

Multi-Country Funding Appeal: occupied Palestinian territory and Egypt, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan



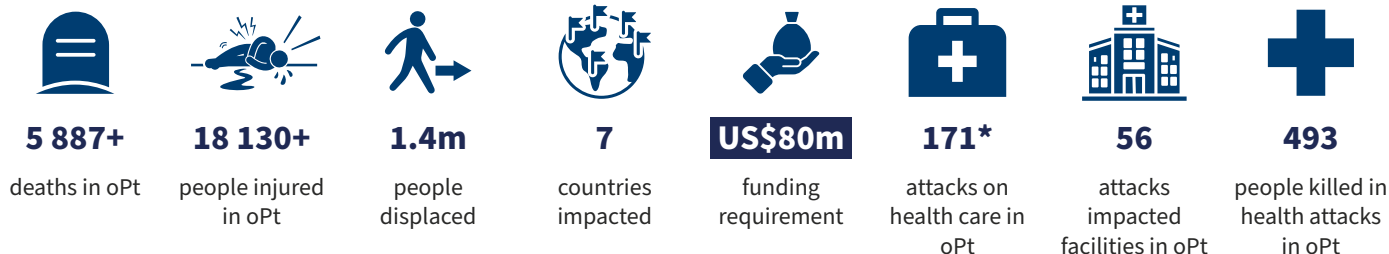
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World Health Organization

Key figures (as of 24 October 2023)



Highlightsⁱ

- The recent escalation of hostilities in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) is taking a heavy toll on civilians. Thousands have been killed or injured, and over 1.4 million people have been displaced. There have been 171 attacks on health care in oPt leading to 493 deaths and 387 injuries, with 56 attacks impacting health facilities and 130 impacting health personnel, as of 24 October 2023. The health system is on the verge of collapse and dwindling access to health services, clean water, food and fuel on top of an already weakened healthcare system risks further loss of civilian life. Massive displacement to shelters with inadequate resources will result in disease outbreaks. The escalation of hostilities has already spread to the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Lebanon Israel border and Syrian Arab Republic, with a risk of spilling over to other countries in the region, including Jordan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Iraq.
- WHO urgently needs an estimated US\$80 million to respond to the humanitarian needs in oPt, particularly in Gaza, and to undertake contingency planning for Egypt, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan through the end of 2023. WHO will scale-up trauma and emergency care services, maintain access to essential health services and treatment of chronic conditions, establish disease surveillance and outbreak control measures (especially in displacement sites), and ensure coordination including through the work of the Health Cluster.

Humanitarian situation and health needs in oPtⁱⁱ

In the early hours of 7 October 2023, Hamas and other armed Palestinian groups launched an attack on Israel, especially effecting the Israeli border towns around the Gaza Strip. As of 26 October, more than 1 400 fatalities and 5 431 injuries have been reported according to Israeli official sources. It is further estimated that 224 people are currently being held hostage in Gaza. WHO is gravely concerned by the humanitarian and health situation facing the people being held hostage, including health workers and children. WHO calls for the immediate release of all the hostages, along with urgent access to each of them and delivery of medical care.

By mid-morning on 7 October 2023, Israel launched strikes into the Gaza Strip. The next day, Israel's Security Cabinet approved a declaration of war alert. The oPt - particularly the Gaza Strip, which was already experiencing the consequences of a 16-year

Israeli blockade - is currently facing a humanitarian crisis and the escalation of hostilities has resulted in heavy loss of life and injuries (5 887 fatalities, 18 130 people injured in oPt as of 24 October 2023). WHO's country office in the oPt has documented 171 attacks on health care.ⁱⁱⁱ

In the Gaza Strip, women, children, the elderly, and the sick are bearing the brunt of the crisis. The health system in the Gaza Strip, including emergency medical services, was already under pressure, and is now on the verge of collapse. Thousands of patients need access to emergency and trauma care, and a further 350 000 are suffering with chronic conditions like diabetes, kidney failure, cancer and heart disease. 50 000 women are currently pregnant, with an estimated 5 500 giving birth each month.

