

**Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale**

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# UNRWA Continues Operations in Gaza Amid Ongoing Insecurity and Shortages of Essential Services



Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), briefs reporters on UNRWA's services across the occupied Palestinian territories and UNRWA's ongoing operations. Credit: UN Photo/Mark Garten

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 18 2025 (IPS) - After nearly two years of conflict between Hamas and Israel, displaced Palestinians in Gaza have begun returning home as humanitarian organizations work to restore essential,

life-saving services. Despite recent progress, the United Nations (UN) and its partners continue to face major obstacles in reaching the most vulnerable populations due to ongoing insecurity and heightened restrictions. With winter fast approaching—and expected to further worsen living conditions—sustained aid operations remain critical.

Roughly one month into the ceasefire, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) has reported ongoing daily bombardments of residential areas in zones where Israeli forces remain deployed, particularly in eastern Khan Younis and eastern Gaza City. The agency has also documented multiple ceasefire violations along the “Yellow Line,” leading to numerous civilian casualties.

According to Gaza’s Ministry of Health, between October 29 and November 5, bombardments resulted in 15 Palestinian deaths and 24 injuries. An additional 31 bodies were recovered from the rubble of collapsed buildings. The Ministry further reports that since the start of the ceasefire, 241 Palestinians have been killed and 609 injured.

Philippe Lazzarini, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)), observed that the humanitarian situation in Gaza firmly hinges on the stability of the ceasefire. “A ceasefire that merely prolongs the absence of war without charting a viable path to peace would only repeat the disastrous mistakes of the past,” Lazzarini wrote in a Guardian op-ed on November 10. “A truly peaceful future requires a genuine investment in a definitive political solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.”

Additionally, Lazzarini underscored the urgent need for an international stabilization force to protect key civilian infrastructures and facilitate a smooth flow of humanitarian operations, as well as increased accountability measures to acquire justice for victims of violations of international humanitarian law. On November 12, Lazzarini informed reporters at the UN headquarters that accountability is crucial in establishing a sustainable end to violence and a path to recovery for Palestine as a whole.

“The starting point could at least be a board of inquiry,” said Lazzarini, “More broadly, if we want to promote any lasting peace, I don’t think we would succeed if we aren’t going for the delivery of justice and healing, and recognizing the scope of atrocities that have been committed.”

Despite the UN recording considerable improvement in the humanitarian situation of Gaza, conditions remain dire, with famine and disease remaining imminent threats for most Gazans. The UN and its partners continue to face significant access constraints imposed by Israeli authorities. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres informed reporters that the UN is far from having “what is necessary to eliminate famine quickly and create conditions for the people in Gaza to have the very, very minimum that is necessary for dignity in life”.



Philippe Lazzarini (right), the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) briefing on UNRWA’s operations in the occupied Palestinian territory. Credit: Oritro Karim/IPS

OCHA further notes that access to humanitarian aid and agricultural fields beyond the Yellow Line remains prohibited, with yellow-painted concrete blocks being set up to demarcate prohibited areas, as ordered by

the Israeli Minister of Defence. Access to the sea also remains barred, with Israeli forces detaining at least five fishers since November 4.

According to OCHA, several essential aid items remain barred from entering Gaza—including humanitarian vehicles, solar panels, mobile latrines, x-ray machines, food and educational supplies, and generators—many of which Israeli authorities classify as outside the scope of humanitarian assistance. OCHA also reports continued restrictions on maintenance tools needed for water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) systems. Dozens of UNRWA vehicles and equipment, including water tankers and jetting trucks, have yet to be cleared for entry.

[UNRWA](#) and its partners have expressed alarm over the continued imposition of such restrictions during the ceasefire, particularly with the approaching winter season projected to exacerbate living conditions for Palestinians in displacement shelters. The Shelter Cluster estimates that at least 259,000 Palestinian families, or more than 1.45 million Gazans, will be adversely affected by the winter if adequate protection services are not put in place soon.

In a November 5 [joint statement](#) from several UN agencies, including UNRWA, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN and its partners have been collaborating with Gaza's Ministry of Health to prepare an “integrated catch-up campaign” for immunization and nutritional support, aiming to reach approximately 44,000 children who have been cut off from lifesaving services since the beginning of this conflict.

An estimated one in five children under age three are zero-dose or under-vaccinated due to the conflict, leaving them highly vulnerable to preventable disease outbreaks. The campaign will be carried out in three rounds to provide children with missed routine vaccinations, including Pentavalent, Polio, Rota, Pneumococcal, and two doses of the MMR vaccine.

Vaccination services will be available at 149 health facilities and 10 mobile vehicles across the enclave, with the first round scheduled for

November 9-18. The second and third rounds of the vaccine campaign are planned for December 2025 and January 2026, respectively.

Alongside vaccinations, UNICEF and partners will screen children for malnutrition, provide treatment and follow-up for those affected, and refer severe cases to WHO-supported stabilization centers. UNICEF is also rehabilitating 15 health centers, while WHO is restoring an additional 20 facilities that were partially or fully destroyed.



On 14 October 2025 in Gaza's Middle Area, State of Palestine, 4-year-old Abd Al Kareem eats from a sachet of Lipid-Based Nutrient Supplements (LNS) during a malnutrition screening. Credit: Rawan Eleyan/UNICEF

“This immunization campaign is a lifeline, protecting children’s health and restoring hope for the future,” said Dr Richard Peeperkorn, WHO Representative in the occupied Palestinian territory. “It’s a crucial step in strengthening essential health services and protecting vulnerable children in Gaza who have been cut off for far too long. Yet this is only one piece of the puzzle. Much more is needed, and WHO is working to rebuild Gaza’s fragile health system so every child, every community, can access the care they deserve.”

Additionally, Lazzarini informed reporters on November 12 that UNRWA has been a lifeline for Gaza since the beginning of this crisis. Over the

past two years, UNRWA has supported over 15 million primary health consultations, providing over 14,000 consultations on average on a daily basis.

UNRWA has also been instrumental in keeping the water system in the enclave from collapsing, with Lazzarini stating that roughly “40 percent of clean water is thanks to the work of (UNRWA’s) engineer(s) on the ground.” Furthermore, UNRWA has supported more than 48,000 children across 96 UNRWA schools five days a week, alongside bringing online education back to about 300,000 children.

“I do believe that we are and remain an extraordinary asset at the disposal of the international community, especially for securing critical services for the population of Gaza and any effort in stabilization and success,” said Lazzarini. “The main challenge is that we need to safeguard the operational space of the agency in Gaza. That’s challenge number one, to acknowledge that the agency is a vital key partner and an invaluable asset to the international community to help consolidate the ceasefire and ensure a successful recovery.”

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