

Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs)

Gaza

January - April 2026



occupied Palestinian territory



Context

Since October 2023, Gaza's health system has endured severe and sustained strain. By March 2026, the Ministry of Health reported over 72,000 deaths and 172,000 injuries¹. A little over half of all hospitals (19/36) and primary health care facilities (114/212) are only partially functional, while all 36 hospitals and 176 health facilities have sustained damage². Critical shortages of essential medicines and medical supplies continue to hinder health service delivery. According to the Ministry of Health (MoH), 44% of essential medicines are at zero stock, leaving both acute and chronic patients without adequate care and placing health facilities at risk of service interruption.

The scale of unmet need remains staggering. Over one million people require mental health support, while thousands more depend on life-sustaining services including dialysis, cancer care, and physical rehabilitation, with the demand far exceeding health system capacity. Gaza's health system remains fragile and dependent on sustained national and international surge support.

Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Support

Last year, 26 EMT partners supported the deployment of 57 EMTs, including two national teams. The WHO-led EMT Coordination Cell coordinated 726 international personnel into Gaza and 724 out. In 2026, 281 international EMT personnel entered and 265 exited Gaza.

As of 15 April 2026, 23 EMT partners continue to support the emergency response, with 36 active EMTs comprising 72 international and 310 national personnel. Of current deployments, 67% are Specialized Care Teams (SCTs) embedded within Ministry of Health hospitals, while a smaller number of stand-alone EMTs provide Type 2 field hospital and Type 1 fixed and mobile outpatient and primary healthcare services.

While trauma injuries remain significant, demand has increasingly shifted toward primary healthcare and complex case management, requiring specialized teams in oncology, cardiology, neurology, and limb reconstructive surgery.

Services Provided by EMTs since Jan 2024 – March 2026



4 288 220
General medical consultations



65 056
Emergency surgeries



272 483
Critical trauma patients treated



404 449
Patients treated for noncommunicable diseases



31 924
Referrals



8646
Patients treated for severe acute malnutrition



20 812
Births supported

1) Data source: Ministry of Health, occupied Palestinian territory. Health Cluster Health situation dashboard, 2026. Available from: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoia0DAxNTYzMDYtMjQ3YS00OTMzLTkxMWQ0OTU1NWWEwMzE5NTMwIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQ0NGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCIslmMiOj9>

2) World Health Organization. Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS): Gaza Strip, March 2026. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/herams-opt-gaza-infographics-2026-03>

National Emergency Medical Teams

As outlined in the EMT 2030 strategy, national EMTs are a critical component of emergency preparedness and building healthcare systems resilience. They provide rapid response and surge capacities, ensuring swift, locally adapted approaches to emergencies, and enhance the ability to manage crises with existing resources. Recognizing the importance of localized responses, prior to the October 2023 conflict, the Ministry of Health with support from the WHO established two National EMTs earlier in the year as part of emergency preparedness planning.

Following the conflict, the national EMT resumed operations in September 2024, with support from local authorities, WHO, and MAP-UK. Prioritising quality of care and self-sufficiency as core principles, the teams resumed their contribution to Gaza's escalating health needs. Their work proved instrumental in the resumption of services at Shifa Medical Complex – once Gaza's largest tertiary hospital, which had suffered extensive damage in April 2024. Focused on restoring emergency services, the national EMT provides acute trauma stabilisation, surgery, emergency care for both communicable and non-communicable diseases, and referrals for critical cases.

