On 7 July 2014, a humanitarian emergency was declared in the Gaza Strip, following a severe escalation in hostilities involving intense Israeli aerial and navy bombardment and Palestinian rocket firing. The humanitarian impact of these hostilities comes against a backdrop of heightened vulnerability and instability in Gaza. Unemployment increased dramatically since mid-2013, following a halt of the illegal tunnel trade, exacerbating the impact of the longstanding access restrictions imposed by Israel which had prevented any meaningful economic activity. Additionally, former de facto government employees, including the security forces, have not been paid salaries regularly since August 2013 and an ongoing energy crisis, involving power outages of 12 hours per day, has critically affected the WASH and health sectors.

Since the current escalation in hostilities began, the situation on the ground has evolved rapidly and needs have increased markedly. An Israeli ground operation began on 18 July which alongside continued intense shelling and airstrikes, has resulted in a high level of civilian casualties, the widespread destruction of buildings and infrastructure and a steep rise in internally displaced persons (IDPs). The current hostilities have so far resulted in 697 fatalities (518 civilians, including 170 children and 86 women), 3,993 injuries and the destruction or severe damage to 3,230 homes. 140,000 IDPs are currently seeking shelter in 83 UNRWA schools (up from 47,000 persons hosted in 36 shelters on 18 July) and tens of thousands of IDPs have taken refuge elsewhere in Gaza, including with host families, public schools, other facilities or in open spaces. Due to the quickly rising numbers of
the displaced, UNRWA schools have been overwhelmed which has given rise to an urgent need to find alternative, safe refuges for the additional caseload.

Apart from the protection of civilians and the evacuation and treatment of those injured, the main priority for humanitarian agencies continues to be the provision of food, water, mattresses and hygiene items to those displaced, as well as fuel to essential water, health and solid waste facilities. The protection of services providers and humanitarian workers during these life-saving operations is of utmost importance. At least 125,000 children already require direct and specialized psychosocial support on the basis of families who have experienced a death, injury or loss of home over the past week. In addition, unexploded hazards from parties represent a significant risk for civilians and for humanitarian operations.

To date, 116 schools, 18 health facilities and significant essential WASH infrastructure have been damaged. 25% of all WASH facilities have no electricity due to damage to electricity lines and transformers. The ongoing military incursion has greatly increased trauma casualties, which hospitals are hard-pressed to treat without adequate medicines and medical consumables.

Service providers and humanitarian workers are severely constrained in their responses, and risk their lives, due to the prevailing security situation. The security situation has also hampered assessments, resulting in limited capacity to identify and respond to needs of specific groups of affected population such young children and pregnant women amongst IDPs; sex and age disaggregated information of IDPs is lacking.

Despite both funding and security constraints, so far humanitarian partners have been able to mount a number of responses including for example, provision of shelter, water tankering and food assistance to IDPs in UNRWA schools and other shelters, distribution of NFI kits to those residing with host families, distribution of fuel to MoH hospitals, water and sanitation installations, solid waste management facilities and municipalities, and direct psychosocial support to 1,289 children.

**PRIORITIES**

The immediate priority is to ensure the physical and mental well-being of civilians affected by the escalating conflict and provide them with coping mechanisms in the context of an accelerated humanitarian deterioration. The increased caseload of IDPs has also necessitated a focused IDP response, in addition to other vulnerable groups.

Priority areas include:

- Provision of basic services including water, health, energy and solid waste collection
- Food Security
- Psychosocial support
- Assistance with shelter management

Securing humanitarian space for actors to work safely to carry out the most urgent support is also needed.

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1. All planning figures, caseloads and dollar amounts in this section are as of 22 July (estimates will be refined in the forthcoming Gaza Crisis Preliminary Response Plan)
**Protection**

Contact: lfung@ohchr.org

Priority responses:

- Provision of psychosocial support and child protection, including monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children and community-based child protection responses
- Unexploded ordinance disposal and risk awareness raising
- Monitoring of violations of international law and legal assistance to pursue accountability

Estimated target population: 1.1 million (311,600 people benefiting from psychosocial support interventions/child protection; 102,000 children through community-based child protection responses; 800,000 people benefiting from ERWs/mine action interventions; 2,400 people benefiting from legal counseling and legal assistance to pursue accountability for violations).

