

# Levant – Complex Emergency

March 8, 2024

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<b>2.2</b> MILLION	<b>30,717</b>	<b>1.7</b> MILLION	<b>415</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 – Dec. 21, 2023</i>	<i>UN – Mar. 28, 2024</i>	<i>UN – Mar. 4, 2024</i>	<i>UN – Mar. 6, 2024</i>	<i>UN – Feb. 27, 2024</i>

- USAID Administrator Samantha Power announced \$53 million in additional USAID/BHA funding for the humanitarian response in Gaza and the West Bank, supporting the delivery of emergency food, health, nutrition, protection, shelter, and WASH assistance.
- Hostilities and ongoing military operations continue to generate humanitarian needs across Gaza, especially in Khan Younis and Rafah governorates, where relief actors' access to populations in need is shrinking due to persistent insecurity and violence.
- A Nutrition Cluster analysis revealed deteriorating nutrition conditions for vulnerable populations in Gaza, particularly in the north, where one in six children were acutely malnourished as of January.



<b>TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING</b> For the Levant Response in FY 2024	USAID/BHA <sup>1</sup>	\$96,513,855
	State/PRM <sup>2</sup>	\$69,200,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$165,713,855<sup>3</sup></b>

*For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 6*

<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 U.S. Government (USG) has announced more than \$180 million in humanitarian funding since October 7, 2023; this includes \$14.6 million in funding obligated in FY 2023 and not included in the FY 2024 total.

## **KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

### **USAID Announces Additional \$53 Million in Humanitarian Funding**

USAID Administrator Samantha Power announced \$53 million in additional USAID/BHA funding for emergency relief efforts in Gaza and the West Bank during a February 27 visit to a UN World Food Program (WFP) warehouse in Amman, Jordan. The total funding announced by the USG since October 7, 2023, now exceeds \$180 million with this contribution. This additional funding will support USAID/BHA partners providing life-saving food, health, nutrition, protection, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance to conflict-affected populations. In particular, the additional funding includes \$21 million for WFP to support the agency's efforts to address alarming levels of acute food insecurity in Gaza through emergency food deliveries and logistics support to the humanitarian community. Furthermore, the assistance will also support continued services at a USAID/BHA-funded field hospital in southern Gaza. During the announcement, Administrator Power underscored the importance of protection for humanitarian personnel and unhindered access to communities in need throughout Gaza.

### **Hostilities Disrupt Health Care While Threatening Civilians and Medical Personnel in Khan Younis**

Hostilities in southern Gaza's Khan Younis Governorate continue to generate widespread humanitarian needs, impede health facilities' operations, and prompt civilian displacement. Since mid-January, bombardment and gunfire have limited access to and movement around several critical hospitals—including Al Amal and Nasser—in Khan Younis, endangering civilians, medical personnel, and patients within the facilities while interrupting the delivery of life-saving care, according to the UN. Access restrictions, evacuation orders, growing demand for medical care, and strikes targeting hospitals have required many health facilities to operate under increasingly challenging conditions with dwindling reserves of food, fuel, and medical supplies. In particular, intensified conflict in and around Nasser Hospital, southern Gaza's largest medical facility, expanded in mid-February and disrupted care for hundreds of patients, according to relief actors. Government of Israel (GoI) security forces directed displaced people to evacuate the premises around Nasser on February 13 and 14 in advance of its planned operation against Hamas—a Gaza-based armed group—prompting many of the estimated 10,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) sheltering at the facility to vacate the compound. However, several hundred patients and an unconfirmed number of health staff and other civilians remained at Nasser when GoI soldiers forcibly entered the facility on February 15. The ensuing hostilities, which continued until February 22, resulted in numerous civilian casualties, the arrest of an estimated 70 medical personnel, and severe damage to the building as several areas of the compound's perimeter were demolished, according to the UN. Determining Nasser consequently lacked the capacity to adequately provide care, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) and other humanitarian actors evacuated more than 50 patients in critical condition from the hospital to nearby health facilities—including the USAID/BHA-supported field hospital—between February 18 and 20.

### **Escalating Conflict in Rafah Exacerbates Dire Displacement Conditions and Worsens Humanitarian Operations**

In southern Gaza's Rafah Governorate, approximately 1.5 million people were sheltering in an area of approximately 25 square miles as of February 17, representing six times the governorate's population prior to the escalation of hostilities on October 7, 2023, according to the UN. Evacuation orders and ongoing hostilities, including intense fighting in and around Khan Younis since mid-January, have driven more than half of Gaza's population into the southernmost governorate, resulting in deteriorated

humanitarian conditions characterized by severe overcrowding and acute shortages of essential resources, particularly food, medicine, shelter, and water. Limited access to basic sanitation services and safe drinking water, combined with poor hygiene practices, has increased the risk of disease transmission in the governorate. For example, on February 8, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) attributed a recent uptick in suspected hepatitis A cases in Rafah to the shortage of clean drinking water and the absence of functional medical facilities.

