

End of ceasefire and reimposition of blockade in Gaza

CRISIS OVERVIEW

In the early hours of 18 March 2025, Israel unilaterally ended the ceasefire that it agreed upon with Hamas on 15 January, launching air strikes on Gaza as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced the resumption of conflict. Even during the ceasefire period, Israel also continued its attacks and has imposed blockade on Gaza since March 2, albeit at a lower scale. Between 19 January and 17 March, during the ceasefire, Israel had killed at least 170 Gazans and allowed only 70% of the 600 aid trucks to be allowed in daily (AJ 18/03/2025 a). The 18 March air strikes killed at least 404 civilians (170 children and 80 women) and injured around 660. On 20 March, Israel launched additional air strikes and resumed ground operations, killing around 91 Palestinians and wounding dozens (Reuters 20/03/2025 and 18/03/2025; OCHA 18/03/2025 a; The Guardian 18/03/2025). On Monday 24 March, Israel launched several strikes killing at least 65 civilians, including children and journalists, the attacks have been registered in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, Beit Lahiya and attacks to the Red Cross building in Rafah (The Guardian 24/03/2025; France24 24/03/2025).

Until 25 March, many bodies had not been retrieved from under rubble. The death toll continues to rise as injured individuals fail to receive access to essential medicine because of Israel's most recent and longest blockade on Gaza since 2 March. Medical facilities are also overwhelmed, with many destroyed, rendering them unable to provide adequate treatment (OCHA 18/03/2025 a; The Guardian 18/03/2025). With the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) specifically targeting hospitals and healthcare workers since October 2023, causing Gaza's health system to collapse completely, leaving it without any capacity even before the ceasefire (Insecurity Insight 06/11/2024).

Until 25 March 2025, no safe zones had been established. At the same time, the IDF also attacked previously designated safe areas before the ceasefire, and the recent air strikes hit Al Mawasi and IDP tents in Tal Al Sultan (western Rafah), which were supposed to be considered safe humanitarian zones (AJ 18/03/2025 a; OCHA 18/03/2025 a). The 18 March air strikes hit areas around Gaza city, Khan Younis, and Rafah the hardest (IFRC 18/03/2025). These air strikes have caused new waves of displacement under devastating humanitarian conditions (OCHA 18/03/2025 a).

People in Gaza were already struggling with food insecurity, unmet health needs, inadequate shelter, limited education, and livelihood losses because of conflict and blockades. Since 2 March, Israel has blocked humanitarian aid into Gaza, and humanitarian organisations have since reported food rotting in storage and medicine expiring as aid permits are denied (OCHA 18/03/2025 b).

The ceasefire, agreed upon on 15 January and implemented on 19 January, was supposed to have several phases. The first was implemented with Hamas releasing 25 living and eight deceased Israeli hostages (out of the 251 abducted on 7 October 2023), while Israel released about 1,777 Palestinian prisoners (out of the 1,900 indicated in the ceasefire agreement; estimates point to at least 9,619 Palestinians in Israeli prisons). Simultaneously, Israeli forces were supposed to withdraw from Gaza's populated areas, and humanitarian aid was supposed to enter Gaza without interruption. This did not happen, and Israel has continued attacking, albeit with less intensity, while also blocking aid since 2 March. Phase two was to involve a permanent ceasefire and the exchange of the remaining Israeli hostages for more Palestinian prisoners, but negotiations never began as scheduled after both parties accused the other of violating the truce. On 19 February, Hamas said they were willing to free all Israeli hostages in one go in exchange for a lasting truce and Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, but the Israeli Government rejected their proposal (FP 18/03/2025; OCHA 17/03/2025; NPR 17/03/2025; BBC 19/03/2025; B'Tselem accessed DD/03/2025; The Guardian 19/02/2025; AJ 19/02/2025).

Methodology

The information was compiled through publicly available data, complemented with non-public information from key stakeholders.

Limitations

The information landscape is highly constrained and sensitive given such a politicised and polarised context. The rapidly changing situation further challenges information-gathering and context-monitoring. It is also difficult to distinguish between the impact of the recent conflict escalation and the overall impact since October 2023.

