter (CCCM Cluster 13/01/2025). Overcrowded and poorly lit shelters increase the risk of gender-based violence, reported cases of which have been rising in recent months (OCHA 14/01/2025).

Gaza's winter season typically runs from November–March, exposing the population to two more months of winter rainfall, wind, and temperatures as low as 6° C (ACAPS 30/10/2024). By 18 December 2024, at least 945,000 people, nearly 50% of Gaza's population, required urgent winterization support, including shelter materials, warm clothing, and blankets (UN News 18/12/2024; OCHA 08/01/2025). Over 450,000 people live in displacement sites in flood-prone areas, with heavy rainfall and floods in November–December 2024 destroying shelters and NFIs (STC 29/11/2024; IRC 05/12/2024; OCHA 08/01/2025). There is a risk of further flooding and destruction in the coming months, indicating the urgent need for shelter materials.

By January 2025, 92% (436,000) of housing units in Gaza had been damaged or destroyed (58% damaged, 34% destroyed) (OCHA 08/01/2025). People attempting to return to their homes during the first phase of the ceasefire will be forced to live in damaged structures, posing significant health and safety risks alongside minimal protection from the winter weather.

Health, mental health, and psychosocial support needs

Fuel is urgently needed to ensure life-saving health services for at least 2,000 patients in Deir Al Balah, Khan Younis, and Rafah, and 220 in Gaza and North Gaza governorates, including newborns in incubators and 270 people in intensive care. By 14 January, the 18 of Gaza's 36 hospitals that remained partially functional had exhausted their reserve fuel stocks and were relying on small quantities delivered daily to maintain a bare minimum of critical services (OCHA 14/01/2025). Nasser Hospital, one of the largest in southern Gaza, requires at least 5,500L of fuel daily to function at capacity (MAP 10/01/2025).

At least 12,000 patients require urgent medical evacuation for life-saving treatment, primarily for cancer and war-related injuries. Between the closure of the Rafah Crossing on 7 May 2024 and 8 January 2025, only 446 patients have been evacuated (OCHA 14/01/2025; MSF 19/12/2024). Hundreds of thousands more are living with non-communicable diseases



left largely untreated since October 2023, including at least 60,000 with high blood glucose, 650,000 with high blood pressure, and 45,000 with cardiovascular disease by June 2024 (WHO 12/12/2024). Given the severe lack of screening and diagnostic services, it is likely the number of patients diagnosed with non-communicable diseases will rise as access to health services improves under the ceasefire deal.

High rates of infectious disease transmission persist in Gaza. The November–December 2024 assessment of 565 displacement sites found that key informants in 65% of sites (over 365) reported the presence of diarrhoea, flu, and skin rashes, while 41% reported lice and 40% reported respiratory issues (CCCM Cluster 13/01/2025). Urgent access to healthcare, medication, WASH, food, nutrition support, and adequate shelter is needed to stem transmission.

Between November 2024, the onset of winter, and 6 January 2025, at least eight newborns died from hypothermia. Children are increasingly experiencing acute bronchiolitis, pneumonia, and upper respiratory tract infections (OCHA 14/01/2025). Without shelter, cold weather clothing, and winterization supplies, there remains a high risk of increased illness and death from exposure to winter weather in the next two months (OCHA 14/01/2025).

People returning to damaged or destroyed homes during the ceasefire face a high risk of injury and disease from contact with rubble, which contains decomposed bodies, asbestos, UXO, and other contaminants (Health Cluster 26/09/2024).

By 14 January, over 110,000 Gazans had been injured. In September 2024, the WHO estimated that at least 22,500 injured people required acute and continuing rehabilitation, primarily because of extremity injuries, amputations, traumatic brain injuries, and major burns (OCHA 14/01/2025; WHO 30/07/2024). This includes the estimated 5,800 children with permanent disabilities as a result of explosive weapons (STC 14/01/2025). People with pre-existing and new disabilities will require extra support returning to their homes and accessing assistance and adequate healthcare. By 14 January, Gaza's only rehabilitation centre, at Nasser Hospital, remained non-functional (UN News 12/09/2024; OCHA 14/01/2025).

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs will rapidly rise during the ceasefire, as people return to their damaged and destroyed homes, learn the fate of loved ones, search for those still missing, and attempt to rebuild their lives. After decades of conflict and blockade, MHPSS needs were already severe in Gaza before 7 October 2023, with an estimated 485,000 people with mental health disorders (ACAPS 03/09/2024; Health Cluster 12/12/2024). By July 2024, according to UNICEF, almost all of Gaza's 1.2 million children had MHPSS needs (UNICEF 14/07/2024).

