



Muhammad, 11 years, and Reham, 9 years, stand in front of a food distribution center in Rafah, south of the Gaza Strip.

Reporting Period: 7 to 20 March 2024

UNICEF in the State of Palestine

Escalation Humanitarian Situation Report No. 21



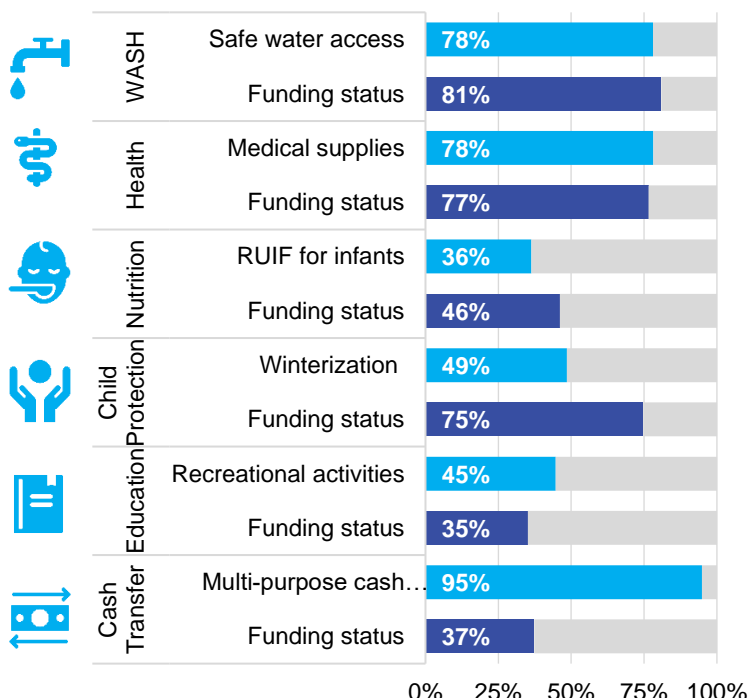
Highlights

- The entire population of 2.23 million people in the Gaza Strip is facing high levels of acute food insecurity, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report, and famine is imminent as half of the population – 1.1 million people – experience catastrophic food insecurity.
- Only 3 litres of water are available per person per day (median) across 75 shelter sites, as analysed by the WASH Cluster in a recent assessment. It found also that 33 per cent of all sites had water sources that were unsafe for drinking, and only 4 per cent of shelter sites have water treatment systems at the water source.
- Even minimal health care is at risk, as hospitals across the Gaza Strip struggle to maintain operations and to save lives, as stated by the World Health Organization (WHO). Patients and medical personnel also lack food and water.
- UNICEF brought fifty incubators for newborns into the Gaza Strip which were installed at three specialized hospitals. This reduces infection risks, as previously up to four newborns had to be accommodated in a single incubator.
- UNICEF has moved 48 trucks into the Gaza Strip in the past two weeks with critical emergency supplies such as water pipes, various vaccines, syringes, acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) periphery kits for 6,900 patients, obstetric surgical kits to cover 2,500 deliveries, 11,300 synthetic blankets, 750 family tents, 7,800 sleeping mats, and 1,500 dignity kits.
- In the West Bank, UNICEF continued to provide essential child protection and response services to 1,120 individuals, of whom 580 were children and 540 caregivers, including mental health and psychosocial support services.

Situation in Numbers

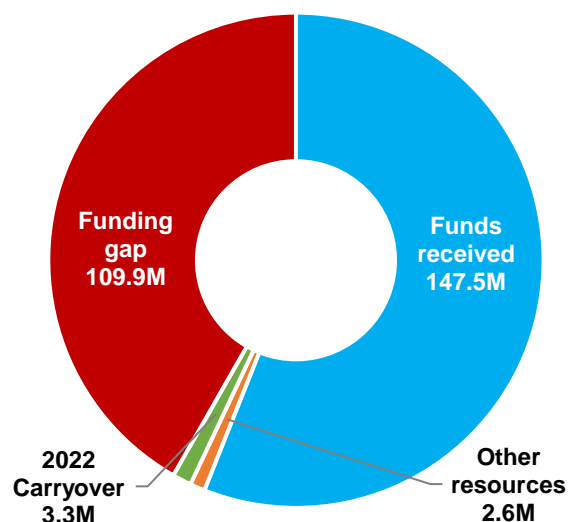
- 3.1 Million** people in need nationally (OCHA Flash Appeal, Nov 2023)
- 1 Million** Children affected in the Gaza Strip (PCBS, 2023 population projections)
- Estimated 1.7 Million** Internally displaced persons (UNRWA, 18 March 2024)
- 81% of households** In Gaza lack access to sufficient clean water (UNICEF, OCHA Flash Update, 6 March)
- 95% of population** Facing high acute food insecurity in Gaza (IPC Phase 3 or worse, March 2024)

UNICEF's Response and Funding Status



UNICEF Immediate Needs US\$ 263.3 million

Funding Status (in US\$)



UNICEF funding status is based on the March 2024 revision of the HAC.

