

GAZA HUMANITARIAN ACCESS SNAPSHOT #3

(30 July - 12 August)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS DENIED AMID RELENTLESS BOMBARDMENT AND POLIO THREAT



Credit: Alef Multimedia Company

SITUATION UPDATE

As of 12 August, 39,897 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed and 92,152 reported injured, with many still missing under the rubble. With nowhere to flee, Palestinians face relentless and widespread attacks across the enclave.

As children worldwide prepare for the school year, the United Nations reports that 477 out of 564 schools in Gaza have been directly hit or damaged as of 6 July. In the past two weeks alone, eight schools have been struck, including the deadly 10 August [attack](#) on al-Tabin school-turned-shelter, where Israeli airstrikes killed at least 93 people during prayers and ignited a fire that could not be extinguished due to severe water shortages.

Please refer to the latest [OCHA flash update](#) for the latest situation update.

“People are volunteering to donate blood to save the lives of those who are injured, but we have to turn them away because they are too malnourished and medically unfit to donate blood.”

Dr Mohammed Salha, Acting Director of Al Awda Hospital, Gaza

HIGHLIGHTS HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

Humanitarian aid delivery remains severely impeded across Gaza, highlighting Israel's neglect of its legal obligations as an occupying power, including the obligation to facilitate and provide urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance at the necessary scale. As of 29 July, the UN [estimated](#) that 86% of the Gaza Strip was marked unsafe by Israeli forces. Since then, Israel's additional so-called "evacuation orders" have further reduced the so-called "humanitarian zones."

According to OCHA, the daily volume of humanitarian aid entering Gaza has dropped by 56% since April. It is important to note that success should be measured not by the number of trucks crossing the border but by the reduction in human suffering and the availability of essential supplies.

Since the assault began, **only 4,900 patients** have been medically evacuated from Gaza, leaving over **10,000** critically ill and wounded still awaiting evacuation. Additionally, more than **2,000** patients have been prevented from evacuating due to the lack of an effective mechanism established by Israeli authorities, which is delaying life-saving treatment, particularly for children.

Between 1 and 8 August, **out of 85 planned humanitarian assistance missions to the North,**

North Gaza



6 were cancelled due to logistical, operational, or security reasons



32 were denied by the Israeli authorities (CLA)

13 were impeded, and only **34** were facilitated.

In the South, **of the 122 planned humanitarian assistance missions to the South,**

South Gaza



15 were cancelled



36 were denied

8 were impeded, and **63** were facilitated.

Combined, denied missions (68) comprise about one third of planned missions since 1 August.

STATE OF CROSSINGS

The Erez East/Beit Hanoun crossing, which has a larger capacity, is currently the entry point for supplies from Ashdod port and Jordan, but it is only used for deliveries to the north.

Israeli authorities are allowing only one northern crossing (Erez East/Beit Hanoun or Erez West/Zikim) to operate at a time, with just one Israeli checkpoint inside Gaza open for travel between the north and south. The Erez West/Zikim entry point has been closed since August 2 for maintenance, which has redirected humanitarian supplies to Erez East/Beit Hanoun.

At the time of writing, the Cyprus maritime corridor also faces delays, with aid shipments stuck in Ashdod due to postponed high-level talks.

The Rafah border has remained closed since 6/7 May, when Israeli forces seized the border crossing. As a result, a backlog of nearly 1,300 humanitarian trucks is stranded in Al Arish, Egypt.

The Kerem Shalom/Karam Abu Salem (KS/KAS) crossing is largely inoperable, allowing only limited items like wheat flour and food parcels on an exceptional basis. Much of the aid remains inaccessible due to a significant backlog in Gaza's staging areas. Aid cargo through KS/KAS has decreased by over 80% in the last three months, falling from an average of 127 trucks per day in April to just 23 in July.

When attempting to move aid into and within Gaza, Palestinian aid trucks continue to be rejected at checkpoints by Israeli forces, leaving them vulnerable to instances of looting, as desperation for aid increases. Together with extreme risks due to bombardment and hostilities, these frequent movement denials and the ensuing lack of safety have deterred many Palestinian truck drivers from delivering aid.