Food insecurity and nutrition

A projected 1.95 million people (91% of Gaza's population) have been experiencing IPC 3 or worse levels of food insecurity since November 2024, including nearly 345,000 (16%) facing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) levels (IPC 17/10/2024). By 6 January 2025, all bakeries in North Gaza and southern and central governorates had closed because of insecurity and lack of fuel and supplies. Only four bakeries remained operational with limited capacity in Gaza city (WFP 06/01/2025). By 12 January, there was effectively no access to fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, and dairy products across Gaza, leaving people reliant on bread and pulses (UNRWA 12/01/2025). There is an urgent need for nutrition support and food assistance that restores dietary diversity, and fuel, flour, and other supplies for bakeries to resume functioning.

In October 2024, the IPC projected 60,000 cases of severe acute malnutrition among children aged 6–59 months and 16,500 among pregnant and breastfeeding women between November 2024 and August 2025 (IPC 17/10/2024). While this projected window has not yet elapsed, it is likely that tens of thousands of children and pregnant and lactating women already require urgent nutrition support. Malnutrition in pregnant women increases the likelihood of neonatal complications and preterm births, with approximately 10% of babies now born preterm or with low birthweight (UNFPA 06/01/2025). Malnutrition in children leads to long-term physical and cognitive developmental problems, contributing to high health, education, and other needs in Gaza for decades to come (STC 28/11/2024).

Producing adequate food within Gaza will take significant time given that, by 1 September 2024, nearly 70% of Gaza's cropland had been damaged and an estimated 95% of cattle and over 50% of sheep and goat herds had died (FAO 03/10/2024 and 02/12/2024).

WASH

Damage to or destruction of over 85% of Gaza's WASH infrastructure, the electricity blackout, and restricted water flow through pipelines from Israel has left people in Gaza with an average of 2–9L of water daily since 7 October 2023, far below the international minimum standard of 15L in emergencies (HRW 19/12/2024). The November–December 2024 assessment of 565 displacement sites in Gaza found that, in 51% of sites (around 285), few or no people had access to sufficient drinking water (CCCM Cluster 13/01/2025). By 15 January 2025, water production was at only 25% capacity compared with pre-7 October levels (UNICEF 15/01/2025).

Fuel is an urgent priority to restore WASH services. On 14 January 2025, the WASH Cluster reported that all WASH services, except the Southern Gaza Desalination Plant, would cease to function without imminent fuel delivery (OCHA 14/01/2025). Even with sufficient fuel, repair materials, and the entry of other necessary supplies, such as water filtration systems and tanks, however, it will take significant time to repair damage to WASH infrastructure across Gaza.

Protection

Destruction and repeated displacement have **deprived many in Gaza of essential documentation, preventing them from receiving aid, housing, education, and employment during the ceasefire**. Without education documents, people cannot apply for jobs, while IDPs returning to their homes will face difficulty proving ownership without identity, housing, land, and property documentation (DRC 15/01/2025).

In May 2024, UNMAS estimated that there was over **800,000MT of asbestos, other contaminants, and UXO** in debris throughout Gaza (Health Cluster 26/09/2024). This number is likely significantly higher now, with an estimated 10% of all ammunition used in the conflict potentially failing to function. This poses a significant security risk to both displaced people returning home and humanitarian responders.

Physical access constraints and violence at aid distribution points are already causing **women, girls, older people, and people with disabilities to face a high risk of exclusion from aid distribution** (Protection Cluster et al. 02/12/2024). A scale-up in aid delivery in Gaza will need to ensure the inclusion of groups with specific access challenges and requirements.

It is reported that the ceasefire deal allows for the pedestrian return of Gazans to their homes in the north without inspection (AJ 16/01/2025). There remains a risk, however, that people – particularly men and boys – will be arrested and detained by remaining Israeli forces when attempting to move.

Education

By mid-January 2025, an estimated 660,000 children in Gaza had been deprived of formal education since 7 October 2023, with nearly 90% of school buildings damaged. Only 105,700 children (16% of this school-age population) had access to some form of learning, such as in temporary learning spaces (Education Cluster 01/10/2024; UNRWA 12/01/2025; OCHA 14/01/2025). Children require safe learning spaces to ensure renewed access to education, psychosocial support, and protection from child labour, early marriage, and other protection risks. Such spaces are particularly vital for Gaza's at least 17,500 unaccompanied and separated children (UNICEF 15/01/2025).

Livelihoods

15 months of conflict has destroyed markets, businesses, and land, leaving 80% of people in Gaza unemployed by September 2024, compared with 45% pre-conflict (FAO 03/10/2024 and 02/12/2024). While some people have been able to start small businesses during the conflict, many others have been forced to sell aid to earn income (DRC 15/01/2025). This will remain a risk during the ceasefire, as increased aid enters but people remain without livelihood opportunities.