

Situation in the occupied Palestinian territory

Escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank
including East Jerusalem and Israel

17th of May 2021

SITUATION

Starting from 10th of May 2021, the tensions related to the confiscation of a number of Palestinian houses in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem and the clashes between Israeli settlers and armed forces and Palestinians in the old city of Jerusalem, during the holy month of Ramadan, erupted into armed hostilities within all the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel.

In the Gaza Strip

Hostilities between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups are going on incessantly from the 10th of May, with an enormous number of rockets and other projectiles shot by both sides. The Israeli defence system called Iron Dome prevented around 90% of the rockets shot from Gaza to hit Israeli targets. Israeli population has access to safe shelters, and the barrages are accompanied by anti-missiles sirens. In the Gaza Strip there is no defence system, no safe shelter and no sirens.

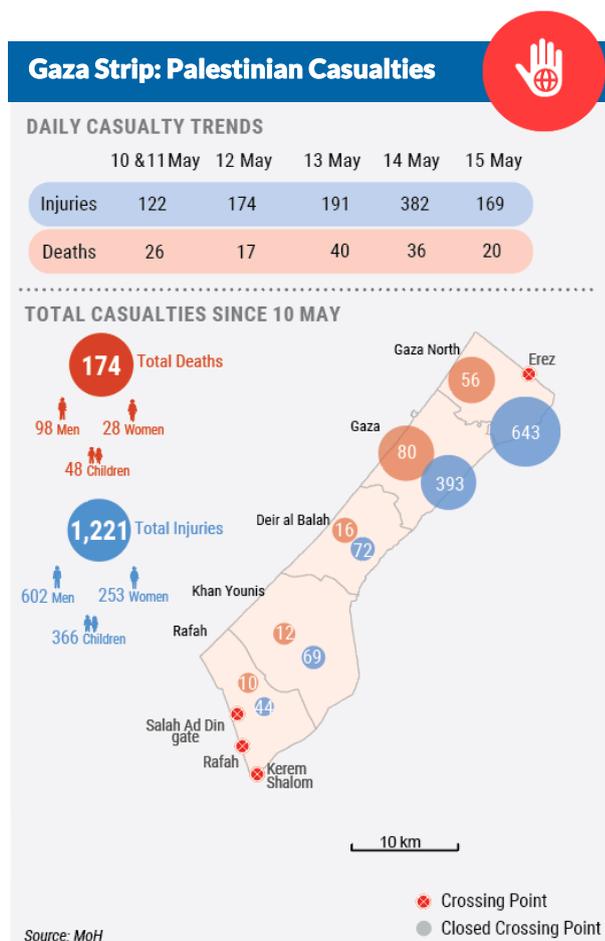
Until now, in the Gaza Strip 174 persons¹ are reported dead by the MoH. 48 of them are children and 28 are women. Total injuries are 1.221 (366 children, 253 women). The toll is supposed to rise as rescue workers and medical teams retrieve fatalities from under the rubble. In one incident on the morning of 15th of May, nine people were killed in one attack on a residential building in Shati Refugee Camp (known also as Beach Camp), west of Gaza City, with no prior warning: seven of them were children (aged 5-12) and two women.

In Israel ten total casualties are reported until now, as a consequence of the missile strikes (2.300 rockets, according to Israeli sources), including two children and five women. Homes, livelihoods and infrastructures were damaged. 564 persons are reported injured.

Infrastructures: Extensive damage is reported to residential and commercial buildings, schools and infrastructure, including main roads (some of which lead to the hospitals), electricity networks, water installations and agricultural lands. According to Palestinian institutions in the Gaza Strip, 94 buildings, comprising 461 housing and commercial units, have been destroyed. 285 housing units suffered major damages and are uninhabitable, leaving over 2.500 persons homeless, according to the Shelter Cluster. Additional 4.814 housing units have sustained minor damages.

