



GAZA HUMANITARIAN SNAPSHOT

15 July 2024

Humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Gaza have consistently reported that Israel's systematic obstruction of aid and its ongoing attacks on aid operations, including facilities, personnel and distribution points, have prevented the effective delivery to people in need. Ever since Israel's defense minister Gallant declared a complete siege on the Gaza Strip on 9 October 2023, the amount of aid entering the enclave has been insufficient to meet the needs on the ground.¹

In early May, Israel launched a long-feared major ground incursion into Rafah and southern Gaza, resulting in mass forcible displacement, civilian casualties, and closure and restrictions at main crossings. This action halted medical evacuations and severed humanitarian aid to Gaza. Over the last weeks, continued Israeli bombardment across Gaza, including attacks on UN-run schools used as shelters, new so-called "evacuation orders", attacks on municipal workers and other public service providers including water and sanitation workers, have further deteriorated the ability of aid agencies to respond. Palestinians continue to be squeezed into smaller, overcrowded areas that lack the resources to support human life.

The Government of Israel's statistics on truck entries and narrative on access fail to address several vital components necessary for an effective operational response. Among these, the most significant is the actual delivery of aid to the population in need within Gaza. The mere entry of trucks into Gaza does not guarantee that the supplies reach the intended recipients due to safety and security reasons. Furthermore, the reported numbers do not differentiate between types of cargo, often mixing commercial goods with critical humanitarian aid, which obscures the real picture of assistance reaching those in crisis.

This document aims to provide a snapshot of the immense obstacles that impede aid delivery in Gaza, with concrete examples from NGOs on the ground. It offers a glimpse into the daily challenges faced by humanitarian workers, made worse by conflict, bombardment and gunfire, and the siege tactics. We aim to complement ongoing reporting from UN agencies and civil society groups to paint a picture of these harsh realities.

¹ In early May, seven agencies released a [briefing note](#) outlining the discrepancy between the Government of Israel's public commitments to improving humanitarian access in Gaza and the harsh reality on the ground. In late May, eighteen agencies published [another press release](#), denouncing the cosmetic changes to the rapidly disintegrating access situation and warning of the humanitarian system's imminent collapse.

DETERIORATION OF ACCESS FOR HUMANITARIAN SUPPLIES INTO GAZA

None of the land crossings into Gaza – the most effective, viable way to deliver assistance – have been fully functional since October 2023, while the North of the strip remains effectively cut off from the South by the Israeli army.

Southern access - Kerem Shalom / Karam Abu Salem crossing

The situation around the Kerem Shalom/Karam Abu Salem (KS/KAS) crossing has deteriorated significantly since Israel's offensive in May, making the crossing unsafe to access from within Gaza and currently not logistically viable. Since early May, KS/KAS has been designated as the primary crossing for humanitarian cargo, food, fuel, and other critical supplies and is described by Israeli authorities as 'open' – but in practice only a small trickle of aid has entered through this crossing and reached people in need for the following reasons:

- The area between this crossing and the so-called "humanitarian zone", where most Palestinians in Gaza reside, is an active combat zone and has become extremely unsafe since the onset of the Israeli offensive on Rafah.
- The security situation has further deteriorated due to Israeli attacks on Gaza's civilian police force, which have hindered their ability to work due to life safety concerns. This has led to a breakdown in public order and safety, increasing the likelihood of looting of humanitarian convoys. The increase in looting incidents now is a result of 9 months of Israeli destruction of civilian infrastructure and aid obstruction, squeezing the population into a pressure cooker situation. When people are pushed to extreme limits, they will do whatever it takes for the survival of their families.
- Lack of visibility and predictability on the situation and KS/KAS crossing, which is hardly accessible for NGOs and the UN, complicates operations and planning.

Since early May, most organizations have had to discontinue purchasing new goods due to the backlog created by the lack of functioning entry routes from Egypt to Gaza. There are reportedly over 1,500 UN/NGOs trucks currently waiting in Al Arish in Egypt to cross into Gaza.

The deteriorating environment has severely impacted humanitarian organizations, including **ActionAid (AA)**, **CARE**, **Médecins du Monde (MDM)**, **Médecins sans Frontières (MSF)**, **Mercy Corps (MC)**, the **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**, **Save the Children (SC)**, **Première Urgence Internationale (PUI)**, **Plan International**, and their ability to operate:



Save the Children

SC has 10 pallets of essential medical supplies in Al Arish with no ability to move those into Gaza safely. SC's last medical supply shipment was stuck due to the Rafah closure, resulting in some supplies spoiling. While SC is exploring northern supply routes, there remains no feasible way to transfer these supplies further South.