Funding does not include the loans received from within UNICEF. See Annex A for additional explanations. For interventions such as water and cash the graph does not reflect the need to reach affected people through multiple rounds of intervention.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

The revised Inter-Agency Flash Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territories was issued on 6 November covering October to December 2023, and was thereafter extended until the end of March 2024. The appeal identifies a financial requirement of approximately US\$ 1.2 billion to meet critical needs for 2.7 million people, 2.2 million population in the Gaza Strip and 500,000 people in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. UNICEF issued an updated Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal for October 2023 until the end of March 2024 aligned with the interagency humanitarian planning processes. The UNICEF funding requirement was adjusted, as laid out in the 2024 HAC appeal, in line with increasing needs to US\$ 263.3 million. This revision reflects strategic shifts towards scaling up and sustaining humanitarian programming in targeted shelters and communities, as well as increased procurement of supplies required regularly and high associated freight costs. To date, the revised HAC has a US\$ 109.9 million (42 per cent) funding gap.

UNICEF would like to sincerely thank partners for their contributions, including the governments of Australia, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom as well as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), EU Humanitarian Aid and the World Bank. UNICEF thanks the UNICEF National Committees of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States. UNICEF would also like to thank the UNICEF private sector fundraising offices of Chile, Croatia, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Gulf Area Office, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Thailand, and Uzbekistan, which have supported the response to the escalation of hostilities. Last but not least, UNICEF benefited from Global Humanitarian Thematic Funding, which enables UNICEF to respond flexibly to the acute needs of the most vulnerable children and their families in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. UNICEF has also received US\$ 8.75 million from the internal Emergency Programme Fund and exceptionally US\$ 10 million of an internal capital loan both of which will need to be replenished – these loans are not reflected in funds received.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The Famine Review Committee (FRC)¹ of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)² found that famine is now projected and imminent in the North Gaza and Gaza Governorates. Both governorates are classified, according to the most likely scenario, in IPC Phase 5 (Famine) with reasonable evidence, with 70 per cent (around 210,000 people) of the population being situated in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe). The projection shows famine will become manifest from mid-March 2024 to May 2024. The famine threshold for acute food insecurity has been far exceeded already, and the increasing trend in malnutrition data indicates that it is highly likely that the famine threshold for acute malnutrition has also been exceeded. The FRC expects the upward trend in non-trauma mortality to accelerate and that all famine thresholds are to be passed soon. The southern governorates of Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis, and Rafah are classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). In a worst-case scenario, these governorates face a risk of Famine through July 2024. For the combined southern and middle governorates the FRC concludes that there is a risk of famine between mid-March and mid-July in a reasonable worst-case scenario.³

A rapid assessment⁴ carried out among displaced women in the Rafah Governorate, southern Gaza Strip, by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) found that 91 per cent of the surveyed women had their homes destroyed or damaged; 94 per cent do not have privacy and do not feel safe in their respective places of displacement; 95 per cent of surveyed women do not have enough money to meet the basic needs for themselves and their families (e.g., food, water, hygiene supplies, blankets); and 91 per cent of surveyed women are not able to meet their personal and menstrual hygiene needs.

As of 20 March, at least 31,923 Palestinians were reported killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of hostilities. Up to 70 per cent are reported to be women (8,700) and children (13,600) reported by the Palestinian Ministry of Health. More than 74,096 Palestinians were reported injured, including at least 11,874 children (partially disaggregated data as of 18 March 2024). UNRWA reports that, as of 18 March, 168 UNRWA staff had been killed, while WHO, UNDP and UNOPS report each one staff member killed respectively. As of 18 March, there have been 349 incidents impacting 160 UNRWA installations, some of which have sustained direct hits. UNRWA reports as of 18 March, that at least 408 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been killed in their facilities, with at least a further 1,406 injured due to the hostilities

¹ The committee was activated on 1 March 2024 by the Global Support Unit of the IPC in consideration of the extreme severity of the evidence that was available. For information on the analysis and the classification can be found on the IPC famine fact sheet, see https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Factsheet.pdf.