Only 30 trucks carrying critically needed items—such as non-food essentials, water and sanitation supplies, medical supplies, and specialised malnutrition treatments—are transported along a fenced road to Gate 96. They face numerous security threats, including bombings, looting, and clashes, all exacerbated by the extreme deprivation caused by severe access restrictions.

Temperature-controlled trucks are not allowed at KS/KAS, requiring cargo to be transferred from closed trucks to flatbed trucks at the KS/KAS crossing, where only five trucks are permitted at a time. This transfer process increases the risk of cargo being seized or attacked, as flatbed trucks expose the items. A growing backlog of cargo is developing as trucks are rejected, and some cargo must be abandoned due to the limited time windows imposed by Israeli authorities for unloading and reloading.

The Jordanian Corridor is operational but faces delays due to security restrictions at border crossings. Logistical challenges, such as the limited number of trucks and difficulties in coordinating movements and ensuring safety, further impact aid delivery.

“The unacceptable bureaucratic impediments and security risks imposed by Israeli authorities for months on humanitarian workers and supplies flagrantly disregard the International Court of Justice’s order to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance. These actions deprive hundreds of thousands of Palestinians of essential humanitarian supplies and services.”

Federico Dessi, Regional Director, HI

During this reporting period, NGOs reported continued delays and denials of access for the following, non-exhaustive, list of items:

Alcohol-based medical supplies	Educational materials	Medical equipment
Antibiotics (amoxicillin, albendazole)	Disability assistive devices	Water Tanks
Anti-lice shampoo	Formula	Personal protective equipment
Basic medicines	Fuel (transport, cooking)	Psychotropic medication
Bedding	Food (meat, fresh produce)	Repair tools
Cash	Gauze	Saline solution
Clean water	Hygiene kits	Scabies medication
Clothes	IT and communications materials	Shampoo
Diapers	Jerrycans	Soap
Dignity kits	Kitchen utensils	Spare parts for WASH equipment
Cleaning products	Laboratory equipment and reagents	Tents
Vaccines	Nutritional treatments for infants and pregnant women	Water treatment equipment

For Example:

Solidarités International

Has had jerrycans, hygiene kits, institutional cleaning kits, and water bottles on standby due to insecurity and backlog at crossing points since May.

Humanity & Inclusion

Has finally received approval for prosthetics, orthotics, and oversized pallets after several weeks. However, the request for shipping much-needed IT and communication equipment is taking longer than expected due to the extensive information required for submission.

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

Has 488 pallets of shelter items, essential household items, and hygiene kits at multiple staging areas in KS/KAS crossing. The items have arrived in batches, with the first shipment arriving on 26 May.

Plan International

Reported that their local Palestinian partner organisations are facing access and security constraints, which means they are unable to pick up offloaded cargo at KS/KAS crossing, resulting in a significant backlog and hindering aid delivery. Plan International has a total of 660 food supplies and 1,186 hygiene kits stuck at the borders since June, as well as 1,800 hygiene kits, 900 dignity kits, and 300 food kits ready to be shipped once crossing is guaranteed.

Mercy Corps

Has pre-positioned 4,450 hygiene kits waiting to enter Gaza through KS/KAS and Erez East/Beit Hanoun crossings, with another 4,600 pending procurement once there are assurances that goods are able to enter, as preparation for a polio outbreak (see alert below).

Save the Children (SC)

Updated that, of the 17 pallets of temperature-controlled medicines stuck in Al-Arish, Egypt, 15 remain without approval from Israeli authorities. Two pallets have finally been approved, and SC is coordinating their onward transportation to KA/KAS with WHO and the Logistics Cluster. COGAT's restrictions on using closed trucks, instead requiring flatbed trucks, have resulted in repeated rejections of shipments of temperature-controlled medicines, which require closed truck transportation.

WeWorld

Has stated that, since the Israeli invasion of Rafah in early May, they have had to delay the import of hygiene materials due to increased security risks and a backlog at the KS/KAS crossing.

Islamic Relief

Has almost 1,000 packs of frozen meat supplies, intended for around 6,000 people, stuck at Kerem Shalom since mid-June. These packs were meant to be distributed for Eid al-Adha. After 7 weeks, around 70% of the delivery was finally approved and allowed into Gaza for distribution. The remaining 30% (almost 1,000 packs) are still awaiting approval from Israeli authorities.