On 7 July, CARE successfully delivered a truckload of baby kits into Gaza for the first time since May, after being stalled at the KS/KAS crossing for around three weeks. Several additional trucks equipped with baby and hygiene kits remain in Cairo, held back from dispatch to Gaza due to the substantial backlogs.



PUI has procured bedding sets and personal care items sufficient to fill 50 trucks since early May, which have still not been allowed to cross into Gaza. Since the expanded incursion into Rafah on 6 May, PUI has only managed to bring two trucks of aid into the enclave.



One AA truck entered through KS/KAS in June and the content was fully distributed. However, a total of 20 truckloads are still stuck in Egypt containing 1800 dignity kits and 1580 hygiene kits. Efforts to coordinate for entry have been ongoing for at least 2 months.



As of 12 July, three trucks containing predominantly essential medical items have been waiting in Egypt to enter Gaza through the KS/KAS crossing since 14 June. The MSF-supported Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis is facing critical shortages of medical supplies.



MdM had planned to dispatch primary healthcare supplies for three of its Primary Health Care Centers in the Middle Area of Gaza, as well as sexual and reproductive health, prenatal, and postnatal supplies intended to support up to 5,000 women, girls, and newborns. The closure of Rafah crossing and ongoing restrictions at KS/KAS have blocked these shipments.



MC trucks containing 660 food kits and 886 hygiene kits have been stuck in Egypt waiting to cross into KS/KAS since 12 June. Trucks containing 464 hygiene kits and 370 food kits that were facilitated in collaboration with Plan International Egypt to enter Gaza via KS/KAS on 14 June have yet to be uplifted due to access and security constraints. A further 1,000 sealing off kits and 1,000 bedding sets have been procured in Egypt but are unable to enter Gaza due to the access issues at KS/KAS.



900 pallets of NRC's shelter materials, non-food items, and hygiene products are currently scattered at various points around the KS/KAS crossing; NRC has not managed to receive new supplies to its warehouse in the Middle Area since 3 May. 16 trucks filled with NRC items such as hygiene kits, kitchen sets, sleeping bags, tarpaulins, and water filters that have been rejected by Israeli authorities have accumulated in Al-Arish warehouse since December, incurring demurrage fees.

Southern access - Rafah crossing

In early May 2024, Israeli forces seized and subsequently closed the Rafah crossing. It was reportedly found to be destroyed shortly thereafter. This brought the movement of aid from Egypt into Gaza through Rafah to a complete halt.



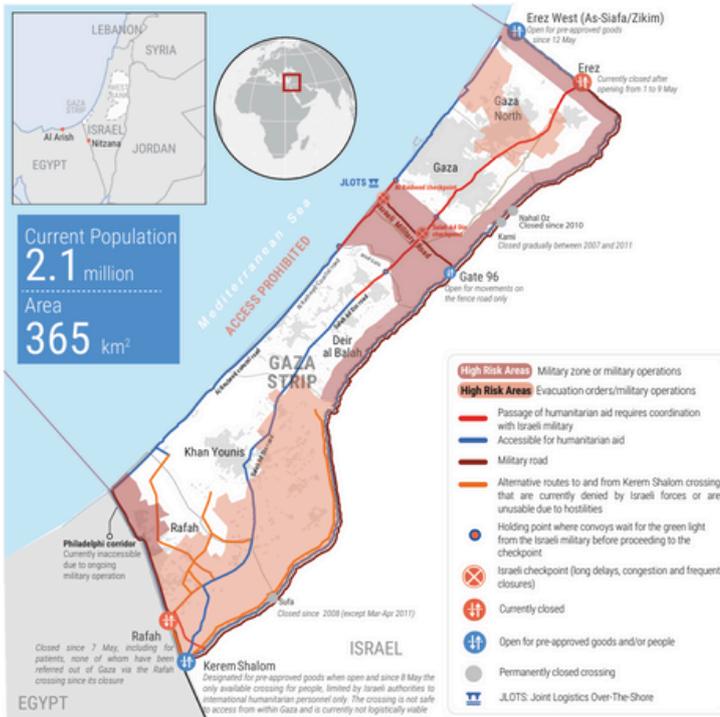
Since Israel's Rafah offensive in early May, Humanity & Inclusion / Handicap International (HI) has had a temporary halt in transporting goods into Gaza. After spending several months establishing new supply chains from Egypt into Gaza through the Rafah crossing, the closure of the crossing has brought HI's supply chain to a standstill. Just before Israel's offensive, HI had sent hygiene kits to Gaza; however, these supplies were lost in the ensuing chaos and remain untraceable. Currently, HI still has 456 pallets of critical supplies stuck in Jordan, Egypt, and France, including prosthetics and orthotics, assistive devices for people with disabilities and injuries, wound dressing kits, hygiene and dignity kits, and clothing, all unable to be delivered to Gaza.