Since the escalation of the hostilities, the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) has reached over 1.4 million (>60% of Gaza's population), with 590 000 IDPs staying in UNRWA-designated emergency shelters (DES) in increasingly dire conditions. Fuel reserves in hospitals are critically low. 67% of primary care clinics and 35% of hospitals are non-functional. Essential medical equipment including life support machines are dependent on hospital electricity generators. UNRWA's DES are overcrowded, forcing many displaced people to sleep outdoors. There is an imminent risk of communicable disease outbreaks. Essential resources like water, food, and medicine are in critically short supply, leading to rising frustration and tensions among displaced populations. There are increasing risks of dehydration, hunger, water-borne diseases, and skin infections. There is also a risk of shutdown of electricity-dependent basic services, which would further aggravate the already dire situation.



Palestinian child injured in an Israeli rocket attack and rushed in to the hospital in Gaza strip." Photo credit: WHO.

Potential regional impact

The current situation has the potential to escalate further, with the risk of a multi-front conflict. There has already been an exchange of hostilities in southern Lebanon and Syrian Arab Republic, with the possibility of violence spreading to other countries in the region. Given the potentially severe humanitarian and health impacts, readiness to respond to health needs including pre-positioning of emergency medical supplies and coordination among partners are urgently needed.

Egypt:

The direct consequences of the ongoing conflict include the potential influx of Palestinians with emergency health requirements to Egypt through the Rafah crossing. Such a scenario will require direct interventions for trauma and surgical care, as well as essential medical care for communicable and non-communicable diseases. Given the current firm stance of the Egyptian government, refugee flows into northern Sinai remain highly unlikely, but cannot be fully discounted. Egypt will also host the main operational hub for cross-border humanitarian operations into Gaza.

Lebanon:

The risk of a full-scale confrontation between Hezbollah and Israel is growing with an increasing number of clashes reported at the Israel-Lebanon border, impacting both southern Lebanon and northern Israel. In the event of a scale-up of hostilities, an increase in trauma-related deaths and injuries must be anticipated, as must the potential displacement of civilians, damage to infrastructure, disruption of essential services and an overall reduction in access to basic services, including health. The impact on healthcare would be significant, as the health system is already severely weakened following years of economic decline and repeated crises. In fact, senior Lebanese health officials have warned that the health system would not be able to respond effectively to another emergency, such as a conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, without support from the international community.

Syrian Arab Republic:

In a context of over 12 years of armed conflict, which has exhausted the health system, a direct confrontation in Syrian Arab Republic would have dire consequences. Further escalation could lead to a high number of wounded and further disruption of the health system and basic infrastructure, especially in Government of Syrian Arab Republic areas.

Jordan, Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran:

The escalation of hostilities in oPt and Israel carries the risk of direct or indirect consequences including violent protests, civilian casualties, injuries, damage to health facilities, and displacement in Jordan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq. The Jordanian government has confirmed that they cannot accept refugees, but such a contingency cannot be fully discounted.



Civilian volunteers search the rubble of a building in the southern Gaza Strip, © WHO (11/10/23)

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WHO response priorities

WHO is making every effort possible to mitigate the impact of the conflict on the health of affected people and on health systems. WHO has already released US\$ 14.56 million from its Contingency Fund for Emergencies (CFE) to allow for an immediate scale-up of assistance and through this address acute needs in oPt and readiness in countries with potential spill overs. WHO has delivered 26 metric tonnes of emergency health supplies to the Egyptian Red Cross, and an additional 40 metric tonnes are slated to arrive in Egypt over the next few days.

Through joined up advocacy efforts by the UN and other partners, five WHO trucks with lifesaving medical supplies were part of the first convoys of trucks that crossed over the Rafah crossing into Gaza on 21 and 22 October. More emergency health supplies are being handed over to WHO's partner, the Egyptian Red Cross, and ready to cross into Gaza.

