



Palestine Situation Report

May 24, 2021

Background

The immediate background to the current period of violence is summarized in Anera's last [situation report \(May 19\)](#). Ongoing updates may be found on our [Updates on the Crisis in Palestine blog](#).

In This Report

- Updated Situation Report: Current Challenges in Gaza and the West Bank
- [Anera's Response](#): Partnership with World Central Kitchen, Medical Procurement, and Medical Shipments

Overview

Gaza

After 11 days of violence, Israel and Hamas announced that they agreed to a ceasefire on Thursday, May 20, that went into effect at 2:00 am local time on Friday, May 21. No violations of the agreement have been reported, although humanitarian workers reported still hearing bombings between when the ceasefire was first announced and when it went into effect. In total, airstrikes during the 11-day conflict caused an estimated \$322 million in infrastructure damage in Palestine.¹ According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, between May 10th and May 20th, 257 Palestinians were killed in Gaza,² including 66 children, and another 8,538 people were injured,³ including 540 children and 361 women (including three pregnant women).⁴ The death toll is expected to rise in the coming days as more bodies are pulled from the rubble.⁵

Israeli airstrikes on Gaza have also resulted in massive displacement. During the conflict, approximately 5.2% of Palestinians in Gaza were internally displaced.⁶ Some 107,000 people were displaced during the hostilities, with over 77,000 displaced persons seeking shelter in 58 UNRWA schools across Gaza, and an additional 35,000 displaced persons sheltering with friends or family members. According to the UN, the vast majority returned home

¹ [May 20 Live Updates | Al Jazeera Media Network](#)

² [May 21 Live Updates | Al Jazeera Media Network](#)

³ [May 21 Live Updates | Al Jazeera Media Network](#)

⁴ [Escalation in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Israel | Flash Update #11, 20 May - 12:00 21 May](#)

⁵ [May 21 Live Updates | Al Jazeera Media Network](#)

⁶ [Calculation based on the total population given in The World Factbook, Gaza Strip | CIA](#)

following the announcement of the ceasefire, with only 330 IDPs remaining as of May 22.⁷ However, at least 6,000 people remain homeless from the bombardments.⁸ Over the past 11 days, airstrikes completely destroyed 258 buildings that account for 1,042 housing and commercial units. Another 769 units have been deemed uninhabitable due to the severe damage they have sustained, and 14,536 buildings have already been found to have sustained minor damage, with numbers expected to rise.⁹ The high volume of displaced persons sheltering together in confined spaces creates conditions that may worsen the pandemic, especially since airstrikes on May 17 damaged Gaza's only laboratory that can process COVID-19 test results, rendering it temporarily inoperable.¹⁰ However, the UNRWA has worked with the Ministry of Health to resume COVID-19 testing among displaced persons sheltering at UNRWA schools.

In total, 54 educational facilities have been damaged since the beginning of the most recent conflict, including 46 schools, two kindergarten centers, one UNRWA vocational training center, one Ministry of Education facility, and the Islamic University of Gaza, according to the UN Education Cluster. Nearly 600,000 children have suffered from significant learning loss during the conflict and all UNRWA schools in Gaza remain closed.¹¹

Six hospitals and eleven primary healthcare facilities have been severely damaged by airstrikes, and one additional hospital is no longer operational due to a lack of electricity, putting further strain on the healthcare system to respond to injuries.¹²

The economic sector suffered significantly from the 11 day conflict, as Israeli airstrikes destroyed more than 525 economic establishments in Gaza, including 50 factories. Attacks on Gaza's industrial zone led to the destruction of shops, factories, and other income-generating facilities in Gaza, leaving many Palestinians without jobs to return to and worsening the economic crisis that led to a 49% unemployment rate before the fighting.¹³ Gaza's industrial zone hosts 54 factories that employ over 1,500 Palestinians, almost all of whom will experience temporary job loss because of the damage caused by airstrikes.¹⁴

Critical supplies like food, water, and fuel continue to run low in Gaza, especially due to border closures. Damage to power lines from the conflict has reduced the average electricity access to only 5 to 7 hours per day in Gaza since the only power plant is still working at half

⁷ [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\) Flash Update #12 | 12:00 21 May - 12:00 23 May](#)

⁸ [Israel-Hamas ceasefire holds as UN launches Gaza aid appeal | Al Jazeera Media Network](#)

⁹ [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\): Flash Update #10 | UNOCHA](#)

¹⁰ [Airstrike Damages Gaza's Only COVID-19 Testing Lab, Officials Said. | NYT](#)

¹¹ [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\) Flash Update #12 | 12:00 21 May - 12:00 23 May](#)

¹² [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\): Flash Update #10 | UNOCHA](#)

