

Palestine Situation Report

May 19, 2021

Background

The immediate background to the current period of violence is summarized in Anera's last [Situation Report \(May 12\)](#). Ongoing updates may be found on our [Updates on the Crisis in Palestine blog](#).

Overview

What began as peaceful protests by Palestinians in Jerusalem angered by their treatment under occupation, has over the past 10 days boiled over into the largest conflagration of Israel-Palestine violence since the 2014 Gaza war. In between unarmed protests against Israeli expulsions of Palestinians in Sheik Jarrah, east Jerusalem, and yesterday's general strike by Palestinians across Israel and Palestine, violence, bombing and warfare have raged. Israeli police actions against Palestinian protesters, thousands of Hamas and Islamic Jihad rockets into Israel, and over 1,180 Israeli airstrikes pounding Gaza have caused hundreds of deaths and thousands of casualties, mostly on the Palestinian side.¹



Palestinian families take shelter at a UN school in Gaza City after fleeing their homes in the town of Beit Lahia. [Mahmud Hams/AFP]

According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, between May 10th and May 19th, 219 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, including 61 children, and another 1,500 people were

¹ [IDF: Over 1,180 strikes in Gaza since fighting began, 3,150 rockets fired at Israel](#)

injured, including 313 children and 206 women. Israeli airstrikes on Gaza have also resulted in displacement of 72,000 Palestinians, due to the destruction of or severe damage to over 450 buildings, with over 47,000 displaced persons now seeking shelter in 58 UNRWA schools across Gaza.² **Since the conflict escalation began, approximately 3.7% of Palestinians in Gaza are now internally displaced.**³ The high volume of displaced persons sheltering together in confined spaces poses a risk for an increase in COVID-19 cases, especially since airstrikes on May 17 damaged Gaza's only laboratory that can process COVID-19 test results, rendering it temporarily inoperable.⁴ Six hospitals and nine primary healthcare facilities have been severely damaged by airstrikes as well, putting further strain on the healthcare system to respond to injuries.⁵ Rocket fire from armed groups in Gaza has killed 12 people in Israel, including a child and two Palestinian-Israelis, and injured another 300. Attacks are continuing for the tenth straight day.



Tensions escalated in Jerusalem, the occupied West Bank, and Gaza throughout the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. [Ahmad Gharabli/AFP]

Meanwhile, violence has escalated between Israeli settlers and Palestinian citizens in the West Bank, and further street violence continues in Israel. At least 22 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem,⁶ and more than 1,650 injured.⁷ Seventy people were hospitalized on May 18 in the West Bank after a clash with Israeli forces in Beit El in which 26 Palestinians were shot with live ammunition, leaving five

² [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\): Flash Update #8 | UNOCHA](#)

³ [The World Factbook | Gaza Strip](#)

⁴ [Airstrike Damages Gaza's Only COVID-19 Testing Lab. Officials Said. | NYT](#)

⁵ [May 18 Live Updates | Al Jazeera Media Network](#)

⁶ [Israel strikes Gaza after Biden supports calls for a ceasefire | Financial Times](#)

⁷ [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\): Flash Update #5 - Escalation in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel \(as of 12:00, 15 May 2021\)](#)

of them in critical condition.⁸ Several others have been injured in protests in Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel. Israel has reportedly cut off access to and from East Jerusalem. Marauding mobs are lighting cars on fire and attacking motorists. Descriptions of ‘skirmishes’ and ‘scuffles’ do not begin to convey the atmosphere and level of targeted violence on the streets.

Anera staff and families in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza are all alive, but tragedy is close by and they do not feel safe. One of our colleagues in Ramallah lost his 14-year old cousin and his best friend lost his son, shot by Israeli forces after they threw rocks. One of our colleagues in Gaza has lost his home, while another was temporarily forced to evacuate when a house down the block was bombed. A colleague in our Washington, DC, office was speaking to someone on her team in Gaza and she heard a huge explosion, then his kids screaming, and then he just disappeared from the call. He has since gotten in touch, and his family is okay, but traumatized. On May 17, an Israeli air strike without warning badly damaged a building in the Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City that houses the U.S. NGOs Palestinian Children’s Relief Fund and Global Communities.

