



## Gaza crisis

ECHO FACTSHEET

### Facts & Figures

(as of 28 .08.14)

#### Number of people affected:

1.8 Million

#### Number of people killed:

Over 2 000

#### European Commission humanitarian funding in the Occupied Palestinian Territory 2014:

€31.6 million

(€23,5 million to the Gaza Strip)

#### Total European Commission funding in Palestine since 2000:

€ 700 million



Photo credit: Shareef Sarhan/UNRWA

### Key messages

- After 50 days of military escalation, a long term ceasefire agreement was reached between Israel and the Palestinians on 26 August 2014. The destruction resulting from the violence in the Gaza Strip is unprecedented and has had a dramatic humanitarian impact, with an extraordinarily high casualty rate among the civilian population.
- Major assistance is required and the European Commission calls for the respect of International Humanitarian Law and for full and unimpeded humanitarian access to ensure the provision of much needed emergency relief to Palestinians in Gaza.
- The Commission's ongoing assistance to Gaza is being redirected to respond to the most urgent needs, including food, shelter, health, repair of water and sanitation infrastructure, and provision of power supply to key emergency services. The European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response in her statement of 17 July, emphasized that Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations must be protected at all times. Both sides must ensure full compliance with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions during confrontations.
- The current crisis confirms the unsustainable nature of the status quo, notably the protracted blockade in the Gaza Strip.

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## Humanitarian situation and needs

The military assault on the Gaza strip which started in July 2014 has led to an **exponential increase in civilian casualties** and **displacement**.

The Palestinian death toll stands at over 2,000 (over three-quarters are believed to be civilians) as well as more than 10,000 injured. A total of 69 Israelis have been killed, of whom 65 were soldiers.

**Over 100,000 Palestinians have had their homes destroyed beyond repair.** Before the ceasefire, almost 500,000 people were displaced (25 per cent of the Gaza population). Following the ceasefire, many displaced families moved out of UN and government shelters to return to what is left of their home or to seek refuge with host families or elsewhere..

Humanitarian operations are at stake and early recovery planning is paralyzed due to the structural impediments undermining the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, particularly damages to critical utilities including water, sewage, and electricity infrastructure.

The high civilian fatality rate, the shelling of hospitals and schools, and the killing of humanitarian aid workers and on-duty medical personnel and electricity, water and waste water technicians, have raised **concerns about respect for the principles of distinction between civilian targets and proportionality under international humanitarian law.**

The financial support made available by the Commission contributes to saving lives, alleviating suffering and restoring dignity in Gaza. Nevertheless, ECHO recognises the serious limitations of what humanitarian aid can achieve without a durable and just political solution of the conflict, in line with the obligations of all parties under International Humanitarian Law. **The blockade imposed by the Government of Israel on the Gaza Strip is in its eighth year and the current crisis confirms the unsustainable nature of the status quo.**

## The European Union's Response

The Commission has allocated **a new financial commitment of €5 million to support emergency operations from key humanitarian partners.** This brings humanitarian funding made available by ECHO to support the Palestinian population of Gaza to about €23.5 million. Following the recent escalations, ECHO's assistance to Gaza has been redirected to respond to the most urgent needs of the Palestinian population, including food, shelter and health as well as repair of water and sanitation infrastructure.

The Commission's partners are currently providing a range of essential services to the Palestinian population in Gaza:

- **Emergency health assistance** in the main hospitals and through convoys by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- **Food assistance** through distribution of vouchers and basic commodities and other essential non-food items to displaced Palestinian by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Occupied Palestinian Territory Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the World Food Programme (WFP), Action Contre la Faim, Première Urgence - Aide Médicale Internationale, and Oxfam GB;
- **Provision of water**, including drinking water and repair of essential infrastructures, and basic sanitation through Action Contre la Faim, ICRC and Oxfam GB
- **Hygiene kits** through Première Urgence
- **Household items**, including basic materials for partitions, for those living with host-families or emergency shelters, through NRC.

Since 2000, the European Commission has provided **€700 million in humanitarian aid** to help meet the basic needs of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian Territory. Current **humanitarian funding for 2014 totals €31.6 million** is reaching more than two million people. Nearly two thirds of the 2014 humanitarian funding already allocated for the occupied Palestinian Territory goes to food assistance and emergency response and preparedness (primarily in health, water and sanitation, and food assistance) in the Gaza Strip.