Funding requirement: $5.13 million

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**Shelter and NFI**

Contact: fadi.shamisti@nrc.no

Priority responses:

- Provision of NFI for those displaced residing in shelters and with host families (mattresses, blankets, cooking sets and hygiene kits). There is a shortage in NFI.
- Provision of cash assistance to 2,655 displaced families
- As soon as security permits, rubble removal and repair of damaged houses will be required.

Estimated target population: 135,500 displaced people

Funding requirement: $17.3 million immediate ($1 million is required to cover the gaps in NFI provision for the 9,900 displaced people living with host families, $8 million is required to respond to the anticipated increase in the caseload of those displaced with NFI and $8.3 million is needed for rental cash assistance). Some $100 million is anticipated for early recovery interventions.

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**Health and Nutrition**

Contact: ymu@who-health.org

Priority responses:

- Ensure continuity of life saving and essential health services, including first responders, health provision of critical medicines and medical consumables. The MoH has requested $ 3.2 million/month to sustain services
- Ensure fuel for standby generators at hospitals
- Ensure provision of medical equipment and spare parts.

Estimated Population: 1.28 million people including 728,000 children

Funding requirement: $7,842,500 for immediate interventions, including: $ 4 million for filling gaps in shortages of medicines and medical consumables for six months; $1,242,500 for medical equipment and spare parts; $52 million for fuel for six months, and $600,000 for operational support for the implementation in Gaza.

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**Food Security**

Contact: marco.ferloni@foodsecuritycluster.net

Priority responses:

- Food and voucher distribution (including school feeding) for food insecure people affected by displacement and lack of livelihoods
- Livelihoods support for farmers, herders and fishers through inputs’ distribution and restoration of productive assets

Estimated target population: 1.02 million

Funding requirement: $16m for immediate support to people whose food security has been affected by the conflict and to support emergency livestock feeding.

In the medium-long term, $80m to $120m could be needed for the rehabilitation of productive assets to achieve restoration of affected livelihoods. This estimation is based on previous damage and loss assessments performed in
similar escalations affecting Gaza in the past as well as on the basis of initial information gathered on the ground during the current crisis.

Contact: mmuenchenbach@unicef.org
Priority responses:

- Humanitarian space for operation, maintenance and damage repair to WASH facilities and water trucking
- Immediate repair of critical damages to water and sanitation facilities (ASAP)
- Emergency repair of WASH facilities (1 month)
- Repair of major damages to WASH facilities including wells, sewage pumping stations and waste water treatment plants (up to 6 months and more depending on assessment)
- Provision of emergency response equipment including fuel, chlorine and spare parts to water service providers according to emergency response plan
- Ensure systematic solid waste collection
- Provide an increasing IDP caseload with water tankering, hygiene kits, water kits, storage container and filling points

Estimated target population: 1.2 million people in need of drinking water and sanitation services

Funding requirement (preliminary): $12 million (immediate life-saving repairs/water provision $1.5 million, urgent interventions $3.5 million, critical infrastructure upgrades $5 million, provision of WASH requirements to IDPs including water tankering, hygiene kits, storage container and filling points $2 million )

Contact: mthompson@unicef.org
Priority responses:

- Ensure damaged schools / schools used as shelters are functional by the school year (including replacement of furniture and classroom materials). Intensify advocacy for a sustained humanitarian corridor for access of construction materials into Gaza.

Estimated target population: 241,000 (227,000 public school students and 14,000 educational staff)

Funding requirement:

$2,300,000 (Rehabilitation of schools and furniture/materials $600,000; temporary learning spaces and school bussing $500,000; extra-curricular activities $1,000,000; school uniforms and other student supplies $200,000).

Contact: rima.abumiddain@undp.org
Rubble removal: Rubble removal including assessment, removal and crushing and re-use of crushed rubble.

Estimated target population: 1.8 million

Funding Requirements: immediate intervention
**Solid waste management:**

- Immediate removal and transfer to central landfills of an estimated 60,000 tons of accumulated solid waste
- Support the municipalities for primary solid waste collection and cleaning of Wadi Gaza and the beach

**Estimated target population:** 1.8 Million

**Funding Requirements:**
- Immediate intervention $ 700,000
- Urgent intervention $ 4.1 million

*Figures as of 17 July. Update pending.