² A multi-partner initiative for improving food security and nutrition analysis.

³ The findings are available at <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/alerts-archive/issue-97/en/>.

⁴ "The Impact of the War on Women in the Gaza Strip", by UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP), with data collection being carried out between the end of December 2023 and the end of January 2024.

since 7 October. Close to 1.7 million IDPs are sheltering at emergency shelters, which are UNRWA shelters or public shelters, at informal sites, or in the vicinity of UNRWA shelters and distribution sites and within host communities.

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, OCHA reports that since 7 October, at least 422 Palestinians have been killed.⁵ At least 115 Palestinian children and one Israeli child were reported killed in conflict-related violence in the same time period, with more than half of incidents in the Jenin, Nablus, and Tulkarem governorates of the northern West Bank, and more than one quarter of incidents in the Ramallah and Jerusalem governorates. Militarized law enforcement operations inside Palestinian communities and refugee camps involving high use of live ammunition, explosive weapons, and aerial strikes, as well as settler violence and movement restrictions, continue to put Palestinian children at higher risk of violence, grave violations, and displacement, and impact their access to services. According to OCHA, since 7 October, at least 2900 Palestinians including more than 1,300 children have been displaced, mainly in Area C and East Jerusalem, due to settler violence and access restrictions, home demolitions, and destruction of residences during military law enforcement operations.

Israeli sources report that approximately 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed, mostly in the attacks of 7 October, and more than 7,500 people are reported injured. More than 35 children have been reported killed. Around 250 people, including at least 36 children were abducted from Israel into the Gaza Strip, of whom 34 have been released, with very limited information available on the children remaining in captivity.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

In response to urgent WASH humanitarian needs, through the UN mechanism⁶, UNICEF provided 132,314 litres of fuel during the reporting period, which allowed the public and private water wells and desalination plants to produce clean water, benefitting more than 1,601,178 people, including over 816,000 children with lifesaving water for drinking and domestic needs in Deir Al Balah, Khan Younis, Rafah, Middle Area and North Gaza (Jabalia).

In addition, UNICEF brought more than 5.9 km of water pipes (uPVC) with varying sizes from 25mm to 630mm to support repair and maintenance of the water supply network and the wastewater systems.

In addition, UNICEF distributed 6,169 packs of child diapers (each with five diapers); 3,644 family hygiene kits; 7,700 10L buckets; and 1,404 packs of sanitary pads. These items benefitted a total of 28,033 people including children, women and adolescent girls in Rafah, Khan Younis and Deir Al Balah.

Furthermore, in response to the dire sanitation services for IDPs in overcrowded shelters, UNICEF, through the UN mechanism, provided fuel to operate one wastewater treatment plant in Rafah, enabling wastewater treatment and safe disposal of sewage, benefitting over 275,000 people, including 140,250 children in Rafah.



To address solid waste and environmental hygiene needs in the overcrowded shelters, UNICEF continued to support cleaning services at 22 non-UNRWA shelters in Rafah and Deir Al Balah, benefitting over 90,000 people, including 46,000 children. UNICEF continued the Incentive Based Programme where 700 workers are engaged in solid waste management, benefitting over 30,000 people, including 16,000 children. In partnership with the WASH Cluster, UNICEF is scaling up WASH service delivery in IDP hosting communities through an integrated package of WASH services.

The WASH Cluster, with 47 active partners including 35 in the Gaza Strip and 24 in the West Bank, has led the coordination of water, sanitation, and hygiene efforts. The WASH Cluster, through partners, completed the second round of rapid WASH assessments at IDP sites in Rafah, covering 75 locations, conducted by WASH partners.

⁵ Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel, Flash Update #143, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-143>

⁶ Through a signed agreement with UNRWA, UNICEF receives fuel to support water service providers in the operation of water and wastewater systems. UNICEF refunds UNRWA for the fuel. This is a UN wide mechanism agreed upon with all parties.

