



Occupied Palestinian Territory

HUMANITARIAN ADVOCACY UPDATE

LAST UPDATED 6 OCTOBER 2026

HIGHLIGHTS

- **This is not a ceasefire:** One year since the ceasefire was announced, Palestinians continue to face daily violence and forced displacement.
- **The humanitarian crisis is enormous:** Most of Gaza's 2.1 million people are displaced and approaching the rainy season in overcrowded sites, without adequate shelter and at risk of flooding and disease, while the Israeli blockade continues to restrict entry of vital supplies (See page 2).
- **Israeli annexation in the West Bank is accelerating:** The humanitarian situation is deteriorating sharply due to state-backed settler attacks, land grabs, and restrictions on movement (See page 8).
- **The Yellow Line:** Around two-thirds of Gaza is now inaccessible to Palestinians or subject to severe access restrictions, leaving civilians confined to overcrowded and insecure areas (See page 7).

94%

People in Gaza need shelter

83%

Of buildings & infrastructure damaged

74%

Of road network destroyed

90%

Of energy infrastructure destroyed

1.2 M

Face critical/ catastrophic shelter conditions

88%

Of WASH infrastructure destroyed

5,026

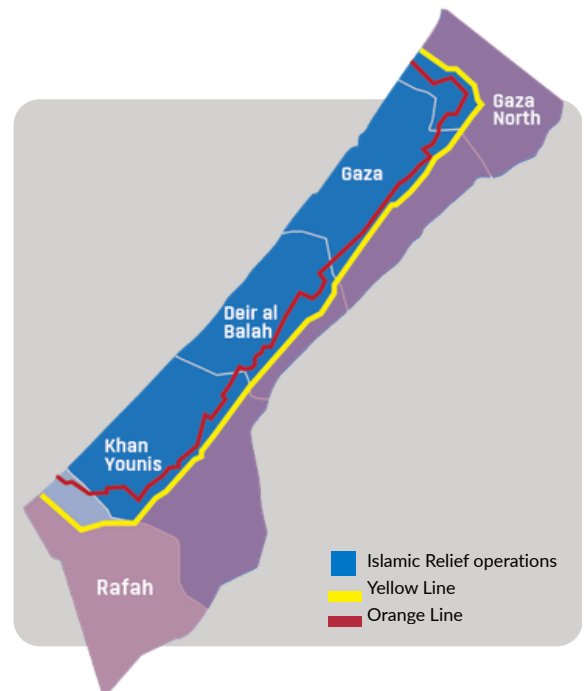
Injured in Gaza since October 2025

1,431

Killed in Gaza since October 2025

ISLAMIC RELIEF IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY

- In 2025, Islamic Relief reached more than 500,000 people across the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) through programmes providing food, healthcare, education and other aid.
- So far in 2026, working with local and international partners, we have provided some assistance to more than 260,000 people. Our current direct operations are concentrated in Gaza City, Khan Younis and Deir al Balah, as well as in other areas that are accessible within the Yellow Line.
- In October 2026, Islamic Relief launches an advocacy campaign for a Palestinian-led recovery that places children and young people at its centre.
- Despite enormous challenges, we continue to respond to urgent needs in an increasingly complex and volatile environment.



HUMANITARIAN NEEDS: GAZA

Despite the ceasefire announcement in October 2025, outlined in the US Administration's 20-point Gaza plan, and endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2803, civilians remain exposed to repeated attacks, averaging 6.7 attacks per day. At least 1,431 Palestinians have been killed and 5,026 injured during the ceasefire period, with women and children among the casualties.

These attacks are in densely populated areas, with no genuinely safe place to seek protection. Ongoing strikes continue to damage and destroy homes, schools, health facilities, water and sanitation networks, and other critical civilian infrastructure, further deepening an already catastrophic humanitarian crisis. People in Gaza continue to live in daily fear for their lives.

Women-headed households have doubled since October 2023 to around 86,000, nearly one in four families in Gaza. Almost 60,000 children have lost one or both parents. The term "wounded child, no surviving family" underscores the rise in orphaned and unaccompanied children and the urgent need for targeted support. Many survivors have been left with permanent, life-changing injuries and long-term physical and psychological trauma. Over one million children require protection services and psychological support.



Access to safe water and sanitation in Gaza is collapsing. Repeated attacks have damaged water networks, desalination plants, wells and sewage infrastructure. Fuel shortages, broken equipment and restrictions on essential supplies have left many families struggling to find enough clean water for drinking, cooking and washing.