KEY FINDINGS

- According to OCHA, between 7 October 2023 and 23 March 2025, the conflict killed at least 50,021 Palestinians in Gaza and injured over 112,000. During the same time frame, the violence also killed at least 896 people in the West Bank (NPR 23/03/2025; UNRWA 15/03/2025). The numbers are evolving because of continuous clashes and violence.
- On 17 March, the Israeli military ordered Palestinians in Gaza living close to the border with Israel to leave their homes, labelling the border areas dangerous combat zones, and move to shelters in Gaza city and Khan Younis, forcing people to displace again (NYT 17/03/2025; OCHA 18/03/2025 a; AJ 18/03/2025 b).
- Despite the ceasefire agreements, since 2 March, Israel has blocked the access of all goods to Gaza, including humanitarian food convoys and essential medicine (NYT 15/03/2025; Reuters 02/03/2025). The scarcity of goods, particularly food, has increased prices in Gaza, further preventing people from getting enough food and nutrients.
- Until 25 March, crossing points remained closed, impeding the entrance of essential supplies and aid to Gaza (The Guardian 18/03/2025).
- By 15 March, some water wells in Gaza were functioning but only delivering brackish (i.e. more saline than fresh) water, posing a high risk to health (NYT 15/03/2025). As of 22 March, there is no consistent source of electricity and people rely on solar panels because Israel still blocks access to power.
- By 18 March, Hamas still held 59 hostages from Israel. Half are believed to still be alive but at high risk of getting hit by the Israeli air strikes (Reuters accessed 21/03/2025).
- From 2–18 March, Israel did not allow any fuel to enter Gaza, constraining the functionality of ambulances and power generators (AA 18/03/2025). The Palestinian Red Crescent fleet of 53 ambulances has only 23 operational vehicles because of the lack of gasoline (IFRC 18/03/2025). The situation remained unchanged as of 25 March.
- The UNSC convened an emergency session on 18 March, with many countries condemning the assault and urging an immediate return to the ceasefire. The council, however, has not initiated any votes, and there have been no concrete actions to prevent further attacks against civilians (NYT 17/03/2025).

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

- Netanyahu has threatened to strengthen Israel's military operations, claiming that the recent escalation was just the beginning of the attacks. Civilian security can be expected to deteriorate, especially as there is no certainty on which areas are safe or are being targeted by the IDF (The Guardian 18/03/2025).
- The number of dead and injured people is likely to increase given the lack of capacity to treat affected people. Paramedics and emergency medical teams from the Palestine Red Crescent have been responding in Gaza after the air strikes. Medical facilities are overwhelmed, and essential healthcare products are scarce (IFRC 18/03/2025; AA 18/03/2025). The clashes are expected to increase the number of patients needing rehabilitation services and evacuation, but Israel has reduced permits for medical evacuation through all crossing points from Gaza. On 19 March, around 13 injured people from Gaza were evacuated to Europe, but restrictions will likely strengthen. By 20 March, over 11,000 people in Gaza were in need of urgent medical evacuation (Agerpres 20/03/2025; RI 20/03/2025). Before the ceasefire, Gaza's healthcare system was already collapsing as a result of Israel's attacks on infrastructure and health workers. The supply blockade has worsened the situation by severely limiting the availability of medicine and other essential supplies.
- Without the entrance of humanitarian aid, people are more likely to become ill or even die because of the lack of healthcare access (OCHA 17/03/2025). Restricted access to primary healthcare, combined with disease outbreaks and reduced vaccinations, is likely to worsen preventable diseases and the conditions of those with chronic illnesses who cannot receive treatment. The lack of health facilities and supplies also means unsafe delivery for more women, leading to increased maternal mortality. Groups more vulnerable to diseases, such as children under five years old, women, and older people, are likely to be the most affected (CARE 09/09/2024; Health Cluster 08/08/2024; MSF 29/04/2024; Alokaily 01/2024).
- Food insecurity levels will keep rising. With 82% of croplands damaged since October 2023, people are unable to cultivate crops, and the prices of vegetables and fruits have increased, leading to high dependence on food assistance (OCHA 17/03/2025; BBC 06/03/2025). By 18 March, around 80 community kitchens were estimated to close by April because of the lack of supplies, while others will be forced to adjust meal content or the number of meals per day (OCHA 17/03/2025).
- The rising number of civilian casualties will likely lead to more unaccompanied children, directly increasing the risk of sexual violence, exploitation, trafficking, and mental health issues.

