



TOPIC A

# Humanitarian crisis in Gaza



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# Economic and Social Council

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### Introduction

Since the conflict started in October 2023, the Gaza Strip has faced its longest stretch of time without access to aid or commercial supplies. More than 2.1 million people are trapped, most of them are women and children who are left to starve in desperation waiting for the blockade that has halted humanitarian aid since March 2, 2025 to be lifted. Nearly half a million of them face starvation and Gaza is under the critical threat of famine.

90% of the population have forcefully left their homes and over 1.7 million people have been internally displaced, living in overcrowded shelters or makeshift homes. Since March 18 about 197.7 square kilometers of the Gaza Strip are now under active displacement orders, reducing even more the territory available for inhabiting. Furthermore, nearly 175,000 structures were damaged in the Gaza Strip generating a total of 53,466,870 tonnes of debris, which will take 22 years and over \$US 1 billion to clear completely. The loss of people's lands and livelihood, due to demolition or confiscation of this, has resulted in the displacement of entire communities.

The health situation in the Gaza Strip is a cause for great concern. As a consequence of the destruction of medical facilities and shortage of medical supplies, the access to medical services has been extremely reduced resulting in the deteriorating health of the population. The damage and destruction of 70% of critical water infrastructure has led to severe dehydration and a higher spread of infectious diseases, making people extremely ill. Children are the most vulnerable in this ongoing health crisis since they are facing extreme malnutrition, which has even led to death from its effects.

Organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are working to combat the worsening conditions by providing medical services, temporary learning spaces to educate children, and raising the alarms worldwide about to situation in the Gaza Strip.



## Definition of Key Terms

- **Blockade**

Procedure whereby a belligerent nation prevents the access of its enemy's territory to vital deliveries of foodstuffs and war materials.

- **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

People that have been forced to flee their homes by conflict, violence, persecution or disasters, however, they remain within the borders of their own country.



- **Malnutrition**

Refers to deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients. The term malnutrition covers 2 broad groups of conditions. One is undernutrition, which includes stunting (low height for age), wasting (low weight for height), underweight (low weight for age) and micronutrient deficiencies or insufficiency (a lack of important vitamins and minerals). The other is overweight, obesity and diet-related noncommunicable diseases (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer).



- **Ceasefire**

A temporary stoppage of war, which may also be undertaken as part of a larger negotiated settlement.

- **Humanitarian Aid**

Material or logistical assistance provided for humanitarian purposes, typically in response to humanitarian crises. Its primary objective is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. It includes: direct assistance, indirect assistance, and infrastructure support.

- **Humanitarian Access**

Used to refer both to an actor's access to affected populations as well as to affected population's access to humanitarian aid.

## Background information

- **Origin of the conflict in Gaza**

After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, agreements left Egypt occupying the Gaza Strip which led to many Palestinians fleeing or being forced to leave their homes. Combining the territory of the Gaza Strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem, and West Jerusalem about 750,000 Palestinians left and ended up as refugees, an event known in Arabic as the Nakba (Catastrophe). Later on during the Six-Day Middle East war in 1967, Israel took control of Gaza after launching a strike on Egypt's air force. Together with the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Gaza is now part of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Palestinians living in this territory are under the control of Israel, which creates tensions that have erupted in conflict before.

- **Origin of the blockade in the Gaza Strip**

After Hamas won Palestinian elections in 2006 intense fighting broke out the following year. This led to Israel and Egypt imposing a blockade in 2007, in which Israel controlled most of what was allowed into the territory.

- **The current conflict in the Gaza Strip**

Since the blockade was established in 2007, many major conflicts have erupted between Hamas and Israel in the years that followed. Every round of fighting has signified important losses from both sides, the vast majority of them Palestinians in Gaza. In October 2023, Hamas fighters launched an assault from Gaza to Israel resulting in the death of 1,200 people and the capture of more than 250 hostages. This triggered a massive Israeli military offensive in Gaza, where more than 46,700 people have been killed. In January 2025, a deal to halt the war and release Israeli hostages and Palestinian Prisoners was reached between Israel and Hamas. The 2nd of March Israel stopped all deliveries of aid and commercial supplies to Gaza, starting a humanitarian aid blockade that is having severe consequences on the population of the Gaza Strip.



## Major Parties Involved

- **Israel**



Israel plays a central role in the crisis as the main enforcer of the blockade on Gaza since 2007, and controlling the border crossings. It has conducted repeated military operations in Gaza, which have caused numerous casualties as well as significant infrastructural damage.

- **State of Palestine**



Divided between the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza, internal political divisions have difficulty the governance and effective humanitarian response in the territory. The State of Palestine advocates internationally for an end to the blockade and increased support for the Palestinian people.

- **Egypt**



Egypt controls the Rafah crossing, the only non-Israeli entry point into Gaza, and has alternated between opening and closing it based on security and diplomatic considerations. Egypt also plays a key role as a mediator in ceasefire negotiations and regional diplomatic efforts, while maintaining its own national security priorities.

- **United States of America**



It has provided extensive military, diplomatic, and financial support to Israel. While supporting Israel's efforts to end Hamas rule and secure hostage returns, the U.S. has also increased criticism of Israel's operations and expressed concerns about civilian casualties and humanitarian challenges in Gaza.

- **Qatar**



Qatar provides financial assistance directly to Gaza and has acted as a mediator between Hamas and Israel during escalations. It supports reconstruction efforts and humanitarian relief through both governmental and non-governmental channels.

## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Numerous ceasefires have been attempted, particularly by Egypt, Qatar, and the UN. These have provided a temporary respite to the conflict but failed to establish lasting peace.

Humanitarian aid plans have mobilised funding and supplies for Gaza. However, the blackades and difficulties to reach the population have limited their impact.

Efforts to rebuild Gaza have been interrupted by the continuous conflict and destruction of infrastructure. As conflicts escalate, destruction continues.



## Possible Solutions

- **Immediate ceasefire and respect for international humanitarian law:**

All parties should halt hostilities and ensure civilian protection.

- **Establishment of humanitarian corridors:**

Secure and monitored corridors must be created to deliver aid safely and consistently. Corridors should be managed by a neutral body led by the UN.

- **Lifting the blockade:**

Agreement to lift the blockade imposed in the Gaza Strip to allow the entry of aid.

- **Long-term reconstruction Plan:**

Internationally funded, locally led initiatives to rebuild infrastructure and create employment.

- **Accountability and monitoring:**

Investigations into violations of international law and transparent reporting on aid delivery.

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