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UN News/Ziad Taleb | An UNRWA shelter in Zawaida, Central Gaza, receives badly needed aid supplies.

United Nations, 27 November 2023

Desperate Gazans in the north of the enclave had their first sip of clean water in weeks on Monday as a continuing pause in fighting enabled broadening aid access to the Strip, UN humanitarian said.

“This aid barely registers against the huge needs of 1.7 million displaced people,” a [statement from the UN Secretary-General’s office](#) said on Monday, highlighting his call for a full humanitarian ceasefire. “The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza is getting worse by the day.”

And as the UN emergency relief coordination office, [OCHA](#), reported that people in the south were queuing for kilometres to obtain cooking gas and resorting to burning window frames and doors for cooking, it added that the four-day humanitarian pause agreed upon by Israel and Hamas has been “largely maintained”.

Acc

Under the agreement, Hamas released 17 more hostages taken during the armed group's terror attacks in southern Israel on 7 October, bringing the total number of hostages released to 58, OCHA said. Some 117 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons have also been released since Friday.

Meanwhile over the weekend new efforts to bolster Gaza's devastated healthcare system came to fruition as a UN convoy transported life-saving vaccines from Gaza City to the south of the enclave, where they can be refrigerated.

Rescuing vaccines

OCHA said that on Sunday the joint UN convoy collected 7,600 doses of vaccines for various diseases from the Gaza Ministry of Health warehouse, where they would have become unusable due to a lack of refrigeration in the north, and successfully brought them to the south.

"After thorough inspections to ensure their validity, the vaccines will be utilized to enhance routine immunization, which has been hampered by a shortage of supplies and ongoing hostilities," OCHA stressed.

'Hunger, desperation and destruction'

Humanitarians reaching the north of the Strip for the first time since it was sealed off by Israeli military operations weeks ago bore witness to scenes of desolation. On Sunday, the UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) and the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) conducted a joint mission to deliver vital food assistance to Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City and to surrounding areas.

"It's a promising step, but the team recounted painful stories from the people who haven't received any aid in weeks," [WFP](#) Representative in the occupied Palestinian territory Samer AbdelJaber, wrote on social platform X. **"They saw hunger, desperation and destruction."**

On Saturday a UN health agency ([WHO](#)) and Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS)-led mission evacuated at least 17 patients and wounded people from Al-Ahli hospital along with 11 of their companions, to the European Hospital in Khan Younis in the south of the enclave. [WHO](#) chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that the patients were "suffering from gunshot wounds, amputations and burns". He reiterated calls for a "sustained ceasefire".

Urgent food assistance

Aid convoys brought ready-to-eat food to four shelters run by the UN agency for Palestine refugees ([UNRWA](#)) in north Gaza's Jabalia camp on Sunday, as well as tents, blankets and bottled water.

"The convoys were carefully inspected by Israeli forces deployed at a checkpoint near Wadi Gaza before proceeding northwards," OCHA said.

Since 24 November, WFP has managed to provide essential food assistance to 110,000 people in UNRWA shelters and host communities through the distribution of bread, food parcels, and electronic vouchers.

OCHA reported that food prices in Gaza have surged since the start of the conflict. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the price of wheat flour jumped by 65 per cent in October while that of mineral water

doubled.



© UNICEF/Abed Zaqout | A man inspects his destroyed home in in Khan Younis city, in the south of the Gaza Strip.

‘Burning doors to cook’

Since the pause came into effect cooking gas has also been entering Gaza, but OCHA warned that the amounts “fall well below the needs”.

The UN Office reported two-kilometre queues at a filling station in Khan Younis in the south of the Strip, with people waiting overnight, while those unable to secure cooking gas were “burning doors and window frames to cook”.

The original article appeared [here](#).

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