Northern access - Erez and Western Erez/Zikim/As-Siafa

In early May, Israel announced the opening of two crossings in the North. However, on 9 May, Erez/Beit Hanoun crossing closed again for UN and NGO humanitarian trucks. In practice, Western Erez/Zikim/As-Siafa crossing is logistically hardly viable, and inadequate to cover the needs of people in the Northern area, where 20% of households are classified

in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) and 45% in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) for food insecurity.

Furthermore, humanitarian aid entering through northern crossings has to first travel through the Jordan corridor from Amman, a route with many challenges. Vandalism by Israeli settlers, the necessity to cross-load goods from one truck to another at each crossing, lack of organizational oversight whilst unloading at Western Erez/Zikim/As-Siafa, and extended X-ray scanning have resulted in significant delays in aid delivery. Moreover, not all humanitarian actors can utilize the Jordan corridor as aid must be customs-cleared, requiring organizations to be registered in Israel.



Map: Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), [10 July 2024](#)

For these reasons, as well as logistical challenges induced by the closure and backlog at southern crossings caused by the Israeli military operation, it took Oxfam five weeks to transport just 1,600 food parcels through Western Erez/Zikim/As-Siafa crossing point. In reality, it should take no more than 6 hours to drive goods from Jordan to Gaza and not more than 3 days maximum to process the entire delivery. Delays in the heat are especially critical for perishable food items, greatly increasing the risk of spoilage during transit.

Aid entering does not match the needs

Already prior to October 2023, the Israeli blockade restricted the entry of trucks into Gaza to roughly 500 trucks per working day, resulting in around 10,000 - 11,500 trucks entering each month to meet the bare humanitarian minimum in times of stability. Over the last nine months, humanitarian needs have sharply increased, requiring far more aid than in the past to support the population's survival.

The Israeli Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories body (COGAT) states that a total of 41,234 trucks have entered Gaza from 7 October 2023 to 9 July 2024. This is significantly higher than the UN's figures of humanitarian trucks entering Gaza. While it is unclear and unverifiable how COGAT's figures are calculated, there is an apparent prioritization of commercial goods over humanitarian supplies, despite the sky-high prices in the markets. Colleagues on the ground report that the most affordable foods available are sweets/fizzy drinks. Fruits and vegetables are hard to find, and are often too expensive for people to afford. Access to a nutritious diet is particularly critical for children as well as pregnant and lactating mothers given long-term implications for child development.

Moreover, prior to October, approximately 11,000 trucks entered Gaza each month, totaling at least 99,000 over nine months. As such, even according to COGAT's own numbers, only 40% of Gaza's minimum needs during periods of stability are met (41,234 out of 99,000). Most importantly, COGAT's numbers of trucks and humanitarian access narrative ignore several components key to an

effective operational response, including whether humanitarian aid is reaching populations in need within Gaza.

Counting trucks is a false metric for evaluating humanitarian access in the Gaza Strip. Instead, humanitarian access should be gauged by the reduction in human suffering and the availability of sufficient supplies to provide assistance to the population. This is not the situation in Gaza, where aid organizations are reporting critical shortages of urgently needed items.

MdM and its teams are facing shortages of medical supplies. Drug supplies are severely limited, with several types completely banned from entering Gaza, including anesthetics for surgeries and strong painkillers. Additionally, essential drugs for non-communicable diseases, particularly those for type 1 diabetes, are missing. There is also a current shortage of creams for skin diseases. Recently, there has been a notable lack of antibiotics, especially those safe for pregnant and lactating women.

INSIDE GAZA: ACCESS WITHOUT SECURITY IS NOT ACCESS

Even when humanitarian staff and goods are within Gaza, their movement to reach those in need is severely restricted. NGOs report numerous obstacles including checkpoint delays, constant bombardment, fuel shortages, impassable roads and UXOs, as well as ongoing military operations. Humanitarian operations are confined to an increasingly smaller so-called “humanitarian zone” which has never proven to be safe, as demonstrated by the 13 July attack on Al-Mawasi, reportedly killing at least 90 civilians and wounding 300.