- The resumption of ground operations is likely to increase the number of detention incidents affecting civilians, including the arbitrary arrest of health workers, as was reported in 2024 (UNRWA 06/01/2025; DW 27/02/2025).
- Mental health is one of the most pressing issues in Gaza. People have reported cases of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression. According to a survey of 504 households in Gaza conducted by the Community Training Centre for Crisis Management with support from the War Child Alliance, 96% of children feel their death is imminent. The resumption of attacks and blockades deteriorates the mental and psychological wellbeing of communities (OCHA 17/03/2025; The Guardian 11/12/2024; War Child 11/12/2024). Children's long-term development is likely to be affected by the resulting trauma, education disruption, and lack of safe spaces, among other consequences of the conflict.

HUMANITARIAN CONSTRAINTS

- Since 2 March, all of Gaza's land border crossings have remained closed, except for specific patient evacuations. This closure has hindered humanitarian aid delivery and delayed that of essential medicine, medical equipment, and hygiene supplies. This disruption increases the risk of pregnancy complications, chronic diseases, the spread of waterborne diseases, and preventable deaths (HOPE 14/03/2025; Agerpress 20/03/2025; RI 20/03/2024).
- On 18 March, the IDF started ground operations by retaking part of the strategic Netzarim Corridor that divides Gaza's north from the south, advancing towards the northern town of Beit Lahya and into the southern border city of Rafah. The operatives have forced people to displace and stay in overcrowded areas (The Guardian 21/03/2025). The recurrent displacement makes it difficult for humanitarian organisations to gather information and identify people's needs.
- As of 22 March, electricity outages across the Gaza Strip have hindered humanitarian efforts and information gathering. The lack of consistent power suggests that the actual number of casualties may be higher because of delays in reporting (OXFAM 24/03/2024; MondoWeiss 22/03/2025).
- Before 17 March, 62% of Gaza's roads were destroyed, constraining the transportation of humanitarian aid and people needing emergency healthcare. Around 92% of homes and buildings were also destroyed (OCHA 17/03/2025). The possible presence of explosive ordnance under debris and collapsed buildings and the constant risk of damaged buildings also collapsing create a security risk for both residents and humanitarian workers.
- Humanitarian workers have been targeted during clashes. By 21 March, 281 UNRWA workers had been killed since 7 October 2023 (UNRWA 21/03/2025). By 13 January, at least 878 health workers had also been killed and between 297 and 351 detained (Health Cluster accessed 24/03/2025; Insecurity Insight 12/03/2025). The total number of health and aid workers

killed varies between sources and is believed to be higher than the current verified number as the situation is evolving and clashes have been hampering the gathering of information, and the death toll is believed to be much higher than the figures published by Israeli authorities.

- Over 800 incidents have affected UNRWA facilities since October 2023 (UNRWA 15/03/2025).
- The executive orders on the suspension of US aid funds have severely affected Gaza. USAID was supposed to fund \$383 million of the aid to Gaza as the ceasefire progressed, as approved by US President Trump on 31 January. By 7 March, there were still no confirmed payments (AP 07/03/2025; TOI 07/03/2025). Several aid organisations also highly depend on US funds to continue their operations; with the recent US aid suspension, they are likely to have to cease their programmes. The International Medical Corps and other organisations have had to scale down operations and lay off workers, with some receiving termination letters to "immediately cease" all activities (TOI 07/03/2025).

CRISIS IMPACTS

Displacement and shelter

On 18 March, the Israeli military ordered the immediate evacuation of Palestinians from North Gaza and eastern Khan Younis, telling them to move to shelters in Gaza city and Khan Younis (OCHA 18/03/2025 b). Most people have been displaced over three times since 2023. The air strikes from 17–18 March affected 19 neighbourhoods, including 13 in North Gaza and six in eastern Khan Younis, affecting an estimated 65,000 people. By 21 March, it is estimated that 124,000 people had been displaced in Gaza since the end of the ceasefire (The Guardian 21/03/2025; OCHA 19/03/2025). Until 22 March, the number of people displaced and in need of shelter remained unclear; actual figures are likely higher than what is available, with attacks and electricity outages constraining the gathering of information.