Health

To respond to the acute shortage of incubators in the Gaza Strip due to conflict loss and damage, UNICEF delivered fifty incubators in the Gaza Strip which were distributed and installed in the Emirati (23), Al Aqsa (19) and Gaza European (eight) hospitals. Through this essential support in hospitals small and sick newborn children received life-saving support. This support immediately eased the congestion in these specialised hospitals that previously accommodated up to four newborns in a single incubator, cutting down on potential nosocomial infections.

A six-month vaccine replenishment shipment successfully crossed into the Gaza Strip to cover the entire target population. The antigens replenished, with their respective delivery devices, include hepatitis B (4,490 10-dose vials) and combination vaccines (13,450 10-dose vials of DTP-HepB-Hib).

UNICEF participates in the Health Cluster including through technical working groups for Sexual Reproductive Health and Rehabilitation.

Nutrition

Following the recent famine review of the IPC analysis, published on 18 March 2024, the second round of nutrition vulnerability assessment has been initiated to gauge the current nutrition situation using the recently collected data. Partners have continued mid- and upper-arm circumference (MUAC) screenings targeting children aged 6 to 59 months in shelters and healthcare facilities, conducted alongside vaccination campaigns to detect acutely malnourished cases. Children identified with Acute Malnutrition are referred for treatment, following simplified community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) treatment protocols. From mid-January to mid-March 2024, 23,611 children aged 6-59 months underwent MUAC screening, with 1,627 children with acute malnutrition identified (1,371 with Moderate Acute Malnutrition and 310 with Severe Acute Malnutrition). These children are currently receiving treatment according to the simplified protocols.

The analysis of the nutrition data collected through the cash post-distribution monitoring (PDM) shows a clear further worsening of the dietary diversity for pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBW), as more respondents did not select any of the food types (increase from 17 per cent to 26 per cent). Not having selected any options does not necessarily imply that the PBW did not have any meals, but the further worsening of this indicator is extremely worrying. Also, for children aged 6-23 months, the already severely compromised dietary diversity shows signs of a further worsening – as the number of respondents not selecting any food type increased (from 20 per cent to 24 per cent) and about two in three children in this age group consumed only one food type or potentially even none.

UNICEF continued to lead and coordinate the Nutrition Cluster, which is active with 49 partners and continues its efforts in capacitating nutrition cluster partners in the Gaza Strip on early identification and treatment of acutely malnourished cases through using simplified approaches. In the reporting period, 11 staff from the Ministry of Health (MOH) were trained, making the number of health workers trained to date 57. The cluster is also currently updating the service delivery mapping at the Primary Health Care centres (PHC) level and shelters. Based on the received partners' report, five out of 16 functioning PHCs, are providing screening and treatment of wasting services, also the nutrition services are provided in 24 out of 138 shelters so far.

Child Protection

In the Gaza Strip, UNICEF continues to provide life-saving winterization items to children, including to Rafah, Khan Younis, and Deir Al-Balah. Since 7 October, in collaboration with 12 implementing partners, UNICEF has distributed over 160,205 clothing items for children aged newborn to 17 years old.

UNICEF has provided in-person PSS services to 130,638 individuals, of whom 98,228 are children despite the challenges of delivering recreational kits to the Gaza Strip and the following implementation delay. Among them, 66,968 children (including 34,671 girls and 989 children with disabilities) as well as 14,222 caregivers, have received structured in-person PSS services. Additionally, UNICEF has organized specialized psychosocial sessions for 350 children who either sustained injuries or have existing disabilities. These sessions aim to assess and cater to their specific needs within the intervention framework.

UNICEF, with partners, organized face-to-face sessions on explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), reaching a total of 25,272 individuals in shelters and vulnerable communities. Among these participants were 16,210 children and 9,062 caregivers.

In response to the needs of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), UNICEF has been involved in providing appropriate services. A total of 11 unaccompanied children are currently in the care of a UNICEF partner in the Rafah

Governorate, receiving counselling, basic services, along with family tracing support. In total, since 7 October 2023, eighteen children have been placed in alternative care with UNICEF's partner including seven who were unified with their families. In addition, three unaccompanied infants were identified in and outside hospitals and are in the process of being verified for possible temporary placement at the safe care home operated by a UNICEF partner, upon hospital discharge and other relevant verifications. A total of 210 separated children in informal kinship care arrangements are regularly monitored by a UN agency, including 175 children identified directly by UNRWA and 35 identified by UNICEF with partners. Activities to prevent and respond to family separation have been designed and will be included in the "Recreational Programme" run through education programs. The implementation of the pilot program providing informal kinship care to UASC is still under review.

