

**Comments by Dr Akihiro Seita, Director of Health of UNRWA for EMRO/RC 70
(10 Oct 2023)**

Dear President, Regional Director, Director General and all delegates.

The situation in Gaza is beyond any description. The scale and severity of the current conflict are unprecedented. UNRWA is deeply concerned about the status of 2.1 million people in Gaza including 1.7 million Palestine refugees.

UNRWA continues to provide, under such difficult situation, lifeline support to Palestine refugees and people in Gaza. Nearly 137,500 internally displaced people (IDPs) are sheltering in 83 UNRWA schools in all areas of the Gaza Strip. As heavy airstrikes continue, more and more IDPs seek shelter in UNRWA's schools.

5 (out of 22) UNRWA Health Centres across the Gaza Strip are providing primary healthcare services from 9:00 to 12:00 to patients with urgent referred appointments received through telemedicine, or free-toll hotline. 125 health staff (13.5 % of total health staff) are rotating at the health centers. Yesterday, 1,672 callers used the toll-free hotline and were provided with services.

The situation remains extremely volatile and unpredictable. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health: 560 people have been killed, including at least 90 children, and 2,900 injured. Two UNRWA staff members have been killed and five UNRWA students.

We urge international community to scale up the efforts to deescalate the situation, and the scale up the support to all humanitarian agencies including WHO and UNRWA. Establishment and maintenance of the humanitarian corridor is urgently needed.

Thank you for your attention.