

# Levant – Complex Emergency

JANUARY 16, 2024

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<b>2.2</b> MILLION	<b>24,100</b>	<b>1.9</b> MILLION	<b>344</b>	<b>1,200</b>
Projected Number of People Facing Acute Food Insecurity from December to February	Palestinian Deaths Reported in Gaza Since October 7	People Displaced in Gaza Since October 7	Palestinian Deaths Reported in the West Bank Since October 7	Deaths Reported in Israel Since October 7
<i>IPC – December 2023</i>	<i>UN – January 2024</i>	<i>UN – December 2023</i>	<i>UN – January 2024</i>	<i>UN – January 2024</i>

- More than 85 percent of Gaza’s population is displaced amid ongoing hostilities. UNRWA reports that shelters in southern Gaza are severely overcrowded, fueling health and WASH crises.
- Only 15 of 36 hospitals operational in Gaza prior to October 7 remain partially functional, while hospitals in the north can only provide extremely limited services.
- An IPC analysis released on December 21 estimates that Gaza’s entire population of 2.2 million people is experiencing Crisis—IPC 3—or worse food security conditions.
- USAID/BHA-supported field hospital opens in Rafah, providing emergency health care to patients experiencing acute needs.



<b>TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING</b> For the Levant Response in FY 2024	USAID/BHA <sup>1</sup>	\$43,314,285
	State/PRM <sup>2</sup>	\$69,200,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$112,514,285<sup>3</sup></b>

*For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 7*

<sup>1</sup> USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

<sup>3</sup> The \$100 million in USG funding announced in October 2023 includes USAID/BHA funds obligated in FY 2023 and not included in the FY 2024 total.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### Majority of Gaza's Population Displaced as Humanitarian Crisis Worsens

Ongoing conflict—including airstrikes, artillery fire, ground operations, and naval bombardment—continue to result in civilian casualties and drive new displacement into increasingly crowded areas with few or no available resources. Three months since hostilities escalated, an estimated 24,100 Palestinians in Gaza had been killed and more than 60,800 injured as of January 15, according to the UN. Additionally, more than 1.9 million people across Gaza—more than 85 percent of the population—are currently displaced. Of these, approximately 1.4 million people are sheltering inside nearly 160 UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)-administered sites across all five governorates of the Gaza Strip, while another 400,000 individuals are in close proximity to these installations and receiving assistance from UNRWA. The UN agency reports severe overcrowding, with shelters—virtually all of which are schools—operating at more than four times their intended capacity and requiring internally displaced persons (IDPs) to sleep in shifts due to lack of space, according to international media. Relief actors report significant concerns regarding the transmission of communicable diseases and other health conditions. Outside of UNRWA-administered shelters, particularly in southern Gaza's Rafah Governorate, thousands of IDPs are residing in overcrowded, makeshift shelters—comprising plastic sheets and tarps—where they are increasingly susceptible to harsh weather conditions resulting from the November-to-March rainy season. The compounding effects of these conditions are driving food, health, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs that continue to exceed the availability of resources.

### Entire Population of Gaza Now Acutely Food-Insecure, One-Fourth Face Catastrophic Conditions

Between December 8 and February 7, Gaza's entire population of approximately 2.2 million people is projected to experience Crisis—IPC 3—or worse levels of acute food insecurity, according to an expert-level Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis released on December 21.<sup>4</sup> More than 50 percent are projected to experience Emergency—IPC 4—levels of acute food insecurity, and more than 25 percent are likely facing Catastrophe—IPC 5—levels, the analysis reports; these classifications are generally characterized by extreme lack of food and exhaustion of coping capacities. The projections represent the highest percentage of the population and highest number of people projected to face Catastrophe levels of acute food insecurity in any country or territory worldwide. The food emergency in Gaza has significantly worsened since October 7, driven by hostilities and resultant displacement, disruption of crucial services, and the lack of commercial imports. Food consumption levels in northern Gaza are projected to be worse than in southern Gaza, as only minimal assistance has reached north of Wadi Gaza, the evacuation line designated by Government of Israel (GoI) security forces separating northern and southern Gaza. However, even in the south, the share of the population experiencing Catastrophe-level conditions exceeds 20 percent, according to the IPC analysis. The UN World Food Program (WFP) reports nearly all households in Gaza are skipping meals every day to mitigate the lack of food, with some going multiple days without eating.

<sup>4</sup> The IPC is a multi-partner initiative that developed a standardized scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries and time, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5—for acute food insecurity. IPC Phase 5 is referred to as “Catastrophe” when classifying a household and “Famine” when classifying an area. Famine conditions occur when at least 20 percent of the population in a given area face an extreme lack of food; the Global Acute Malnutrition prevalence, measured by weight-for-height z-score, exceeds 30 percent; and the mortality rate exceeds two people per 10,000 individuals per day.