The sewage system has largely failed. All six wastewater treatment plants are out of service, and around 70% of sewage pumping stations no longer function.

Gaza City's main treatment plant, which once served about 700,000 people, has been heavily damaged and now discharges sewage into Sheikh Radwan Lagoon¹. Restrictions on access to landfills near the Yellow Line add to public health risks, leaving children exposed to sewage and disease.

Clean water is increasingly scarce. Some 91% of households face moderate to high water insecurity, and many depend on water trucks for their basic needs. Delays in Israeli approvals for engine oil and spare parts threaten the generators that keep water, sanitation, health and waste services running.

[1] More than 150,000 cubic metres of untreated wastewater enter the environment each day, contaminating land and water sources.

Shelter needs remain severe. More than 1.9 million people across Gaza require shelter assistance. Hundreds of thousands are living in overcrowded displacement camps, damaged buildings and makeshift shelters that provide little protection from weather, disease or renewed violence. Many families are now facing another winter in tents. Restrictions on the entry of materials classified as "dual-use" continue to block essential shelter items, including generators, tent poles and metal pallets.

Rodent infestations have become widespread, with reports of people, including infants, being bitten while sleeping. Scabies, lice, fleas and bedbugs have also spread rapidly in overcrowded shelters. Families report rats moving through camps, contaminating food and water and biting children. More than 680,000 children live in displacement sites affected by rodents and pests.

With winter approaching, worn-out tents, poor sanitation, flooding, and shortages of bedding, clothing, lighting and safe cooking facilities are increasing risks, particularly for children.

Education: Across the occupied Palestinian territory, 1.5 million school-aged children are being denied their right to safe education for a fourth consecutive academic year. Around 700,000 children aged 4 to 17 have missed three consecutive years of in-person education and now rely on 359 temporary learning spaces, which can only partially address the scale of need.

Nearly all school buildings (98%) have been damaged, while 93% of school facilities require major rehabilitation or complete reconstruction. Almost 800 teachers and educational staff have been killed. Gaza's children have lived through a collapse of normal life. What was once a temporary disruption has become an entrenched crisis that is denying an entire generation its future.



Food insecurity remains widespread across Gaza. Although the October 2025 ceasefire and limited increase in aid deliveries provided some relief², the risk of famine persists. More than 95% of agricultural infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, reducing local food production and increasing reliance on imports. Reduced humanitarian and commercial inflows continue to drive shortages and high prices. Fresh food remains scarce due to high temperatures and limited cold-chain capacity. Even when food is available in markets, three-quarters of households report difficulties buying it because of cash shortages and lost livelihoods.

More than 1.2 million people (nearly 60% of the population) face crisis levels of food insecurity or worse, including over 212,000 people in emergency conditions. Every governorate in Gaza is classified as being in crisis. By winter, more than 1.4 million people are projected to face crisis levels of hunger or worse.

Children are among the most affected. By April 2027, it is estimated that 74,200 children under five will require treatment for acute malnutrition, including more than 11,400 severe cases. Thousands of pregnant and breastfeeding women are also expected to become acutely malnourished. Shortages of food, clean water, healthcare, cooking fuel and essential household items continue to compound the crisis. Without sustained and unhindered access to food, humanitarian assistance, and functioning markets, the risk of famine will remain a real and persistent threat.

Healthcare capacity in Gaza remains severely constrained. Only 39 health facilities are fully functioning, while 355 health facilities are non-functioning. Across the Gaza Strip, only around 2,200 inpatient beds and 107 intensive care unit beds remain available. More than 1,700 health workers have been killed or injured since October 2026, while others have been detained.

Hospitals continue to face severe shortages of medicines, fuel, supplies and equipment. Central stocks of intravenous fluids have been exhausted, while shortages of insulin, dialysis supplies, cardiac catheterisation materials, laboratory reagents and oxygen equipment continue to disrupt treatment. Restrictions, delays and non-approval of shipments continue to limit the entry of essential health commodities. Severe fuel shortages frequently force field hospitals to shut down or reduce services and operating hours.

The constricting of the Yellow Line has further reduced access to healthcare, leaving 35 hospitals and clinics located behind the line and concentrating demand on a shrinking number of functioning facilities. Thousands of critically ill patients are still prevented from leaving Gaza for vital treatment, forcing them to live in pain and suffering.