WHO's response priorities for the next three months include:

- **Life-saving trauma and emergency care:** provision of immediate lifesaving pre-hospital and hospital-based trauma and emergency medical services to injured and critically ill; ensuring the continued availability of trauma kits and essential lifesaving medical supplies; deployment of Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) as needed; the establishment of trauma stabilization points and potential transfer of injured, critically ill people to points of care.
- **Ensuring continuity of integrated essential health services:** supporting existing healthcare facilities with medicines, medical supplies, and equipment to sustain the provision of uninterrupted essential health and nutrition services, including primary healthcare; prepositioning critical lifesaving supplies in other impacted countries; deployment of EMTs.
- **Maintaining and reinforcing disease surveillance and outbreak control measures (especially in displacement areas):** establishing/strengthening robust disease surveillance systems, such as early warning alert and response system (EWARS), to monitor and detect potential outbreaks, especially in overcrowded displacement sites and areas; implementing preventive measures and scaling up active case detection and management.
- **Health cluster coordination:** coordinating the delivery of humanitarian health response across health cluster partners to ensure the effective use of resources, adherence to the principle of leaving no one behind and to avoid duplication of activities; undertaking joint strategy, planning and advocacy on behalf of health partners.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in healthcare facilities and collective centers: monitoring water quality; working with WASH partners to maintain water supply and delivery systems in health facilities and collective centers; promoting proper hygiene practices to prevent waterborne diseases.

- **Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for victims and survivors of violence and health workers:** establishing MHPSS services in healthcare facilities, collective centers, and camps; establishing/strengthening community-based support networks for ongoing psychosocial support.
- **Preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PRSEAH):** implementing measures to prevent and respond to PRSEAH, ensuring the safety and well-being of affected individuals.
- **Duty of care to staff:** ensuring staff safety and well-being of all national and international WHO staff in all impacted countries and territories.
- **Advocacy and health diplomacy:** monitoring, documenting, and reporting attacks on healthcare facilities and personnel; engaging in advocacy to raise awareness of the health consequences of the conflict and the need for humanitarian assistance; leveraging health diplomacy to engage with relevant parties and advocate for the protection of patients and healthcare and adherence to international humanitarian law.



Boxes of humanitarian aid await shipment to the Gaza Strip, © WHO (21/10/23)

WHO's funding requirements (October 2023 - January 2024):

By country / territory	Requirement (US \$)
occupied Palestinian territory	50 000 000
Lebanon	10 000 000
Egypt	8 000 000
Syrian Arab Republic	5 000 000
Jordan	2 000 000
Regional response coordination and operational surge support	5 000 000
Total funding requirement	80 000 000

By budget line	Requirement (US \$)	%
Life-saving trauma and emergency care	30 000 000	38%
Ensuring the continuity of essential health services	32 000 000	40%
Disease surveillance and outbreak control measures	5 000 000	6%
Health cluster leadership and coordination	2 000 000	3%
WASH in health facilities and collective centers	8 000 000	10%
Mental health and psychosocial support	2 000 000	3%
Preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment	1 000 000	1%
Total funding requirement	80 000 000	100%



Lifesaving WHO health supplies land in Egypt for people-in-need in Gaza. Photo credit: WHO

- i Sources: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, Doctors Without Borders, Palestinian Health Ministry, Kuwaiti Hospital, al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, Palestine Red Crescent Society, Israeli Ministry of Health.
- ii United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, Doctors Without Borders, Palestinian Health Ministry, Kuwaiti Hospital, al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, Palestine Red Crescent Society, Israeli Ministry of Health.
- iii Since 07 October 2023 – 171 attacks have led to 493 deaths and 387 injuries

*The SSA platform accessed on 25 Oct. The latest numbers are available here: [WHO Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care \(SSA\)](https://ssa.who.int/)

More Information:

Dr Richard Brennan

Regional Emergency Director

WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region

brennanr@who.int

Ms Mira Ihalainen

Director, Communications, Resource Mobilization & Partnerships

WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region

ihalainenm@who.int

Ms Purvi Paliwal

External Relations

WHO/HQ

paliwalp@who.int



**World Health
Organization**

World Health Organization
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

WHO in Emergencies:
www.who.int/emergencies/en