International Development Relief Fund's (IDRF)

Efforts to provide critical aid, including 5,000 hygiene kits, 1,000 water tanks, and clothing for 10,000 families are severely hindered due to the closure of Rafah, the destruction of main roads and fuel shortages which have prevented these from entering Gaza while the destruction of IDRF's water truck in the north due to bombardments further exacerbate the challenges.



"Water desalination units and their spare parts, generators, pump, solar panel, chlorine are essential to increase the provision of safe and sufficient drinking water and must be allowed to enter Gaza. Clean water is essential for survival. The population is forced to drink highly saline or polluted water, leading to widespread waterborne diseases."

Senior Management, Solidarités International



POLIO ALERT



- The risk of infectious disease outbreak in Gaza is high. **Médecins du Monde** highlights that the contamination of water, shortages in medication, and the decimation of the health and sanitation systems are driving widespread disease and exhausting the immune systems of vulnerable groups, including women, children, and people with disabilities. The lack of fresh food and clean water has led to malnutrition – with the UN reporting a **300% increase** in July – and the spread of communicable diseases.
- The Health Cluster is preparing for a potential polio outbreak given the detection of the virus in sewage samples and the decline in vaccination coverage from **99%** in 2022 to **89%** in 2023. This decline, coupled with the inability to implement full disease surveillance and conduct outreach vaccination services, heightens the risk. Humanitarian agencies, including UNRWA, WHO, and NGOs are actively monitoring for suspected cases.
- In response to the worrying situation, the WHO Director-General has announced plans to send over one million polio vaccines to Gaza, calling for **"days of tranquility"** in the short term, and a ceasefire, to be able to administer the vaccines.

- On 5 August, **ActionAid partner Al-Awda** referred suspected polio cases to Kamal Adwan hospital. Due to a shortage of medical supplies and testing equipment in Al-Awda, they have been unable to carry out the necessary medical tests to confirm the diagnosis. Future cases will be referred to Kamal Adwan due to the limited capacities in Al-Awda.
- Among urgent needs to prevent or respond to an outbreak are: vaccines; training for community-based nurse agents to recognise polio cases; protective equipment and supplies; and educational materials to raise awareness; and medical treatment.
- **Mercy Corps** is working to expand its WASH programming to reduce the risk of transmission. As noted above, Mercy Corps is awaiting entry of hygiene kits to support improved hygiene.

“We’ve already seen a spike in skin diseases like scabies, as well as hepatitis, and gastrointestinal diseases in children. Members of the Health Cluster are preparing for the worst-case scenario of a polio outbreak in the coming weeks. While there have been no recorded cases so far, we know that doctors could be missing the warning signs given the decimation of the healthcare system and the outbreak of many different communicable diseases.”

Francis Hughes, Emergency Response Director for Gaza, CARE



IN DEPTH: **ACCESS & MOVEMENT CONSTRAINTS**

NGOs operating in Gaza face significant obstacles due to the security environment and stringent blockade and access restrictions imposed by Israel. The following examples from this reporting period illustrate the severity and complexity of these challenges:

- **Oxfam:** On 2 August, an Oxfam colleague attempted to travel 15-20 km from the south to the north of Gaza, this time with an FAO-OCHA mission. Despite prior coordination, the delegation was held at the Netzarim checkpoint for 5.5 hours and had to turn back. Out of several attempts, Oxfam reached the north only two times in 10 months. In both cases, missions were initially turned back. This highlights the extreme difficulties of even short travel within Gaza, a territory only 41 km/25 miles long. A month earlier, another colleague faced a 7-hour delay returning from a mission, arriving in Deir al Balah at 4am, risking safety given the poor visibility in an active combat zone. These delays and forced vehicle scans are part of Israel's systematic obstruction of aid.
- **Médecins du Monde (Mdm):** Mdm is facing severe challenges in delivering medical supplies and ensuring safe movement for its staff. The organisation reports increased rejections of movement coordination requests, particularly from 1-7 August. Active military operations in Jabalia camp and the targeting of medical facilities have further complicated their operations. Despite working within areas unilaterally designated as so-called "humanitarian zones", Mdm staff face significant security risks and operational constraints due to restricted access and the lack of fuel.
- **Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA):** The organisation has encountered significant delays in picking up humanitarian aid from the KS/KAS crossing due to dangerous routes and ongoing security threats. For example, aid pickups were delayed for more than 10 days when large areas of Khan Younis were under so-called "evacuation orders". The lack of fuel and the dangerous security situation further impede aid deliveries, forcing frequent cancellations of distributions.
- **ActionAid:** One of ActionAid's partners in eastern Khan Younis has been unable to reach its warehouses, which are located in areas covered by so-called "evacuation orders". The breakdown in public order, limited fuel availability, continuous bombing, and unsafe conditions for aid convoys have slowed down and limited aid deliveries.
- Another organisation reports that their water trucking operations were denied by Israeli authorities multiple times without explanation, causing significant disruption in aid delivery.

“Every day, humanitarian workers in Gaza are risking their lives to provide vital aid to people in desperate need. No one should have to work in such appalling conditions, but this is the reality our staff and partners have faced for more than nine months now. Aid access must be urgently improved and there must be a permanent ceasefire now, to stop this catastrophic humanitarian crisis spiraling any further out of control.”

Ziad Issa, Head of Humanitarian Policy, ActionAid



BOMBARDMENT & DAMAGE TO INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Médecins du Monde's** medical points in Rafah and Jabalia camp have been targeted, leading to their relocation or suspension of services. Staff work under high security risks, affecting their ability to provide aid. Attacks on infrastructure, such as the destruction of water wells, desalination plants, and oxygen plants, further exacerbate the crisis.
- **WeWorld** reports that recent Israeli forces' attacks on displacement sites raised concerns about staff safety, leading to the postponement of critical WASH repairs in shelters.



UNSAFE DELIVERY CONDITIONS

NGOs continue to encounter roads that are destroyed or unsafe, and unexploded ordnance is a major risk. Together with the general breakdown in public order, these lead to unsafe delivery conditions.

- **NRC** items were transported in two trucks to the Logistics Cluster warehouse in Gaza's Middle Area on 2 August – the first delivery of any cargo for NRC since 3 May. On completion, NRC was informed that one of the two trucks had been looted during travel. Losses from this incident are estimated to be at least USD 135,000. NRC transported the remaining aid from the Logistics Cluster warehouse to its own warehouse in Deir al-Balah on 11 August.
- **Oxfam** also lost some of its parcels due to the growing insecurity and the total deprivation of people in Gaza leading people in desperation to resort to looting.



"It is unrealistic to expect international organisations to police Gaza and prevent looting amidst extreme desperation caused by Israel's policies of collective punishment and siege. These organisations already operate under constant threats and are repeatedly compromised by Israel's prioritisation of military objectives over its obligations to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian aid."

Tania Hary, Director, Gisha



FUEL SHORTAGES HIGH COSTS & LIQUIDITY ISSUES

NGOs are facing critical fuel shortages, with available fuel being prohibitively expensive, which significantly impacts their ability to deliver assistance. In addition to fuel shortages, NGOs also grapple with high coordination and transportation costs. These combined challenges strain their budgets and liquidity, further complicating their operations. See NRC's in-depth note on Gaza's cash liquidity crisis [here](#).

- **ActionAid** successfully coordinated deliveries with the Logistics Clusters but had to pay high transportation costs to deliver aid through alternate routes.
- **ActionAid, ADA, CARE, DCA-NCA, HI, MdM, MdM-CH, MECA, Solidarités International, War Child, and WeWorld** are all facing severe cash liquidity issues. They are struggling with limited cash availability, difficulties with wire transfers, and vendors' reluctance to accept alternative payment methods. This situation hampers the payment of salaries for staff and contractors and the purchase of essential items, such as solar panels. International bank transfers and cash agents incur high fees, forcing NGOs to prioritise activities based on cash availability rather than need. Rising inflation is also increasing the cost of basic supplies for both communities and humanitarian actors. Inflation is increasing the cost of basic supplies for communities and humanitarian actors alike.