Public health risks are increasing. Respiratory infections accounted for nearly half of reported communicable diseases in August, while cases of acute jaundice syndrome increased, raising concerns about Hepatitis A transmission. Overcrowding, poor sanitation and limited healthcare capacity increase the risk of further outbreaks.

[2] WFP, August 2026: Only 15% of surveyed households reported better access to food, while 40% reported no change and 45% indicated that access had worsened.

A CHILDHOOD DISPLACED BY WAR

Before the crisis, Odai, his sister Mariam and their mother Anagheem lived a modest but stable life in their home in Gaza City's Al-Toffah neighbourhood. Like hundreds of thousands of Palestinian families, they were forced to flee for their lives. Their home was completely destroyed, leaving them with nothing but the clothes on their back and the memories of the life they once knew.

"The tent protects us neither from the intense summer heat nor the bitter cold of winter," Odai's mother explains. "We are surrounded by mosquitoes, rats and other pests."

Life in displacement has robbed the children of far more than their home. It has taken away their sense of security, their routines and much of their childhood.

"The children have been deprived of education and recreation. They have also been deprived of their childhood and their chance to play. They are confined to this tent. Standing in lines for food from community kitchens and getting water is a daily struggle."

Anagheem describes how the experiences of repeated displacement, fear and uncertainty have affected her children in ways she never imagined. "They are emotionally and mentally exhausted. They have developed behaviours they never had before because of everything they have experienced."

Anagheem described the difficulties that her seven-year-old son, Odai, is going through: "My son missed both kindergarten and preparatory education. We tried to enrol him in temporary educational centres, but we were displaced again. He has fallen behind in reading."

Despite these hardships, Odai remains determined to learn and dreams of a brighter future. In the midst of these challenges, Islamic Relief's Orphan Sponsorship Programme has become a vital lifeline for the family. The support helps them meet essential needs and provides a measure of stability in circumstances defined by uncertainty and loss. However, in Gaza, rising prices and limited access to goods mean that every day remains a struggle.



Odai, seven-year-old, collecting water for his sister and mother in Gaza



HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND AID DELIVERY

Nowhere near enough aid or essential supplies are getting into Gaza to meet the enormous scale of need. Israel's blockade continues to restrict the movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza, including the entry of vital humanitarian items and the exit of critically ill patients.

The effectiveness of humanitarian access should be measured by outcomes, not by the number of trucks entering Gaza.

Counting truck movements alone obscures critical questions about whether sufficient aid is reaching civilians, whether essential goods are available, and whether people can access them safely and affordably.

Even when supplies cross the border, the overall volume and composition of assistance remain inadequate and far below what was envisaged under the ceasefire agreement.

- **Kerem Shalom (Karem Abu Salem) crossing** has remained the only operational entry point for goods since the closure of Zikim Crossing on 24 May, leaving Gaza's supply chain vulnerable to disruption.
- **The Egyptian corridor** continued to face the highest levels of truck returns and rejections, with offloading rates dropping significantly to 35% in September from 72% in August.
- **The Ashdod route** remained the main entry point for humanitarian cargo, accounting for more than half of all UN and partner shipments entering Gaza.
- **Restrictions on items:** Items classified by Israeli authorities as "dual-use" continue to face significant restrictions, which have limited the availability of shelter materials, construction supplies, water and sanitation equipment, power systems, and essential tools required for recovery and winter preparedness efforts.



OCHA 2026: Gaza Strip Crossings September 2026

THE YELLOW LINE³ AND SHRINKING SPACE

More than two million Palestinians are now crowded into around 35% of the Gaza Strip, while around 65% is now under full Israeli military and administrative control. Families living near the line have often been forced to leave their homes with little notice as military operations and evacuation orders advance.

Much of Gaza's most fertile agricultural land is now east of the Yellow Line. The United Nations has warned that much of the land suitable for displacement camps lies within prohibited or highly restricted areas to the east, north and south of the Yellow Line.

In March 2026, Israel demarcated the Orange Line as an additional restricted belt extending west of the Yellow Line as a secondary security zone adding more than 11% more territory of Gaza to the restricted area. This leaves families with fewer options and forces many into overcrowded sites already struggling to meet basic needs.

The expanding military-controlled zone has also undermined humanitarian efforts. At least ten UN facilities, including collective shelters, and 35 hospitals and clinics now fall within areas that are effectively inaccessible to Palestinians. Access to dozens of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities requires Israeli approval, which is frequently delayed or denied.