According to the UN, of the 115 humanitarian missions planned for northern Gaza in June, only 53 (46%) were facilitated by Israeli authorities. Additionally, 41 missions (35.7%) faced impediments, 11 (9.6%) were outright denied access, and 10 (8.7%) were canceled due to logistical, operational, or security concerns. Movement between Gaza's North and South is also particularly challenging due to the checkpoints and holding points along the Israeli military's Netzarim corridor, which segments the enclave, compounded by persistent fighting and insecurity, including the following:



Picture: © CARE. The few aid trucks that do enter Gaza face the risk of looting and must be equipped with protective cages around windows and lights due to the increasing desperation of the local population facing starvation and death.

Several NGOs reported that their teams are required to notify the Israeli authorities of their movements even within designated “humanitarian zones” and must wait for acknowledgement before proceeding. The stated intended purpose of these so-called “humanitarian zones” is to ensure safe and free movement; the necessity for such notifications illustrates that no place in Gaza is safe.

One NGO described severe mobility challenges during the short journey from Deir al Balah to Gaza City. Departing at 8AM, teams faced multiple stops, requiring Israeli approvals, extensive security screenings, and prolonged waits, turning a brief trip into a day-long ordeal. Palestinian aid workers are subjected to additional risks as they must exit the vehicle for checks, whereas non-Palestinian staff are screened via cameras or drones.



Oxfam's trucks have been limited to delivering goods through the West Erez/Zikim/As-Siafa crossing in Northern Gaza. This region has been heavily impacted by continuous Israeli bombings, destroying infrastructure and forcing many, including Oxfam's local partners, to flee to less perilous areas. The lack of fuel has further impeded their ability to distribute aid effectively. As a result, simply transporting goods from the crossing to people in need has become a challenge.

Navigating the Gaza Strip has become increasingly difficult due to escalating fuel shortages since the Israeli ground incursion in Rafah. Prior to October, a liter of gas cost around 7 shekels (less than 2 USD), whereas it has now skyrocketed to between 200 and 220 shekels (nearly 60 USD). This fuel crisis has drastically hindered mobility, affecting essential operations. Lacking fuel, DanChurchAid and Norwegian Church Aid (DCA-NCA) teams have had to rely on donkey carts or walk extensive distances to complete their tasks.

Following DCA-NCA's needs assessments, the organizations planned to implement critical WASH interventions in Al Mawasi area in Khan Younis. However, as Israeli military operations approached these areas, the organizations were forced to limit their assistance to only the Middle Area. This is just one of many instances where organizations have had to cancel, postpone, or relocate their operations, preventing them from responding on the basis of needs.



NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID
actalliance

HUMANITARIAN ACTION UNDER ATTACK

Despite attempts to use voluntary humanitarian notification and deconfliction systems with the Israeli forces, our premises, infrastructure, and personnel have repeatedly come under attack, disrupting aid efforts and endangering lives. Over 500 healthcare workers and 274 aid workers have been killed in the last nine months. These workers should be protected and never targeted, and their killing reduces already limited staff capacity. Survivors face constant danger, sheltering from bombs, and struggling to find food, hindering their work. Many NGOs have suspended sending additional staff into Gaza, despite urgent needs for rotation and reinforcement.



Since the start of the war, MSF staff and patients have had to leave 14 health structures and have endured 26 violent incidents, which includes airstrikes damaging hospitals, tanks firing at agreed deconflicted shelters, ground offensives into medical centres, and convoys fired on. The last MSF health facility in North Gaza has been forced to temporarily close after Israeli forces issued a so-called evacuation order for areas of Gaza City on 8 July.



In May, a medical point supported by MdM within an UNRWA school sheltering displaced persons in North Gaza was destroyed by Israeli forces during a three-week Israeli military offensive on Jabalya refugee camp. It was one of 6 UNRWA schools that were besieged, set on fire and destroyed by Israeli forces. The severity of the military operation in Jabalya led to significant devastation, temporarily halted critical health services for multiple days before resuming in another location.



In June, Israeli forces bombed the home of an HI staff member in Nuseirat Camp, killing her and her entire family.

Around the same time, Israeli forces also destroyed a warehouse in Rafah managed by Atlas Logistique, one of HI's operational units, destroying with it nearly 200 pallets of life-saving aid belonging to different organizations.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AND WAYS FORWARD

Under Article 55 of the IV Geneva Convention, the occupying power is obligated to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the occupied population are met. This includes facilitating humanitarian aid and creating conditions that enable the provision of 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 organizations 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 International Humanitarian Law (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.

Our presence in Gaza is solely due 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 a sign of something worthy of being called "access" - it is despite its very absence. The risks our colleagues are exposed to each moment are unacceptable. Today, the issue is not just a "shrinking" humanitarian space; there is hardly any space left to operate at all.

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.