In the West Bank, UNICEF continued to provide essential child protection and response services including psychosocial first aid (PFA), mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), awareness sessions and legal services to 1,125 people including 582 children and 543 caregivers. UNICEF also continued its effort to support child protection services and support vulnerable families in hotspot areas. Two supervision sessions for 13 child protection counsellors and family and juvenile police officers were concluded to enhance their capacity to effectively respond to children's needs. In addition, positive parenting sessions continued for 195 children through 14 sessions and 41 mothers through three sessions in hotspot areas, providing them with essential guidance and tools to foster healthy family dynamics and promote positive child-rearing practices.

Individual PSS sessions were facilitated at Dar al Amal in Ramallah, for 11 children, offering personalized care and attention to address their emotional and psychological well-being. Additionally, UNICEF continued its support to the ongoing Child Protection Diploma program, attended by 23 participants in two sessions. Due to UNICEF's financial and technical support, child protection counsellors were able to reach 12 child victims and at risk in Ramallah, Qaliqlya and Nablus.

In the second two weeks of February, the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CPAoR) partners reached 32,441 people (19,898 children and 12,543 caregivers) in the Gaza Strip and West Bank with specialized child protection services, including MHPSS, winter clothes, Case Management and awareness raising on Explosive Ordinance Risk Education and Child Rights. See [here](#) for data on the response.

Education

In the Gaza Strip, UNICEF with partners continued to support the well-being of children through the provision of recreational activities. Partners reported reaching 1,931 children (1,059 girls; 872 boys; and seven children with disabilities). Cumulatively, 69,289 children (36,777 girls, including 1,270 children with disabilities) have been reached with recreational activities since the escalation of hostilities on 7 October 2023. Security risks, limited supplies and space limitations remain challenges to supporting the integration of informal learning, nonetheless multiple partners are preparing to initiate learning activities where and when possible. UNICEF is leading the efforts with all partners and stakeholders to model functional safe learning spaces to bring children back to safe learning communities based on different implementation phases for any learning interventions. 100 adolescent girls have been provided with dignity kits to support them with menstrual hygiene management.

Since October 2023, 17 partners of the Education Cluster have reached more than 202,469 students and teachers with psychosocial support, emergency learning, recreational supplies and activities, and awareness sessions in the Deir Al Balah, Khan Younis, and Rafah governorates. Most of the cluster responses are delivered by local partners. Some recreational and psychosocial support activities in Gaza governorate started through group of youth volunteers under remote supervision by education partners. Essential "Education in Emergencies" stationery kits have been pre-positioned in vulnerable districts to benefit 19,840 children to reduce the cost of schooling for these children and mitigate their risk of dropping out of school.

Social Protection

Since the onset of the escalation on 7 October 2023, UNICEF has provided cash assistance to 555,311 people (83,890 families, including 295,753 children, 18,125 people with disabilities, and 43,644 female-headed households). Of those, 388,374 people (56,085 families) were assisted with multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA). This represents 65 per cent of all transactions provided in the Gaza Strip. In recognition of a continuous need, UNICEF started to provide the second round of MPCA and already reached 180,194 people (21,278 households) – 27 per cent were assisted two times. The plan includes to cover all recipients with three rounds of payments.

Responding to the growing food insecurity, UNICEF has been providing nutrition top up cash payments since December 2023, reaching cumulatively 28,840 pregnant and breastfeeding women, and disability top up cash payments to 5,079 families with children with disabilities. These top ups are estimated to benefit a total of 211,499 people.

During the past two weeks, an additional 10,244 individuals (comprising 2,236 households) have received cash assistance. In specific, 7,246 individuals (distributed across 1,726 families) were provided with MPCA, while 2,998 individuals (across 510 families) received support as 'protection cases', and incentives for solid waste management in 12 shelters.

Cash delivery has been accompanied by recurring post-distribution monitoring (PDM) through RapidPro with over 8,000 PDM survey responses to date, shedding light on the continued usefulness of unrestricted cash transfers. According to the latest data collection round (14-21 February), a large majority of respondents – 73 per cent – responded “partially” or “yes” to the question: “Do you find the goods you need on the market?”. This is in line with previous data collection rounds, as there has not been a significant increase in negative responses.