**IDP response**

- The IDP response needs are covered in the above but will specifically consist of:
  - Water tankering and supply of water kits to those displaced
  - Food and vouchers to displaced and host families (and shelters if needed)
  - Monitoring damage to schools used as shelters

Issues to note regarding gender and vulnerable groups: implementation of gender sensitive standards in shelters including through involvement of female and male IDPs in management of shelter, provision of health services for injured IDPs, protection from GBV and sexual harassment, address shortage in food assistance for IDP children under 2 and for children under 5, water for drinking and maintaining hygiene standards at temporary shelters, installation of mobile latrine facilities (separate for men and women) in temporary shelters.

**Cross-cutting and context-specific issues**

Women and children have been most affected during the current escalation as evidenced by the high numbers of fatalities, injuries and displacement amongst them. The response will ensure that gender sensitive approaches will be mainstreamed throughout the response starting with data collection for assessments of needs. In the immediate stages, this is particularly critical to interventions related to shelter and NFIs. There are also indications of gender specific needs related to psychosocial support for boys, girls as well as women.

Efforts to ensure outreach to women in particular during the emergency response will secure their access to critical information on available protection and basic services including on reproductive health services and child health and hygiene. Women having the role of the main care providers to their families, will play a significant role in mitigating threats related to worsening water and sanitation conditions. Direct consultations will be pursued as a valuable source of information on the needs of the affected population and the adequacy of the humanitarian response.

Building on evidence from previous crises, the recovery stages will prioritize gender specific needs associated with coping strategies such as increased incidence of domestic violence, early marriage and gender biases in access to livelihoods and shelter.

Particular attention will be paid to the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities.

**Operational constraints**

The prevailing security situation, need for enhanced protection of humanitarian workers and general depletion of stocks among humanitarian actors pose the largest operational constraints. The Government of Israel agreed to a UN initiative for a humanitarian pause on 17 July from 10:00 a.m to 03:00 p.m. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) negotiated a two-hour humanitarian pause to allow ambulances and medical teams to evacuate the wounded and the dead, as well as search and rescue of people trapped under the rubble in the heavily hit neighbourhood of Ash Shuja’iyyeh area in eastern Gaza City on 19 July however, this could only be partially implemented due to the resumption of hostilities.

**Funding strategy for the response**

Humanitarian action is required to respond to the current escalation in the context of an already rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation. Funds can be mobilized through various channels, including a dedicated Gaza preliminary response plan by the HCT (forthcoming), funding of current priority projects in the 2014 SRP (shared with

2. Includes IDPs sheltered at UNRWA and displaced people hosted by families
donors), bilateral donations to individual agency funding appeals and existing pooled funds such as the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) and Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

As implementing agencies are expending resources currently not available, funding will be used to deal with the immediate needs, as well as replenishment of resources for ongoing humanitarian programming.

Key ways of contributing to the crisis response in the Gaza Strip

GAZA CRISIS PRELIMINARY RESPONSE PLAN

Needs in Gaza as a result of the latest crisis continue to grow and have surpassed those foreseen in the Humanitarian Country Team’s (HCT) initial planning for the year. The HCT has therefore decided to launch a Gaza Crisis Preliminary Response Plan which is currently under development. The plan will address urgent humanitarian needs from now until the end of 2014 that have arisen in relation to the current crisis. The 2014 Strategy Response Plan (SRP) will continue to exist as the HCT’s strategy to respond to the protracted humanitarian situation in oPt; funding for top priority SRP programmes should be maintained.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND FOR THE oPt

The Emergency Response Fund for oPt is managed locally by OCHA and can provide up to $250,000 per project. The ERF is funded by donors who also comprise an advisory board chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator. The ERF has two windows: a rapid response window which can support new needs that have arisen as a result of this emergency, and a second window that funds critical yet underfunded projects in the SRP, many of which can also help address current needs in the Gaza Strip. New contributions are essential. For more information contact abdel-haq@un.org or visit the ERF page on the OCHA website, where contributions can also be made.

REGISTERING AND RECOGNIZING YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

OCHA records all humanitarian contributions through its Financial Tracking Service (FTS). FTS aims to give donors due credit and visibility for their generosity, and helps humanitarians track funding and gaps in emergencies. Please register your contributions by emailing fts@un.org, or through the online contribution report form at fts.unocha.org.
For further information on the oPt Humanitarian Country Team’s response to the Gaza crisis, please contact Maria Jose Torres at OCHA (torres8@un.org)