¹³ [Israel's targeting of economic facilities in Gaza signals disastrous consequences | Euro-Med Monitor](#)

¹⁴ [Israeli artillery targets four factories in Gaza's industrial zone | WAFA](#)

capacity.¹⁵ With 93 recorded airstrikes damaging WASH infrastructure since the beginning of the bombardment according to the UN WASH Cluster, water access continues to be an issue for Palestinians. Airstrikes within the last 24 hours of the conflict destroyed the main water transmission pipeline, cutting off more than 50,000 Palestinians in Khan Younis from access to clean water. The airstrikes also destroyed the sewer pressure pipeline that served more than 60,000 residents in Beit Lahiya, increasing the risks of water contamination due to a lack of water sanitation access. Sewage treatment facilities have resumed operations at a limited capacity, but still push over 20,000 cubic meters of contaminated water into the sea each day. Damage to sewer networks presents a major public health risk by potentially exposing people to human waste.¹⁶

On May 18, the Kerem Shalom crossing opened temporarily, but only five of the scheduled 24 total humanitarian trucks with supplies were permitted to enter Gaza.¹⁷ It remained closed until a partial reopening on May 21 that allowed approximately 50 truckloads with food, medical aid, and other humanitarian relief supplies and 27 truckloads of animal fodder to cross into Gaza, delivering much needed aid. Despite receiving this aid, Gaza is experiencing a severe shortage of animal fodder that could lead to a spike in animal deaths and even a possible collapse of the poultry and livestock sectors according to the Ministry of Agriculture.¹⁸

The West Bank

In the West Bank, at least 27 Palestinians were killed in clashes between Israeli forces and settlers and Palestinian protestors, including four children and one woman. Over 6,370 Palestinians in the West Bank, including 85 children and eight women, have suffered from injuries. Sixty percent of the injuries resulted from tear gas, 25% resulted from rubber bullets, and 11% resulted from being shot with live ammunition, with the remaining being more minor injuries from clashes.¹⁹ The West Bank is also experiencing a drain of local resources such as water and medicine as they are now redirected to Gaza following prolonged border closures. Demonstrations have resulted in multiple clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces. Israeli police stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex early on May 21, firing tear gas and wounding approximately 20 people.²⁰ In Hebron, Israeli forces burned fields of crops and uprooted dozens of olive trees in an attack on the agricultural sector. Since the beginning of the conflict on May 10, Israeli forces have killed 27 Palestinians and injured 6,794 more in similar clashes in the West Bank.²¹

¹⁵ [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\) Flash Update #12 | 12:00 21 May - 12:00 23 May](#)

¹⁶ [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\): Flash Update #10 | UNOCHA](#)

¹⁷ [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\): Flash Update #10 | UNOCHA](#)

¹⁸ [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\) Flash Update #12 | 12:00 21 May - 12:00 23 May](#)

¹⁹ [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\): Flash Update #10 | UNOCHA](#)

²⁰ [May 21 Live Updates | Al Jazeera Media Network](#)

²¹ [Occupied Palestinian Territory \(oPt\) Flash Update #12 | 12:00 21 May - 12:00 23 May](#)

Apart from aid to meet immediate food, water, medical, and shelter needs, Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank are in dire need of psycho-social support due to the impacts of the conflict and the compounding economic and COVID-19 crises. According to the WHO, approximately 210,000 people, or more than one in ten, were suffering from moderate or severe mental health issues at the beginning of 2021. That number is expected to rise from the impacts of exposure to violence, the loss of loved ones, and lack of security following the current crisis.²²

Anera's Response

Our office and distribution networks in Gaza mean that we can respond to needs on the ground immediately. 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 some of the people displaced by the violence, for as long as needed. On Sunday, May 23, we began working with chefs at the Cooperative Society for Savings and Lending women's center in Beit Hanoun, North Gaza, to make 300 meals for families in the area who were displaced by the recent bombardment. This was the first day of meal distributions that we'll be doing in partnership with WCK and CSSL in all areas of Gaza over the next couple of months to prepare and distribute meals. The initiative will employ 50 women to make 3,725 meals for displaced families. The fresh produce for the meals comes from Anera-supported farmers.



²² [Health Crisis in the oPt: Urgent Appeal | WHO](#)

Anera will also soon be providing water, hygiene kits and other non-food items.

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, 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

Anera brought into Gaza this morning three shipments of medical supplies like PPE and urgently-needed chemotherapy medicines – these are the first medical aid shipments, coordinated with UN agencies and other international non-profits, to come into the territory since the bombings began. 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 nine more shipments of donated medical aid in process for delivery over the next few weeks** and, in the meantime, we are using funds to procure urgently needed medicines. We also will be distributing medical aid and personal hygiene items in the West Bank over the coming days.

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 Palestine 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.