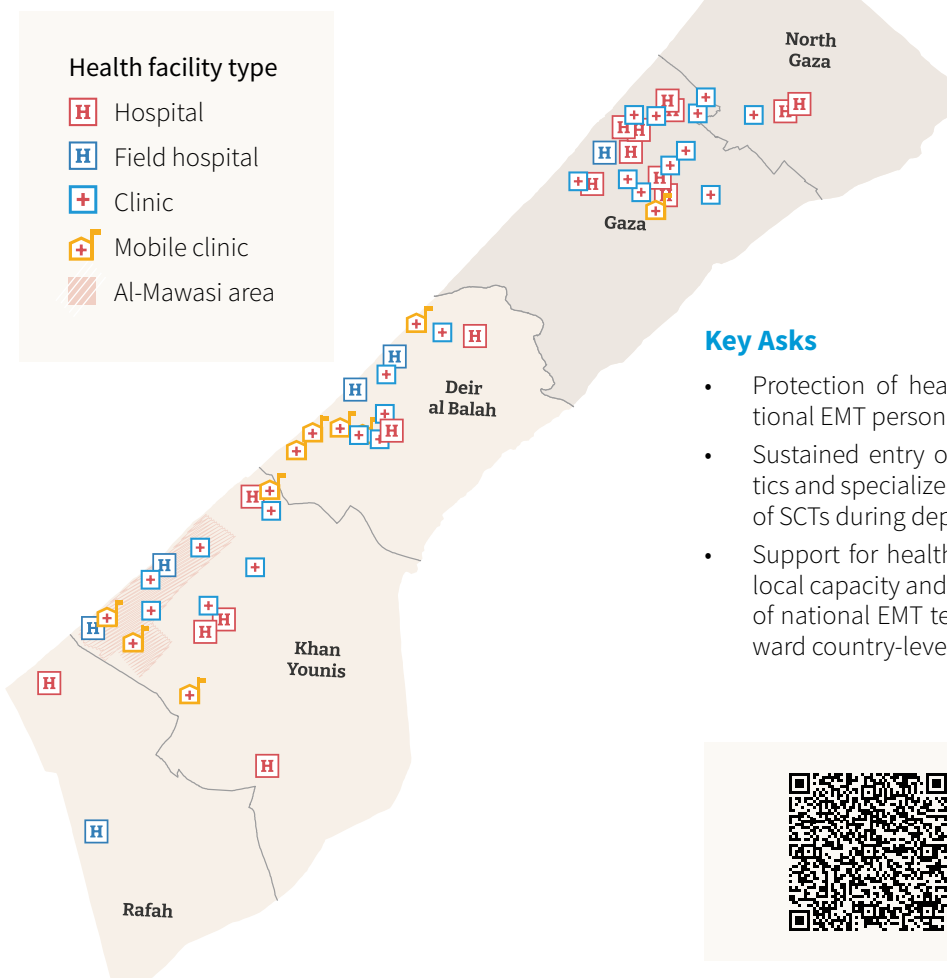
Building on this foundation, the second National EMT was relaunched in February 2025 as an SCT, with support from local health authorities, WHO, and NORWAC, focusing on orthopaedic surgery and physical rehabilitation. Initially established at the European Gaza Hospital (EGH), the team subsequently relocated to provide surge capacity at Al Amal Hospital and Nasser Medical Complex, before consolidating operations at Shifa Medical Complex.

Looking Ahead

WHO is working with partners to expand the EMT response through a revitalised strategy aligned with early recovery priorities and MoH needs, particularly in support of restoring key health services in Gaza. This includes a deliberate shift toward strengthening national EMTs and building the capacity required to sustain the initiative as part of wider operational readiness and preparedness efforts.

Through embedded technical expertise and structured mentorship, EMTs are contributing to medium and long-term health workforce resilience, ensuring continuity of care for chronic conditions and strengthening the system's capacity to respond to future emergencies. Given this, beyond their immediate role as emergency responders, EMTs are also partners in rebuilding and sustaining Gaza's health system.

2026 EMT-covered Health Facilities



Key Asks

- Protection of healthcare, including national and international EMT personnel.
- Sustained entry of medical supplies, particularly diagnostics and specialized equipment, to support the effectiveness of SCTs during deployments.
- Support for health system recovery to restore and rebuild local capacity and services, including through the transition of national EMT teams from acute emergency response toward country-level preparedness and readiness.



WHO Emergency Medical Teams Public Dashboard: [click here](#)