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) / Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

UNICEF is continuing its efforts to ensure that communities have direct, safe and confidential channels for any complaint or feedback they may have regarding UNICEF and partners' interventions in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Since 7 October, 23,091 pieces of feedback with complaints received through the UNICEF Community Feedback Mechanism channels: the Interagency Hotline, the PSEA network hotline and the UNICEF e-mail. During the reporting period, 4,029 pieces of feedback and complaints were received. Communication and feedback included requests for cash assistance, issues related to cash redemption, and requests for specific products. Complaints were referred to the relevant channels to be resolved and the feedback related to the Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programme is analysed by the team, and followed up on, to identify and resolve challenges, as well as to inform the direction of the cash programming.

Through the PSEA network, UNICEF continues to strengthen inter-agency feedback channels, and advocates for the use of the hotline (164), which receives requests and complaints, and provides MHPSS and referrals. During the reporting period, the hotline documented overall 1,427 cases⁷ (17 girls, 68 boys, 673 women, and 579 men). Among the overall cases, there are 694 documented cases where MHPSS was received through the PSEA Network hotline (243 females and 451 males), with 353 cases referred to inter-agency services. Most of the overall cases received through the hotline are from the Gaza Strip, specifically from Rafah and the southern governorate areas, with some from Gaza City, depending on a telecommunication connection. Some of the children who received MHPSS mentioned symptoms of increased irritation, less appetite, constant panic and fear, and stomach-ache. In many calls it was described that there is not enough food available in school shelters, as well as the scarcity of drinking water and of infants' milk. Over 1,060 calls, from across the Gaza Strip, either mentioned poor access to food or starvation since 7 October 2023. The hotline received an average of ten calls per day from the north of the Gaza Strip from 6 to 10 March on hunger and starvation, while the hotline referred 231 urgent cases to WFP during the reporting period.

Through the PSEA Network Sanad platform, the network partners published Risk Communication materials in Arabic (posters, no-excuse cards, hotline info cards) to raise community awareness and promote safeguarding practices. Since the platform's launch on Facebook and Instagram in late December 2023, the network has published 143 stories, 22 reels/videos, and 10 informative posts. Through these Meta platforms UNICEF is consistently reaching an average audience of 1.4 million people, 98 per cent of whom reside in the Palestinian territories. While the audience reach figures in the Gaza Strip covers an estimated audience of 200,000 people according to Social Media data reports. As of 18 March, the total number of followers on Instagram and Facebook has increased by 4,727 audience members. According to social media audience reports, around 70 per cent of Sanad followers are women, and 30 per cent are men.

A UNICEF partner who is providing PSS services in the Gaza Strip continues to deliver safeguarding sessions that reached 109,328 IDPs with safeguarding awareness services and a copy each of the Sanad brochure. Another UNICEF partner in the Gaza Strip launched a new project on supporting community-led initiatives during crisis, partnering with local civil society organisations, by utilizing existing and emerging volunteer community groups to lead and run community-led initiatives that respond to the immediate needs within the community. This includes supporting and developing a structure to raise safeguarding concerns. This will provide people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse and any harm caused by personnel who provide humanitarian aid.

⁷ This includes individuals who reached the hotline as well as the number of cases of recurring MHPSS provision.

Support from Egypt Coordination Cell

Cumulatively, 594 trucks containing UNICEF supplies have crossed into the Gaza Strip from Egypt since 21 October. During the reporting period, a total of 48 trucks with critical emergency supplies have crossed. Key supply items delivered include:

- Pipes for water and sanitation system repairs.
- Vaccines (HepB pediatric, DTP, DTP-HepB-Hib) and syringes (A-D,0.5ml) for immunization activities.
- Acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) periphery kits for the treatment of 6900 patients.
- Obstetric surgical kits to cover 2,500 deliveries, including 50 with complications and surgery.
- High quality tents (each 48 m²) and 11,340 synthetic blankets, 756 family tents, 7,875 sleeping mats, 1,584 dignity kits and three armored vehicles.

Operations at the Nitzana and Karem Abou Salem crossing points are challenging for a smooth processing of humanitarian aid. The number of humanitarian aid trucks passing through remains sub optimal.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF is an active member of the UN Country Team and the Humanitarian Country Team and closely coordinates with other organizations and local partners, including women-led organisations. UNICEF also leads the coordination of the WASH and Nutrition Clusters and co-leads the Education Cluster with Save the Children. Within the Protection Cluster, UNICEF leads the Child Protection Area of Responsibility as well as the Technical Working Group on UASC. UNICEF is part of the Inter-Cluster Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Technical Working Group. UNICEF also supports the Inter-Agency Network for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and participates in the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Working Group coordinated by OCHA. UNICEF also actively participates in the Regional and National Gender and Humanitarian Working Group, coordinated by the UN Women and OCHA, and contributes to gender equality programming as well as preparedness and response.

