



Left and above: Hala Al Shawa Primary Health Care Centre in Gaza is severely damaged after being hit twice since hostilities began

1500+

Estimated number of Palestinians injured

126

People killed in Gaza, including 31 children

47

Incidents of attacks on health care recorded

1000

Patients benefitting from WHO-provided drugs / disposables

US\$ 1.2m

Released by WHO to support urgent health response

SITUATION

- Tensions in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip have been escalating in recent weeks. Between 7 and 11 May, the Palestine Red Crescent Society reported 1,514 Palestinians injured in the West Bank, as well as 872 injured in East Jerusalem. In the Gaza Strip, up till 14 May, 126 Palestinians, including 31 children, have been killed and 950 injured during escalations of violence. Displacement of an estimated 10,000 people is ongoing.
- The Israel-controlled Erez/Beit Hanoun and Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom crossings are closed until further notice. This blocks referrals outside the affected areas, as well as the delivery of emergency health supplies, including those COVID-10, into the Gaza Strip.
- Since the beginning of the current conflict situation in mid-April this year, 47 incidents of attacks on health care have been recorded in the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the West Bank. As a result of these attacks, 37 health workers were injured, 11 health vehicles were damaged, detained or confiscated, and five health facilities were damaged, including at least one severely damaged in the Gaza strip.
- Reported incidents include beatings and arrests of paramedics, prevention of access for ambulances and paramedic teams, physical attacks against ambulance vehicles, and incursion of a health care facility.
- According to the Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS) in Gaza. All 13 MoH hospitals are not damaged and functioning according to an emergency plan. 17 NGO and private hospitals are functioning according to their emergency plans. All 49 primary health care centres are not

damaged, but only 8 are partially functioning providing COVID-19 testing. One MoH primary health care centre (Hala Al-Shawa) is severely damaged and not functioning.

- The escalation of violence coincides with the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) experiencing a third peak of COVID-19 infections, which have shown a significant surge, especially in Gaza. Although case numbers have been slowly subsiding, one week prior to the current escalation, oPt recorded over 3,800 new cases of COVID-19, of which 2,725 were recorded in Gaza.

HEALTH NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

- Mechanisms for unimpeded, life-saving referrals and movement of humanitarian personnel and essential health supplies, including COVID-19 supplies. WHO estimates that trauma medicines and supplies will be required for an estimated 10,000 injured people.

CHALLENGES

- A significant influx of trauma patients has placed additional burdens on an already overstretched health system also struggling to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Limited access to health care for people living in Gaza due to the complete closure of the Erez crossing since 11 May.
- Protests, displacements, which may increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and attacks on health care facilities which also hamper the ability to implement the ongoing response to the pandemic, including the vaccination programme.
- The closure of Tel Aviv airport which may close again due to bombardment from Gaza, impeding delivery of supplies.
- Continued occupation and a 14-year old Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, as well as fragmentation of the Palestinian health system regularly results in critical shortages of drug, medical disposable and fuel that affect the most vulnerable. In April 2021, The Central Drugs Store in Gaza reported that 256 out of 516 essential drugs listed (50%), and 285 medical disposable items out of an essential 853 (30%), were at zero stock at the end of March 2021.
- Limited funding to cover health needs, especially in Gaza.

HEALTH RESPONSE

- The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has set up a field clinic at their ambulances station in Jerusalem with a capacity of about 11 beds. PRCS has 13 operational ambulances for transportation of injured patients from the point of injury to one of the hospitals in the East Jerusalem Hospital Network (EJHN).
- Al-Makassed Hospital emergency department has 40 beds available. Out of these, three are resuscitation emergency department beds with increased patient management capacity and ventilators.
- In Gaza, MoH hospitals are properly managing patients. PRCS has allocated dedicated ICU beds in Al Quds Hospital (Gaza City) and Amal Clinic (Khan Yunis), deployed pre-triage tents as preparedness measures, and set up trauma stabilization points (previously provided by WHO) in Jabalia, Deir Al Balah and Rafah.

WHO RESPONSE

- On 10 May, WHO conducted a rapid needs assessment at the Palestine Red Crescent Society, Al-Makassed, St. Joseph and St. John hospitals in East Jerusalem – all first line responders from the East Jerusalem Hospital Network. WHO and Health Cluster partners continue to conduct assessments of emergency departments and primary health services, including through the Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS) and via phone given the current situation.
- WCO continues strengthening trauma capacities of hospitals treating injured patients by delivering lifesaving emergency, trauma supplies and medicines. On 12 May, WHO delivered drugs and disposable

for the treatment of up to 1,000 injured patients to the Palestine Red Crescent Society and Al-Makassed Hospital in East Jerusalem. WHO has distributed previously prepositioned medical items in Gaza to key emergency departments for use in triage centres, as well as medical equipment, disposables and pharmaceuticals for bedside interventions.

- WHO is procuring additional drugs and disposables for hospitals, field clinics and for ambulances to be delivered in the coming days. This includes medical items for triage centres, medical equipment, disposables, and pharmaceuticals for treatment of injured patients and to support the ongoing COVID-19 response.
- WHO has finalized an initial 30-day operational plan with focus on Gaza, including pre-hospital as well as hospital trauma/emergency care, and mental health and psychosocial support.
- WHO continues to monitor attacks on health care and advocate for equitable access to emergency care for affected populations, stressing that health is not a target.
- A meeting of few Heads of UN Agencies, including WHO, with the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (Israeli military authorities responsible for coordination of activities in the occupied Palestinian territory) took place today to help ensure an arrangement for access of humanitarian personnel and supplies into Gaza.
- WHO is dispatching trauma kits and drugs/disposables for management of non-communicable diseases from its logistics and supply hub in Dubai.
- WHO aims to minimize / mitigate any disruptions on COVID-19 control measures, including roll-out of vaccinations.

FUNDING NEEDS

- WHO has re-programmed \$80,000 of funds from ECHO to cover the immediate needs of PRCS and Al-Makassed Hospital in East Jerusalem.
- Urgent disbursement of \$1.2 million from WHO's Central Fund for Emergencies is in process to address acute health needs. Trauma care is a priority, in addition to essential health care delivery and mental health care.

For more information, contact:

Nicola Baldwin, communications officer

WHO OPT office

baldwinn@who.int

Inas Hamam, communications officer

WHO Regional Office

hamami@WHO.int