Since 16 January, when the ceasefire was announced, thousands of people have been displaced again, trying to return to what was left of their homes. The recent attacks are likely to displace many of them again. According to the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, by 15 March, at least 92% of the houses had been either severely damaged or destroyed (UNRWA 15/03/2025).

One of the main challenges for residents and humanitarian workers is identifying safe and accessible locations to set up shelters because of widespread damage, rubble, explosive ordnance, and the lack of essential services. Humanitarian organisations and people in general also cannot build shelters because of a lack of materials because of restrictions from Israel, which prohibits the entry of dual-use items that include materials often used for

construction, such as concrete mixers, hammers, and concrete saws. This is forcing people to use tents that are not resistant to extreme environmental conditions (OCHA 17/03/2025).

The recent air strikes have also affected Beit Hanoun in North Gaza, which comprised 19 makeshift displacement sites, four UNRWA collective centres (two of which remain active), and one non-UNRWA collective centre. In Abasan Al Jadida and Khuza'a, east of Khan Younis, there are five makeshift displacement sites (OCHA 18/03/2025 a).

Health

Until 18 March, healthcare access remained limited, with only 22 hospitals and six field hospitals partially functional. The health system in North Gaza has collapsed, rendering it unable to treat all injured people with only one oxygen generator, one computerised tomography scanning machine, and one X-ray machine left (OCHA 18/03/2025 a). According to the Health Cluster, three primary healthcare facilities and one field hospital are within the areas placed under evacuation.

The number of people with injuries is likely to keep increasing with the continuing attacks. Their needs are critically unmet because of current conditions, which feature a lack of painkillers, antibiotics, blood, and health workers, including professional carers. The attacks also raise the risk of people suffering amputations and requiring specialised care. This is aggravated by the Israeli blockade that restricts the entry of essential assistive devices, such as wheelchairs and crutches (OCHA 17/03/2025).

By 17 March, 94% of health facilities in the Gaza Strip were destroyed. 15 out of 35 hospitals, 82 out of 145 primary healthcare facilities, and 194 out of 360 medical points remained non-functional. These conditions have forced health workers to treat patients in field health facilities and sometimes without enough supplies and sanitation (OCHA 18/03/2025 a and 17/03/2025). During the ceasefire, Israel was expected to allow all medical evacuations from Gaza, but only some specific cases supported by WHO were allowed to evacuate. Between 1 February and 17 March, 1,702 patients, including 616 children, were evacuated with 2,557 companions for specialised care in Egypt and other countries. WHO reports that 11,000–13,000 people, including over 4,500 children, still urgently needed evacuation until 18 March (OCHA 17/03/2025 and 11/02/2025; The National 01/02/2025).

From October 2023 until 13 January 2025, the health sector in Gaza reported over 650 attacks against health facilities, over 290 health workers detained, and over 150 health transportation affected during the conflict (Health Cluster accessed 24/03/2025). The blockade of supplies since 2 March has further deteriorated healthcare access for affected communities and professionals' ability to provide healthcare. The Ministry of Health has requested blood donations, field hospitals, operation rooms, and medicine, with the recent air strikes increasing

the number of people injured and in urgent need of care (OCHA 18/03/2025 a). Throughout the ceasefire, until 18 March, Israel did not allow the entrance of generators and related oil and spare parts to sustain electricity at health facilities; spare parts for ambulances; medical oxygen plants, oxygen equipment and supplies; defibrillators, ventilators, electrocardiogram machines, and patient monitors; radiology equipment such as x-rays, magnetic resonance imaging machines, and computed tomography scanners, among other essential health equipment and medicine (OCHA 17/03/2025). The lack of such equipment affects access to secondary healthcare, disease detection, and the treatment of chronically ill patients, aggravating the development of their disease and increasing their risk of death.