The IPC analysis reflects conditions on the ground reported by relief actors, who warn that the emergency is likely to worsen further if conflict and mass displacement do not subside. More than two-thirds of Gaza’s population were dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet at least some of their basic food needs prior to October 7, and assistance is now severely inadequate to meet needs as

<b>IPC Status</b> December 2023–February 2024	
Phase 5	<b>576,600</b> people in Catastrophe
Phase 4	<b>1,169,600</b> people in Emergency
Phase 3	<b>477,800</b> people in Crisis
Phase 2	<b>2,500</b> people in Stress
Phase 1	<b>0</b> people Minimally Food Insecure

conflict-related access limitations and import restrictions continue to worsen. As a result, populations in Gaza are facing a credible risk of Famine—IPC 5—in the coming months if intense hostilities and humanitarian access constraints persist or worsen, according to the IPC analysis.

### **Health Conditions in Gaza Critical, USAID/BHA-Supported INGO Field Hospital Opens**

The conflict is fueling a growing health crisis, exacerbated by limited humanitarian access and supplies. The UN World Health Organization (WHO) reports that only 15 of Gaza’s 36 hospitals active prior to October 7 were classified as partially functional—or able to carry out surgeries—as of January 15, including six in northern Gaza. In response to widespread health needs and limited health care capacity in southern Gaza, USAID/BHA partner International Medical Corps (IMC) commenced operations for a 50-bed field hospital in Rafah on January 6, treating an average of nearly 300 patients per day since operations began. The field hospital is equipped with health staff and equipment to support patients experiencing acute needs with a range of emergency health care services, including surgical care for trauma,

physical rehabilitation, comprehensive emergency obstetric and newborn care, advanced mental health services, and more.

All remaining hospitals throughout Gaza are severely overcrowded, and UNRWA reports that thousands of IDPs are sheltering in hospitals across Gaza. Medical facilities that remain operational are also experiencing acute shortages of medicine and other critical supplies, such as electricity, food, and water; further, medical equipment that is dependent on electricity, such as ventilators, is increasingly nonfunctional, according to the UN. Amid persistent health supplies shortages, UN agencies have begun delivering vaccine supplies to Gaza, and UNRWA released a rapid response plan on January 3 that calls for the delivery of more than 960,000 doses of key vaccines.

### **Access to Gaza Remains Limited; Kerem Shalom Crossing Opens for Humanitarian Cargo**

The delivery of humanitarian assistance remains largely confined to southern Gaza, particularly Rafah, as active hostilities and restrictions imposed by parties to the conflict limit relief actors’ ability to distribute aid to communities north of Wadi Gaza. While humanitarian organizations continue to operate in Rafah, conditions in the governorate remain unsafe, and logistical challenges—including a lack of consistent access to telecommunications—have hindered assistance activities and civilians’ access to information, including updates on conflict activity and emergency services. Relief actors are increasingly challenged in meeting needs in Rafah, fueled by the rapid increase of IDPs arriving from elsewhere in Gaza which has increased the governorate’s estimated population from 280,000 prior to October 7 to more than 1 million, according to the UN.

The GoI announced on December 15 that it would allow humanitarian cargo provided by the UN or U.S. Government (USG) partners to enter Gaza via the Kerem Shalom border crossing—located at the point where Egypt, Gaza, and Israel intersect—with the first shipment through the new inspection point taking place on December 17. WFP reported on December 20 that it had successfully delivered more than 750 metric tons (MT) of humanitarian supplies directly from Jordan to Gaza via Kerem Shalom, marking the first successful use of a second corridor for assistance deliveries.

## UN Warns of Continued Attacks on Reported Humanitarian Sites

Since October 7, UNRWA and other UN agencies continue to report conflict incidents affecting key humanitarian sites—such as health facilities and schools—despite UN agencies continuing to report their location to all parties to the conflict with the goal of deconfliction, or coordination to ensure that these sites are protected from targeted military operations. Kinetic activity, staff detentions, and strikes from all parties are also reportedly restricting the movement of humanitarian convoys carrying essential relief commodities, thereby preventing the delivery of critical assistance to vulnerable populations. Moreover, humanitarian movements—including convoys to northern Gaza to deliver supplies and evacuate patients—continue to experience restrictions and challenges in movements.

### KEY FIGURES



**1.4 Million**

People in Gaza sheltering in facilities administered by State/PRM partner UNRWA



**300**

Average number of patients treated daily at the USAID/BHA-supported INGO Field Hospital

## NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL, AND U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### DISPLACEMENT AND SHELTER

State/PRM partner UNRWA administers nearly 160 shelters for IDPs across Gaza, providing multi-sector assistance in and around these facilities to conflict-affected populations. UNRWA provides health care to IDPs at shelters through nearly 100 mobile medical teams—each of which comprise one to two doctors and one nurse—which collectively treat tens of thousands of individuals daily. UNRWA also continues to identify persons with disabilities in their shelters to support them with specialized assistance and devices.