Intensified Gol military operations and hostilities in Rafah continue to exacerbate dire conditions for conflict-affected populations, according to the UN. Between February 11 and 12, aerial attacks on densely populated areas of Rafah during a Gol operation to rescue hostages held by Gaza-based armed groups resulted in at least 67 deaths and injury to dozens of people, the UN and international media report. Continued military operations in Khan Younis and southern Gaza have placed additional strain on Rafah's already overstretched health system, with health actors reporting hospitals lack the capacity to respond to the growing influx of casualties, especially with the surge of IDPs in the governorate. Relief actors have warned that escalated hostilities in and around Rafah—the governorate in which Gaza's two operational border crossings are located—would likely cut off humanitarian access to the entire enclave, exacerbating already critical humanitarian conditions and impeding the delivery of urgently needed food and medical supplies.

### **Insecurity, Movement Restrictions Constrain Humanitarian Access in Gaza**

Ongoing conflict and insecurity, the expansion of military operations in southern Gaza, and movement restrictions continue to constrain humanitarian access throughout Gaza, hindering relief actors' ability to reach populations in need with life-saving assistance. Despite elevated needs, the UN and its partners successfully facilitated only six humanitarian missions, or 25 percent of the planned missions, to areas north of Wadi Gaza—the evacuation line designated by Gol security forces separating northern and southern Gaza—during February, according to the UN. Security concerns, including a February 5 naval strike against a UN-coordinated food convoy and reported deviations in agreed-upon checkpoint standard operating procedures, largely drove the decrease in completed missions compared to January, during which the UN and its partners completed nine of 61 planned missions, the UN reports. However, humanitarian actors successfully scaled up the number of coordinated humanitarian missions south of Wadi Gaza during the month despite growing insecurity and persistent access impediments; in February, the UN and its partners facilitated 105 of the 200 planned missions south of Wadi Gaza, a nearly 62 percent increase from the 65 missions completed in this area during January, according to the UN.

Meanwhile, persistent threats to the safety of humanitarian personnel and sites in Gaza threaten access and constrain humanitarian operations. Between October 2023 and February 2024, hostilities resulted in the deaths of at least 187 humanitarian staff and injury to at least 54 others, according to the Aid Worker Security Database. Moreover, security incidents across Gaza have resulted in the deaths of at least 404 IDPs and injury to 1,400 individuals sheltering at UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) facilities, while also damaging 155 UNRWA installations since October 7, 2023. Additionally, WFP announced a temporary pause to humanitarian food deliveries to northern Gaza on February 20 following multiple security incidents, including looting and armed violence, during attempted northbound missions on February 18 and 19, which endangered UN agency staff and nearby civilians. WFP underscored the importance of additional security measures—such as full respect for the humanitarian notification system and reliable telecommunications networks—and the need to expand the flow of assistance into northern Gaza via multiple routes, including northern crossing points, to mitigate catastrophic levels of hunger.

## One in Six Children in Northern Gaza Acutely Malnourished

Ongoing conflict in Gaza has increased the risk of malnutrition among vulnerable populations—particularly among children ages five years and younger and pregnant and lactating women—by resulting in critical food shortages, health service breakdowns, and inadequate WASH facilities, the UN reports. Findings from a January Nutrition Cluster analysis indicated a deteriorating nutrition situation for women and children throughout Gaza, especially in northern governorates where access to humanitarian aid is severely limited.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, Nutrition Cluster screenings conducted in shelters and health centers in North Gaza Governorate revealed that nearly 16 percent of children younger than two years of age were acutely malnourished in January. In Rafah, where humanitarian aid is more accessible compared to northern areas of the enclave, approximately 5 percent of children were acutely malnourished, underscoring the importance of sustained humanitarian access to mitigate the worst outcomes, the cluster reports. Prior to the current conflict, acute malnutrition prevalence across Gaza was low at approximately 1 percent, according to the cluster. Findings from the January analysis underscore the urgent nutritional needs of conflict-affected populations and the importance of improved access to food, health care, nutrition support, and WASH services, according to the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

### KEY FIGURES



**1 Million**

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



**12**

Average number of major surgeries performed daily at the USAID/BHA-supported field hospital