WASH

Water shortages in Gaza have increased since October 2023, and the clashes, coupled with the blockade of aid since 2 March, increase the risks of dehydration and diseases for the people of Gaza. Until 18 March, Israeli authorities continued to deny access to the Mekerot Bani Sa'id water line from Israel and the entrance of material to fix sewage and wastewater plants, preventing the repair of critical drinking water sources that could produce 10,000m³ of water per day, particularly for residents in Al Bureij, Al Maghazi, Deir Al Balah, and Khuza'a municipalities in central Gaza (OCHA 17/03/2025).

Since 9 March, Israel's cutoff of electricity has led to the closure of a water desalination plant, leaving approximately 600,000 people in central Gaza without access to clean drinking water. The remaining functioning wells deliver brackish water, which poses a high risk to health (NYT 15/03/2025). Sewage, wastewater, and solid waste management mechanisms have been heavily affected and have collapsed, as clashes since October 2023 have also damaged many, posing a high risk of diseases. People have not been able to access proper and regular hygiene and sanitation (OCHA 17/03/2025).

Attacks on Gaza between October 2023 and February 2025 had already destroyed 89% of water and sanitation sector assets in the Gaza Strip, forcing people to drink less than the 3L daily WHO recommendation (OCHA 17/03/2025).

Food security and nutrition

Organisations have reported not being able to distribute aid across Gaza. Since 2 March, WFP has 63,000 metric tons of food to be imported into Gaza that the Israeli authorities have not authorised to enter and is being stored in other countries in the region. This is equivalent to two to three months of distributions for 1.1 million people (WFP 14/03/2025). The lack of commercial inputs, combined with supply shortages and attacks on bakeries

and flour factories, has worsened the situation. On 21 March, WFP reported the closure of six of its 25 bakeries, stating that they only had enough flour to last until 27 March (Reuters 21/03/2025 and 28/02/2024; TRT World YouTube 18/03/2025). The destruction of crops and lack of grazing conditions for cattle make people depend highly on food assistance. Around 95% (15,000) of Gaza's cattle have died, with nearly all calves slaughtered. 68% of agricultural wells have been damaged (OCHA 11/03/2025).

On 11 March, OCHA projected that 91% of the 1.95 million people analysed were facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity levels, including around 876,000 people facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels and 345,000 people facing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) levels (OCHA 11/03/2025).

Between January–March 2025, the Nutrition Cluster reported screening 117,254 children ages 6–59 months for malnutrition, 3,377 (2.9%) of whom were admitted to the Community Management of Acute Malnutrition programme for malnutrition treatment, including 514 (0.4%) with severe acute malnutrition and 2,863 (2.4%) with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) (WHO 12/03/2025). The figures available reflect that not all children are receiving treatment, and the ones receiving treatment are likely to go back to the conditions they had before the current conflict.

Protection

The Israeli air strikes have killed people indiscriminately, including at least 170 children and 80 women. Hamas reported that the air strikes also represent a risk for hostages taken from Israel being held in Gaza (OCHA 18/03/2025 a; NYT 17/03/2025). The rising number of civilian deaths is contributing to an increase in unaccompanied children. Without caregivers and with humanitarian organisations' diminishing presence, unaccompanied children have limited access to food and are at heightened risk of sexual violence, exploitation, and mental health issues. Before 17 March, there were already at least 17,000 children orphaned or separated from their families since October 2023 (Health Cluster 25/02/2025).

The resumption of conflict also increases the risks of gender-based violence. Since October 2023, there have been increasing reports of the IDF using sexual, reproductive, and other forms of gender-based violence against Palestinians, including children (Reuters 13/03/2025; UN 13/03/2025). Health workers detained by Israelis have also reported being tortured and abused (DW 27/02/2025).

The conflict has left explosives under the rubble, putting the lives of civilians and emergency workers at risk. Between 19 January and 1 March, 16 incidents of explosives remnant of war explosions were reported. Until 18 March, Mine Action responders were not allowed to move and dispose of explosive remnants of war because they lacked the materials needed and required permissions from Israel (OCHA 17/03/2025).