Human Interest Stories, External Media and Advocacy

Advocacy - What is UNICEF calling for?

To respond to the situation for children in Israel and the State of Palestine, UNICEF is calling for:

- An immediate and long-lasting humanitarian ceasefire.
- Safe and unrestricted humanitarian access to and within the Gaza Strip to reach affected populations wherever they are, including in the north. All access crossings must be opened including to sufficient fuel, materials needed to run and rehabilitate essential infrastructure, and commercial supplies. Safe movement for humanitarian workers and supplies across the Gaza Strip must be guaranteed and reliable telecommunications networks made available to coordinate response efforts.
- The immediate, safe, and unconditional release of all abducted children, and an end to any grave violations against all children, including killing and maiming children.
- Respect and protection for civilian infrastructure such as shelters and schools, and health, electric, water, sanitation, and telecommunications facilities, to prevent loss of civilian and children's lives, outbreaks of diseases, and to provide care to the sick and wounded. All parties to the conflict must respect international humanitarian law.
- Urgent medical cases in the Gaza Strip to be able to safely access critical health services or be allowed to leave, and for injured or sick children evacuated to be accompanied by family members.

UNICEF continues to press world leaders on every occasion for an end to the violence and humanitarian access to the whole of the Gaza Strip.

Statements:

- 15 March 2024: [Acute malnutrition has doubled in one month in the north of Gaza strip: UNICEF](#)

Human interest stories:

- [The challenges of being a woman today in Gaza | UNICEF State of Palestine](#)
- [Women in the Gaza Strip struggle to protect their children | UNICEF State of Palestine](#)

Social Media:

- [13-year-old Alma lost both her parents, siblings and several other relatives. We keep seeing story after story of children in Gaza experiencing profound grief. They need a humanitarian ceasefire now.](#)
- ["These are the supplies that so urgently need to get across." UNICEF Spokesperson James Elder near the Egypt-Gaza crossing point.](#)

- [International Women's Day: In Gaza, women face immense challenges, while continuing to play a crucial role in their families and communities. Read the stories of four of these women.](#)
- [12-year-old Alma is holding an adolescent wellbeing kit, distributed by UNICEF in Rafah.](#)
- [Thank you tweet to ECHO, Norway, Germany, and Switzerland for supporting the delivery of winter clothes, sweaters, and blankets to children in Rafah.](#)
- ["When I wake up, I ask my mom to bring me bread, but she says there is none," Mohammad, 8-year-old, wakes up hungry and thirsty every morning in the north of Gaza.](#)

Next SitRep: 5 April 2024

UNICEF State of Palestine Humanitarian Action for Children 2024 Appeal: www.unicef.org/appeals/state-of-palestine

Latest Situation Reports are available on: www.unicef.org/sop/research-and-reports

Who to contact for
further information:

Lucia Elmi
Special Representative
+972 (0)2 584 0400
lelmi@unicef.org

Laura Bill
Deputy Representative
+972 (0)2 584 0400
lbill@unicef.org

Jonathan Crickx
Chief of Communication
+972 (0)2 584 0419
jcrickx@unicef.org

Summary of Programme Results (Gaza Strip and West Bank)⁸

Sector / Indicator	UNICEF			CLUSTER		
	Total Target ⁹	Cumulative Result	% Progress	Total Target	Cumulative Result	% Progress
WASH						
# of people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs ¹⁰	2,050,000	1,601,178	78%	2,426,544	2,100,000	87%
# of people benefitting from improved access to sanitation and hygiene services	1,350,000	495,187	37%	2,426,544	759,827	31%
# of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items)	1,050,000	472,381	45%	2,426,544	951,632	39%
Health						
# of people supported through UNICEF delivered medical supplies ¹¹	780,000	609,785	78%			
# of high risks pregnant women who benefited from medical assistance in Gaza	50,000	5,030	10%			
Nutrition						
# of pregnant women receiving preventative iron folate or multiple micronutrients supplementation	182,272	21,000	12%	197,858	28,482	14%
# of children 6-59 months receiving preventative lipid-based supplements, micronutrients supplementation, and high energy biscuits	341,524	36,866	11%	371,859	148,367	24%
# of Infants 0-6 months receiving RUIF ¹²	16,415	5,962	36%	23,551	5,962	25%
# of children 0-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment	6,813	310	5%	6,813	310	5%
Child Protection¹³						
# of children and caregivers affected by conflict related violence received emergency and child protection service including PSS support	596,453 children 255,623 caregivers	110,012 41,790 ¹⁴	18% 16%	746,000	148,367	20%
# of children receiving explosive weapons-related risk education	504,925	16,210	3%			
# of children reached with winterization items (including blankets)	330,000	160,205	49%			
Education						
# of affected school aged children provided with recreational activities to support their well being ¹⁵	155,000	69,289	45%	529,084	149,135	28%
# of school aged children provided with essential education in emergency learning materials	325,500	160	0% ¹⁶	438,286	53,334	12%
Social Protection						
# of households reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers ¹⁷	88,500	83,890	95%			