### HEALTH

With existing medical facilities operating beyond capacity in Gaza, USAID/BHA partner IMC established a 50-bed field hospital in Rafah to increase access to life-saving care, including surgical care for trauma, physical rehabilitation, emergency obstetric and newborn care, and advanced mental health services. Health staff at the field hospital treated an average of 300 patients per day since operations began on January 6. Eight of UNRWA's more than 20 health centers in Gaza remained operational as of December 31, and UNRWA continued to provide services to hundreds of postnatal and high-risk pregnancy cases daily, the UN agency reports.



**665,000**

People reached by  
USAID/BHA partner  
WFP with in-kind food  
assistance in December

## **FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS**

USAID/BHA partner WFP continues to provide life-saving food and multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) to people in shelters and communities across Gaza and the West Bank. The UN agency assisted more than 665,000 individuals in Gaza with hot meals, fortified biscuits, food parcels, wheat flour, and complementary feeding for pregnant and lactating women during December. WFP also distributed 197 MT of high-energy biscuits provided through an in-kind donation from USAID/BHA to IDPs sheltering in UNRWA facilities in Deir Al Balah, Khan Younis, and Rafah governorates in November and December.

Although limited access and civil unrest continues to disrupt food deliveries and distributions in Gaza, as of January 5, several WFP-contracted bakeries in Gaza had resumed operations for the first time since early December, supporting food-insecure individuals with fresh bread through WFP programs. In addition, State/PRM partner UNRWA continues to distribute flour to households in southern Gaza residing outside shelters, reaching more than 181,000 households as of January 2.

## **PROTECTION**

One USAID/BHA INGO partner is providing protection activities, such as psychosocial support services, in Gaza as the security situation permits. In addition, local staff are conducting psychological first aid for displaced persons, including children and caregivers. State/PRM partner UNRWA's medical teams, including more than 280 counselors and social workers, are also providing psychological first aid and other specialized protection services in shelters. As of December 12, UNRWA had provided psychological support, including family support and recreational activities, to more than 101,000 individuals—more than 60 percent of whom were women—since the onset of hostilities. UNRWA counselors and social workers also provide psychological first aid and specialized protection services in shelters, reaching approximately 80,000 IDPs as of December 30. Additionally, as of December 27, the State/PRM partner had provided rehabilitative services to 3,470 persons with disabilities and child protective services and psychosocial support to more than 1,000 people.

## **LOGISTICS**

USG partners, including UN agencies and INGOs, are supporting the Egyptian Red Crescent in its lead role to pre-position supplies and organize humanitarian truck movements from Egypt to Gaza, delivering life-saving assistance to vulnerable populations in Gaza. USAID/BHA, UN agencies, and INGOs continue to send the most urgently needed humanitarian supplies to Egypt's El Arish International Airport for onward distribution in Gaza. Additionally, in late November and early December, three U.S. Department of Defense cargo flights delivered nearly 47 MT of food, medical, and nutrition supplies and winter clothing to El Arish to assist vulnerable populations in Gaza.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Protracted conflict and restricted access to basic services have generated significant humanitarian needs in the West Bank and Gaza.
- On October 7, 2023, Hamas carried out an attack on civilian and military targets in Israel that resulted in an estimated 1,200 deaths and the abduction of approximately 240 people, according to the Gol. In response, the Gol commenced a large-scale military campaign in Gaza, including ground operations and widespread airstrikes. The October 7 attack and subsequent hostilities represent a major escalation of conflict in Gaza and have led to increased tensions in the West Bank.
- On October 8, 2023, then-U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., Stephanie L. Hallett—with the concurrence of Office of Palestinian Affairs Chief George Noll—renewed the declaration of humanitarian need for the West Bank and Gaza for FY 2024 due to current and projected humanitarian needs resulting from the complex emergency.

### USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE LEVANT RESPONSE IN FY 2024<sup>6</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
WFP	Food Assistance—Cash Transfers for Food, Local, Regional, and International Procurement (LRIP)	West Bank and Gaza	\$11,000,000
WFP	Logistics Support	West Bank and Gaza	\$8,000,000
Implementing Partner #1	Food Assistance—LRIP, MPCA, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$9,000,000
Implementing Partner #2	Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice, Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$9,000,000
Implementing Partner #3	Food Assistance—LRIP; Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments; MPCA; Shelter and Settlements; WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$5,000,000
	Logistics Support		\$985,980
	Administrative and Program Support		\$328,305
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$43,314,285</b>
<b>STATE/PRM</b>			
UNRWA	Food Assistance—LRIP, Health, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$51,000,000
Implementing Partner	Multi-Sector Assistance	Israel, West Bank, and Gaza	\$18,200,000
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING</b>			<b>\$69,200,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE LEVANT RESPONSE IN FY 2024</b>			<b>\$112,514,285</b>

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of January 16, 2024.

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## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- The USG encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)