

GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS, POLITICAL and SECURITY SITUATION

During the recent escalation in the Gaza Strip on 25 March 2019, seven Palestinians were reportedly injured and six buildings, including a private house, were destroyed. A ceasefire was announced on the late night of 25 March, however, the situation remains tense.

On 25 March, Israeli authorities announced that both Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings will be closed until further notice. In addition, the permissible fishing zone for Palestinians in Gaza was reduced to zero miles. Movement of people and goods to and from Gaza has been largely prohibited. Movement of UN staff to and from Gaza has also been restricted as of 26 March 2019. Due to the unexpected closure of Kerem Shalom crossing through which fuel for the

Gaza power plant enters, the plant had to shut one of the three power generating turbines on the evening of the 25 March, reducing the power production by one third. This has reportedly resulted in power cuts of 12-14 hours per day. Increased power cuts may cause disruption in provision of essential health and WASH services across the Gaza Strip.



Injured patient is being provided with emergency care in Al-Awda hospital. Credit: UHWC

KEY HEALTH ISSUES

Gaza's health system is already overwhelmed with the large influx of trauma patients injured during the Great March of Return (GMR) demonstration that started on 30 March 2018. According to the latest Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza reports, more than half of almost 30,000 injured people were transferred to the MoH and NGO hospitals since the demonstrations started. Additionally, the one-year anniversary of the GMR on 30 March may result in more casualties.

WHO and health cluster partners developed a contingency plan to address the health needs within the 96-hours of escalation of the situation in Gaza and to prevent death and disability.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

- **MAP-UK** is currently prepositioning 40 medical items (21 drugs, 16 medical disposables, 3 blood bank items) for a total cost of \$39,400 USD. MAP-UK received humanitarian funds worth 800,000 USD to procure medical supplies and 2.4 million for orthopedics supplies and limb reconstruction services to cover the essential gaps in the health system.
- **UNICEF** will distribute 300 first aid kits to MoH (120), Palestine Red Crescent Society (100), Palestinian Medical Relief Society (30), Union of Health Workers Committees (30) and Hayfa Hospital (20).
- **Central Blood Bank Society (CBBS)** has approximately 310 units of blood ready for use: 250 in Gaza, 35 in Khan Younis and 33 in Rafah Governorate.

- **MDM France** are preparing the supplies to be released to Al Aqsa Hospital in case of a further escalation.
- **MDM Spain** is finalizing the process of procuring 400 first aid kits for volunteers to be released before the 31 March.
- **Al Ahli Arab Hospital** has activated its emergency response plan and opened a new ward to accommodate 90 additional beds.
- **WHO** will immediately deliver 10 trauma kits to the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and the Ministry of Health. Each kit will ensure provision of trauma interventions to at least 500 trauma patients. Additional 20 kits are ready to be compiled and will be distributed in consultations with partners and the MoH. WHO also prepositioned 15 surgical supply kits (SSK) in Gaza to support up to 1,500 surgical interventions.
- **The Health Cluster** and WHO are organizing a visit of the Humanitarian Coordinator to the trauma stabilization points and some health facilities on 29-30 March, to assess the level of preparedness and response capacity.
- **WHO** supported the **Health Cluster** in development of the quick assessment tool for the management of mass casualties. The tool will be used to provide assess the level of mass casualty preparedness across key trauma hospitals in the Gaza Strip.

CLUSTER PREPAREDNESS FOR THE 30TH MARCH

| Hospital | Triage support (EMTs) | Surgical support (EMTs) | Supplies | Orthopedic supplies |
|----------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Al Aqsa | MDM-France will support through provision of triage tent and supplies | MSF-France will provide support with one full EMT team. | MDM France will provide surgical supplies and supplies for emergency department MSF France EMT will provide surgical supplies and supplies for emergency department | MDM-Spain provided 10 complete fixators sets, 20 kits and 200 orthopedic supplies items |
| Nasser | MSF- France will provide support with one EMT | MSF-France will provide support with one EMT | MSF-France EMT will provide surgical supplies and supplies for emergency department | No active partner to provide support |
| Shifa | ICRC will provide support with one physician and one nurse | ICRC will support one EMT with a vascular surgeon supported by an anesthetist and a nurse | ICRC has three-month worth of supplies in stock at the ICRC managed ward | MAP-UK to provide supplies |
| EGH | No active partner to provide support | No active partner to provide support | No active partner to provide support | MAP-UK to provide supplies |
| Najjar | No active partner to provide support | No active partner to provide support | No active partner to provide support | No active partner to provide support |
| Indonesia | No active partner to provide support | No active partner to provide support | No active partner to provide support | No active partner to provide support |
| Al Awda (NGO) | Al Awda team and MSF Belgium EMT | Al Awda team and MSF Belgium EMT | No active partner to provide support | Currently have 20 external fixators which is not enough to cover the needs |

KEY GAPS & CHALLENGES

- Limited access for medical professionals and surge support to Gaza remains a challenge for scaling up the health humanitarian response.
- Immediate access to funding is needed in order to scale up prepositioned supplies, in particular drugs, disposables and external fixators.
- Hospitals in Gaza have limited human resources capacity and might require support from international medical teams

FUNDING STATUS

- From an estimated cohort of 676,522 people in need of essential trauma and emergency healthcare in 2019, the Health Cluster partners are able to target 555,615 people for a total of \$ 28.2 million¹. Out of this, \$ 9.7 million has been received, leaving a funding gap of \$ 18.5 million. An additional \$1.5 million is required to the minimum needed resources in order to prepare for and respond to the first 96 hours of violent conflict. Further information can be found here: <http://healthclusteropt.org/details/149/operational-response-for-gaza-2019>

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