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

### DISPLACEMENT AND SHELTER

Despite a pause in USG and other donor funding following serious allegations against several of its employees, State/PRM partner UNRWA continues to administer nearly 155 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, a USAID/BHA international nongovernmental organization (INGO) partner established a 50-bed field hospital in Rafah to increase access to life-saving care, including advanced mental health services, emergency obstetric and newborn care, physical rehabilitation, and surgical care for traumatic injuries. Between January 6 and February 19, the INGO provided health consultations to nearly 17,900 individuals through its inpatient and outpatient departments; on average, the USAID/BHA partner was performing 12 major surgeries per day as of mid-February. The INGO had also increased its capacity to 140 beds by mid-February in response to elevated needs. In addition, seven of UNRWA’s more than 20 health centers in Gaza remained operational as of February 18, with more than 600 health

<sup>4</sup> The coordinating body for humanitarian nutrition activities, comprising UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders.

care staff providing nearly 12,500 medical consultations at operational health centers on February 13. UNRWA health staff also vaccinated more than 22,300 children against diseases, such as measles, mumps, and rubella between January 3 and February 3.



## 1.5 Million

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

## FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

USAID/BHA partner WFP continues to provide life-saving food assistance to people in shelters and communities across Gaza and the West Bank. The UN agency reached more than 1.5 million people in need across Gaza and the West Bank with cash-based and in-kind food assistance during February. In Gaza, the UN agency distributed approximately 271,000 food parcels to IDPs and host community members. Further, WFP continues to support community kitchens, which delivered hot meals to 401,000 people during the month.

Although limited access and civil unrest continue to disrupt food deliveries and distributions in Gaza, WFP delivered more than 1,900 metric tons (MT) of wheat flour and other inputs to 12 bakeries in Deir al Balah and Rafah in February, enabling the bakeries to produce approximately 600,000 parcels of fresh bread. In addition, State/PRM partner UNRWA continues to distribute flour to food-insecure households in southern Gaza residing outside shelters, reaching more than 372,000 families as of March 2.



## 500

Children reached by USAID/BHA INGO partner protection activities via child-friendly safe spaces from January 13 to 31

## PROTECTION

One USAID/BHA INGO partner is providing protection activities, such as psychosocial support services, in southern Gaza as the security situation permits. In addition, local staff are conducting psychological first aid for displaced persons, including children and caregivers. From January 13 to 31, the INGO delivered more than 400 mental health and psychosocial support sessions, alongside 300 consultations addressing gender-based violence prevention and response interventions during the period. Additionally, approximately 500 children ages 17 and younger engaged in child protection activities within the field hospital's child-friendly safe spaces from mid- to late January.

State/PRM partner UNRWA's medical teams are also providing psychological first aid and other specialized protection services in shelters. As of February 19, UNRWA had provided psychological support services, including family support and recreational activities, to more than 139,000 IDPs since the onset of hostilities.



## 44,000 MT

Amount of food assistance transported into Gaza by WFP since escalation of hostilities as of February 29

## 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. UN agencies and INGOs, including USAID/BHA partners, continue to send urgently needed humanitarian supplies to Egypt's El Arish International Airport for onward

distribution in Gaza.

Additionally, as the lead supporter of humanitarian logistics, WFP facilitated the transport of approximately 44,000 MT of food assistance into Gaza via nearly 2,700 trucks between October 7, 2023, and February 29, 2024.

## 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 and affiliated Gaza-based armed groups 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, including Gol hostilities and settler violence which had resulted in more than 400 deaths and 4,500 injuries as of February 28.
- 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>5</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
Implementing Partner #1	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA); Shelter and Settlements; WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$5,500,000
Implementing Partner #2	Nutrition, WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$4,000,000
Implementing Partner #3	Health	West Bank and Gaza	\$1,000,000
Implementing Partner #4	Food Assistance—LRIP, Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA), Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$9,000,000
Implementing Partner #5	Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice, Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$18,000,000
Implementing Partner #6	Food Assistance—LRIP; Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments; MPCA; Shelter and Settlements; WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$5,000,000
Implementing Partner #7	MPCA, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$6,000,000
UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS)	HCIMA	West Bank and Gaza	\$2,000,137

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	HCIMA	West Bank and Gaza	\$2,000,000
WFP	Food Assistance—Cash Transfers for Food, Local, Regional, and International Procurement (LRIP); Nutrition	West Bank and Gaza	\$28,000,000
	Logistics Support	West Bank and Gaza	\$12,000,000
	Logistics Support		\$2,931,511
	Administrative and Program Support		\$1,082,208
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$96,513,855</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<sup>6</sup></b>			<b>\$69,200,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE LEVANT RESPONSE IN FY 2024</b>			<b>\$165,713,855</b>

<sup>5</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of February 29, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> State/PRM has also contributed nearly \$71 million to UNRWA's regional program budget and special projects, some of which may be directed towards crisis-related needs in Gaza.

## 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)