Displacement: According to UNRWA, over 38.000 (+21.000 in the last 24 hours) internally displaced people (IDPs) sought for a shelter in 48 UNRWA schools: only 23 of them are Designated Emergency Shelters (DES).

Health: Several health facilities along the Strip have sustained damages². The risk of Covid-19 transmission increased, considering displaced people seeking shelter inside and outside the DES and the substantial interruption of the vaccination programme. Intensive Care Unit hospitals occupancy is currently at 43% of the capacity, according to MoH, and it is expected to increase in the next days. The MoH declared emergency status and highlighted a critical need for essential drugs, equipment, medical devices and surgical instruments, medical gas and fuel, with an estimated value of 6 million USD for high priority items and 3 million USD for medium priority items.



¹ All information provided is based upon official United Nations sources.

² Among them, four MoH hospitals, two NGOs hospitals, two clinics, one health centre and one PRCS facility

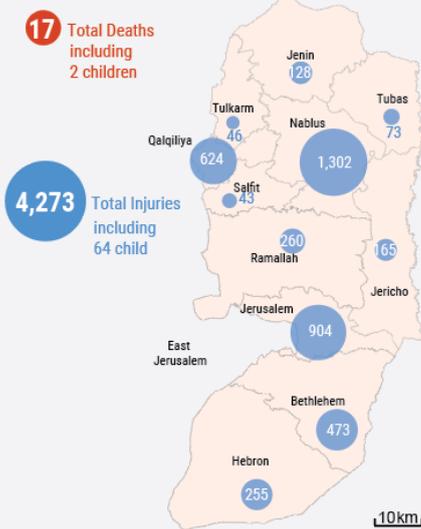
West Bank: Palestinian Casualties



DAILY CASUALTY TRENDS

	10 May	11 May	12 May	13 May	14 May	15 May
Injuries	1,114	473	304	3	185	1,657
Deaths	0	1	2	0	1	10

TOTAL CASUALTIES



Source: PRCS in EJ, the East Jerusalem Hospital Network Coordinator, PMRS, and MSF France.

Water, Sanitation, Hygiene: Preliminary assessment conducted by the WASH Cluster, with the direct involvement of WeWorld team, revealed that WASH infrastructures have been severely affected, including 2.730 meters of water networks and transition pipelines, 3 wastewater pumps, 4.240 meters of wastewater networks, at least 15 water wells. In general, there is a reduction of up to fifty per cent in WASH services along all the Strip, with at least 900.000 people severely affected³. Additionally, damage to power lines and fuel shortages, power supply across Gaza has been reduced to 6-8 hours per day on average, and in some areas to less than 4 hours.

Education: The Education Cluster reports that 41 education facilities⁴ have been affected since the beginning of the escalation. Reports indicate that a number of these schools were directly hit by airstrikes or tank shells.

Access: Erez crossing, the main crossing point between Israel and the Gaza Strip, is closed since 10th of May, preventing among other things the entrance of humanitarian aid and personnel. Also the Kerem Shalom crossing is closed, preventing the entrance of goods, including the fuel, essential for the operation of the Gaza power plant.

In the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Israel

In the West Bank, 17 Palestinians are reported dead during hostilities with the Israeli forces and groups of Israeli settlers. 11 of them during the 14th of May: this is the highest number of Palestinian fatalities recorded in the West Bank in one single day since 2008, when OCHA began to record casualties. The episodes of settlers' violence against Palestinians are increasing. The number of Palestinians injured in the West Bank currently reaches 4.273.

In Israel, where the Palestinians and Arabs represent the 20% of the population, unprecedented inter-communal violence – especially on the Palestinian minority – continues in multiple localities, with increasingly social tension. Leaders on all sides have a responsibility to curb inflammatory rhetoric and calm the rising tensions.

At the moment of this update, international negotiations did not bring to an agreed ceasefire, and hostilities are going on, with increasing risks for the Gaza population.

UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, stated during his briefing to the UN Security Council that "there can be no justification for the killing of civilians anywhere. I am particularly appalled that children continue to be victims of violence. I reiterate that children should not be the target of violence or put in harm's way. They should be afforded special protection from any form of violence".

UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, already declared in the past days that de-escalation of the Palestine-Israel conflict is "an absolute must", adding that the mounting death toll, including children, is totally unacceptable.

Casualties in Israel



CASUALTIES IN ISRAEL



DAILY DEATH TRENDS

	10 May	11 May	12 May	13 May	14 May	15 May
Deaths	0	3	4	1	1	1

Source: (MFA)

³ The North Gaza Seawater Desalination Plant is still not operational and affecting about 250.000 people. In Beit-Lahia, sewage and solid waste are accumulating in the streets. 230.000 people from Gaza City and Khan Younis are still for the fifth successive day having limited access to piped water, due to increasing power cuts and damage to the networks. Damage to sewage networks is resulting in wastewater flows in the streets in various areas, including Beit Lahia, Gaza City and Khan Younis, and no substantial repairs have taken place yet. The largest store of agricultural pesticides in the Gaza Strip was affected by a strike, and authorities are assessing any spillage of chemicals and the environmental impact.

⁴ Including two kindergartens, schools, an UNRWA vocational training center, one MoE directorate and a higher education. Approximately 600.000 students will start losing education time as of today.

WE WORLD INTERVENTION

In the Gaza Strip WeWorld has currently 6 national staff, with 5 new employees starting in the next days. No expat staff is currently deployed in the Strip. All our colleagues and their families are currently safe. We are however concerned about the safety of our colleagues, together with the entire population in Gaza, as no safe shelter, able to protect the citizens in case of a missile attack, is available in the Strip, and no movement outside the Strip is allowed.

The implementation of our activities on the ground is currently suspended for security reasons, waiting for an assessment that allows safe movements along the Strip. We foresee that the ongoing activities will be reassessed and redesigned according to the emerging humanitarian needs.

WeWorld is an active member of the UN OCHA led Clusters system in Gaza. In coordination with relevant clusters, our staff is contributing to the analysis of the humanitarian needs and the operational capacity of the humanitarian actors in the Strip. For the time being, it is impossible to bring persons, materials or goods inside the Gaza Strip. All the humanitarian actors are concentrating their efforts in assessing the needs, in order to provide immediate assistance once the hostilities will be halted and the crossing points will be open.

Our analysis is focused on the **WASH related needs** at household level, in health and education facilities, together with the provision of emergency and health kits to the population in need.

WeWorld, with the support of Italian Cooperation, is also working in the Shifa Medical Complex – the main hospital of Gaza City – where most of the severely injured patients are being treated. The hospital has doubled its intensive care unit capacity to 18 beds in the last days, and the caseload remains manageable for now. In Shifa we are currently supplying desalinated treated water to the entire hospital and improve the medical wastewater treatment and disposal system.

In depth sectorial analyses and damages assessment reports are expected to be available during the current week.

WeWorld active role in the WASH sector in oPt

WeWorld is full active member of the WASH Cluster, member of the WASH cluster Strategic Advisory Group, since 2015 Cluster Gender focal point. Recently, WeWorld is leading the WASH in Health Working Group in Gaza. WeWorld effectively supports the WASH Cluster's work and its mission to promote coordination as an integral part of humanitarian response and early recovery following emergencies. In the Gaza Strip, WeWorld is the WASH Cluster focal point for Deir Al Balah Governorate (known as Middle Area), with an essential role in the ongoing collection and updating of data on the ground, in coordination with 7 municipalities and major actors. WeWorld coordinates its plans, assessments and interventions with the cluster members to ensure integration and effectiveness of results.

WeWorld has previously actively participated with other actors in the consultations and preparation of the [Inter-Agency Contingency Plan](#)