⁸ The Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal for October to December 2023 was carried over in the 2024 HAC revised on 5 January and in February to cover October 2023 to March 2024 inclusive. Accordingly, also the results against the indicators were carried over into 2024.

⁹ UNICEF targets have been updated aligned to the revised HAC.

¹⁰ As interventions support the same population over time, UNICEF reports the maximum number of people reached each week to avoid double counting, based on the water production and trucking.

¹¹ This result is calculated based upon the distribution of Inter-Agency Emergency Health Kits (IEHK) to health facilities and partner reports.

¹² UNICEF is committed to supporting mothers to exclusively breastfeed their infants up to 6 months of age and to continue breastfeeding to age 2 and beyond with appropriate complementary foods. In exceptional circumstances, UNICEF provides breastmilk substitutes, as some infants are not breastfed or only partially breastfed during emergencies.

¹³ CP indicators and targets are linked to quality reach, and it is difficult to implement some activities (e.g. MHPSS level 2 and 3 interventions) during active hostilities. CPAoR partners reached a cumulative of 148,367 children with MHPSS as of 29 February 2024.

¹⁴ The result has been adjusted downward after reviewing partners' reporting to minimize double counting.

¹⁵ The cumulative result indicates 36,777 girls, 32,512 boys and 1,270 children with disabilities. The number has been adjusted downward after reviewing partners' report.

¹⁶ As most of schools are being used as emergency shelters, no learning activities have taken place since 7 October 2023. UNICEF does not count children who benefitted through recreational kits as a result under emergency learning materials indicator. The kits are utilized for recreational activities and the service delivery is reported under the recreational activity indicator.

¹⁷ Reach with humanitarian cash transfers is reported based upon households which have received messages to redeem their cash. The response exceeds the target as the programme revised the initial strategy and has only delivered one round of transfers as compared to three rounds in the plan, with some households receiving second transfers in recent weeks. Furthermore, UNICEF has partially funded the response through loans which are not reflected in the Funding Status table. The actual reach of households has been adjusted from the last report.

Annex B - Funding Status¹⁸

Sector	Revised Requirements (USD)	Funds available			Funding gap	
		Humanitarian resources received after 7 Oct.	Other resources used for the escalation	Resources available from 2022 (Carry-over)	US\$	%
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	62,225,779	49,637,060	93,972	629,647	11,865,100	19%
Health	35,195,054	24,495,184	2,200,000	234,764	8,265,106	23%
Nutrition	27,765,177	12,805,734	0	0	14,959,443	54%
Child Protection	24,857,916	18,123,240	0	462,963	6,271,713	25%
Education	29,645,946	9,216,946	52,000	1,142,966	19,234,034	65%
Social Protection and Cash Transfer	74,376,225	27,059,008	0	727,084	46,590,133	63%
Cross-Sectoral (PSEA, AAP)	4,746,532	2,625,155	0	50,146	2,071,231	44%
Cluster Coordination	4,495,988	3,576,540	220,000	29,000	670,448	15%
Total	263,308,617	147,538,866	2,565,972	3,276,570	109,927,209	42%

*All amounts include weighted cross-sectoral costs and cost recovery.

*Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) and Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) are integrated under each sector.

¹⁸ The funding requirement has been revised with a 56 per cent increase from the January 2024 revision of US\$ 168.3 million, bringing the total funding requirements to US\$ 263.3 million. The funding gap by section (\$ and %) reflects only the sections which are not fully funded, while the overall gap reflects the total funding received against the total funds requirement.