Critical supplies like food, water, and fuel are running low in Gaza, especially due to border closures. **Damage to power lines from the conflict have cut off 230,000 Palestinians from electricity access, and those who do still have access are only receiving an average of four hours of power per day.** Fuel for the sole power plant is expected to run out on Wednesday, May 19, which will deprive hospitals and clinics of electricity and refrigeration. If new fuel is not brought in for the sole remaining wind turbine at Gaza’s power plant, residents could face total blackouts.⁹ Displaced persons also face a strong need for food, water, blankets, and infant care supplies. Anera continues to closely monitor developments on the ground.

⁸ [May 18 Live Updates | Al Jazeera Media Network](#)

⁹ [Gaza ‘days away’ from near total blackout as fuel running out after week of bombardment | Independent](#)



A Palestinian boy pulls a cart carrying his brother and their belongings as they fled their home during Israeli air and artillery attacks. [Mohammed Salem/Reuters]¹⁰

Anera's Response

Our office and distribution networks in Gaza mean that we can respond to needs on the ground immediately, as we did in 2014. Following the Gaza bombing in the summer of 2014, Anera provided \$13 million in relief and development, employing funds from a multitude of organizations and individuals to give Gaza families access to water, medicines, food, and clothing. Anera was one of the first organizations to deliver relief during and after the 51-day bombardment.

Hot meals

[Anera is partnering with World Central Kitchen](#) to provide daily meals to a minimum of 3,000 of the people displaced, for as long as needed. We will work with the CSSL Women's Cooperative in Beit Hanoun and other parts of Gaza to prepare and distribute the meals.

Procuring medicines and medical supplies

During emergencies in Gaza, Anera responds quickly, arranging overseas air shipments. Often the crisis requires more immediate action than an air shipment can provide, especially in Gaza where healthcare facilities are stretched so thin. In these cases we use funds to locally procure items like antibiotics and surgical supplies for hospitals like Al Shifa.

Anera also supports the Central Blood Bank Society (CBBS), a local, non-profit organization located in Gaza. As the only health non-profit working in the blood banking field in Gaza,

¹⁰ [In Pictures: Death and destruction in Gaza as Israel attacks | Al Jazeera](#)

CBBS provides all hospitals in the area with their required blood units, following Palestinian Ministry of Health guidelines and maintaining the highest standards of quality in its services provided to patients in hospitals in Gaza. However, CBBS is facing a financial crisis as well as a shortage of supplies, made worse by the current conflict escalation. **Anera will help the blood bank locally procure bags for donated blood, testing kits, and other necessary supplies to increase their capacity to respond to the medical needs arising from the situation on the ground.**

Shipping medical aid

Although the crossings into Gaza are currently closed, Anera's medical donations team is diligently working to arrange shipments of needed chronic medicines, PPE for COVID-19, and emergency medical supplies for distribution to health facilities in Gaza just as soon as we can get them in. Anera currently has three shipments of medical donations waiting for entry into Gaza, which should happen in the next few days. The shipments include acute and emergency medicines, such as antibiotics and surgical supplies, as well as medicines to manage chronic conditions like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure, upon which thousands of Gaza residents rely to stay well. There are also face guards to protect frontliners against COVID-19 included.

Anera has scores of healthcare partners in Gaza and the West Bank that receive medical aid from the medical donations program and benefit 250,000 vulnerable individuals. In the past 12 months alone, Anera has delivered \$38.5 million in medicines, equipment, and medical supplies to Palestine, with more shipments awaiting approval. Anera's emergency medical responses ensure that doctors have the medicines and supplies necessary to treat the onslaught of patients injured during crises, and so that individuals do not have to forgo life-saving medicines because they are unavailable at the hospital or are prohibitively expensive at private pharmacies or on the grey market. This assistance lessens the burden on the health sector in Gaza and helps countless individuals who may not receive medicine or medical attention otherwise.

If you want to know more or help, contact hjordan@anera.org or [DONATE directly](#) here.