"I am barely able to secure my baby's needs. I am constantly afraid of what is to come, of not being able to find any diapers, formula milk and those kinds of things because of the repeated closure of the crossing and their lack of availability in the market. I sent my husband looking for diapers, and it took him two whole days until he found some. In addition to the inflation in prices, we go through extreme difficulty to find those items."

Diana, 22, a mother currently displaced in Deir Al-Balah





STAFF SAFETY **AND WELLBEING**

Ongoing hostilities are a threat to staff safety, particularly as the humanitarian notification system has failed to protect aid workers on numerous occasions. To date, **284 humanitarian workers** have been killed in Gaza. The frequent targeting of so-called “**humanitarian zones**” places immense pressure on staff, who feel unsafe and at risk of being targeted as they try to survive. This creates a significant mental health burden on staff, further complicating their ability to deliver aid and access locations. The sight of extensive destroyed homes and infrastructure has a profound emotional impact on humanitarian workers.

- An **Oxfam** colleague who travelled to the north with WHO observed the devastation in Gaza City and the emotional toll it took on the residents, many of whom had not seen their homes since the conflict began.
- **War Child** reports that two staff members have been displaced in Khan Younis yet again and that a partner providing mental health services in Deir al Balah suffered severe damage to their premises, with several staff sustaining minor injuries and emotional distress.
- **ActionAid** staff were in close proximity to the devastating attack on Khadija girls’ school in Gaza on 27 July, which killed at least 30 people.



LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Under the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the IV Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Israel, as the occupying power and a party to the conflict, is obligated to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the occupied population are met to the same extent as the legitimate Government was so bound. This includes facilitating humanitarian aid and creating conditions that enable the provision of essential services and supplies. In this case, Israel as the occupying power has the duty to ensure that aid is not only allowed into Gaza but also delivered safely to those in need. Humanitarian organisations are crucial in providing support but cannot do so without safe delivery procedures and an enabling environment - a responsibility beyond our remit. The facilitation of aid must be principled, safe, secure, and unimpeded across all areas of Gaza.

The protection of humanitarians is meant to be guaranteed under IHL. The responsibility for upholding this protection rests with the parties to the conflict. Third States must also respect their own legal obligations to urgently act to enforce respect for IHL in the Gaza Strip.

On 26 January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered that Israel must take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. **On 24 May 2024**, the ICJ ordered that Israel must keep the Rafah crossing open for unhindered provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale, and must immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah governorate.

On 19 July 2024, the ICJ concluded that Israel’s continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory - which includes the Gaza Strip - was unlawful and that Israel must bring its occupation to an end, while Third States also have an obligation not to recognise as legal the unlawful presence of Israel in occupied territory, nor to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation. Third States also have a responsibility to bring Grave Breaches of IHL in Gaza to an end, including, but not limited to, forcible transfer and extensive destruction of property.

**Israel has issued multiple so-called “evacuation orders”, resulting in mass displacements, without providing adequate accommodation, or satisfactory conditions of health, safety and hygiene to meet the requirements of a lawful evacuation under IHL. IHL also requires that a lawful evacuation be temporary. Due to massive damage and destruction to residential buildings in Gaza it is likely that many such evacuations will not be temporary, and so would not constitute a lawful evacuation but rather a proscribed act of forcible transfer.*



CALL TO ACTION

As humanitarian actors, our presence in Gaza is possible thanks to the unwavering commitment of our colleagues on the ground despite great risks to their own lives. Our continued presence should not be mistaken for an indication of unimpeded access. We operate at great risk, and under significant impediments to our access. The risks our colleagues are exposed to each moment are unacceptable and contrary to their protections under international law. In Gaza, we are not witnessing a "shrinking" humanitarian space; there is barely any space left to operate at all.

We, the undersigned NGOs, continue to call for an immediate and lasting ceasefire and maintain it is the only way to provide humanitarian assistance and protect and save lives in Gaza. We also call on all States to immediately halt the transfer of weapons, parts, and ammunition to Israel and Palestinian armed groups while there is a risk they are used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law.



Norwegian People's Aid