The shrinking humanitarian space is not only driving displacement; it is worsening living conditions for an already exhausted population and making recovery increasingly difficult.



BBC 2026: Israel's earth barriers and military positions against the Yellow line.

[3] The Yellow Line is a military demarcation line established with physical concrete blocks during the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire which divides the Gaza Strip into two zones: an eastern area under Israeli military control which covers over half of the Gaza Strip and where Palestinian access is prohibited; and a western area to which almost the entire population of Gaza has been displaced.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION: WEST BANK

The humanitarian situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues to deteriorate. Military operations, settlement expansion, home demolitions, settler violence and movement restrictions are increasing humanitarian needs and displacement.

- Settler violence is a growing driver of displacement and vulnerability. Attacks have targeted homes, infrastructure, water networks, agricultural projects, livestock and grazing land, undermining livelihoods and worsening food insecurity. In 2026, more than 2,600 Palestinians have been displaced due to settler attacks and related access restrictions. Since the beginning of the year, at least 88 Palestinians, including 22 children, have been killed and around 1,900 injured by Israeli forces or settlers. The frequency of injuries directly caused by Israeli settlers has risen sharply, from an average of one Palestinian injured every three days in 2020, to more than three per day so far in 2026.
- Humanitarian operations face increasing restrictions. Administrative measures, including registration delays, visa and work permit obstacles, and restrictions on staff movement, continue to constrain humanitarian access. Some organisations have also been asked to provide personal information on staff, partners and beneficiaries. A recent survey found that 90% of operational NGOs reported that humanitarian conditions had worsened since March 2026.
- Access constraints continue to hamper aid delivery. An expanding network of checkpoints, roadblocks, gates, earth mounds and damaged roads limits movement across the West Bank. Communities can become inaccessible for days, while aid workers continue to face threats and attacks. Nearly 97% of operational humanitarian organisations report access restrictions linked to Israeli settlers.

As needs increase, humanitarian organisations report reducing services, delaying activities and stretching limited resources to maintain operations. Funding shortfalls and access restrictions continue to undermine the humanitarian response.

OUR ASKS

As a neutral and independent humanitarian organisation, Islamic Relief's advocacy is guided by humanitarian principles and focuses on protecting civilians, addressing humanitarian needs, and promoting policies that uphold human dignity and human rights.

This October, Islamic Relief launches a global campaign running into 2027, calling for a fair and just future for Palestinians. The campaign calls for a Palestinian-led recovery that places children and young people at its centre, and builds the environmental, social and material foundations for a safe, dignified and self-determined future.

1. Make the ceasefire real and protect civilians

- **A ceasefire was announced in October 2025, but the violence continues. It has not provided the level of security, protection, and humanitarian assistance that Palestinians were promised.** People continue to be forcibly displaced and denied return to their homes amid destruction, damage to properties and services, explosive ordnance contamination, and territorial acquisition. An immediate, permanent, and genuine ceasefire remains essential to prevent further loss of life and create conditions for recovery. Humanitarian access must be safe, sustained, predictable, unrestricted and principled humanitarian access to people in need throughout Gaza, through a UN-led and coordinated humanitarian response.
- **World leaders must take immediate action to protect Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank.** Israel, as the occupying power, must comply fully with its obligations under international law, cease unlawful and disproportionate use of force, and ensure respect for the rights of Palestinians. All parties must uphold international humanitarian law and protect civilians, humanitarian workers, schools, healthcare facilities, and other civilian infrastructure.
- **All crossings into Gaza should be reopened to allow humanitarian and commercial goods to enter at scale** and ensure access to everyone in all of Gaza. Aid access must be facilitated in line with international law and international humanitarian law and support the UN-led humanitarian response in the OPT, and continue to fund principled and impartial humanitarian organisations.
- **End the weaponisation of aid, including bureaucratic obstruction, arbitrary approval processes,** restrictive registration requirements for international NGOs, and the exclusion of essential humanitarian goods through the "dual-use" restrictions. Israel must cease policies that delay, restrict or politicise life-saving assistance, and allow the unhindered entry of critical supplies, including shelter materials, medical equipment, water and sanitation items. Restrictions on critical items must be removed, while medical evacuations should be facilitated without restrictions on return.

2. End impunity and ensure compliance with international law.

- **The Israeli government has made its territorial ambitions clear.** Through the Yellow Line and the expanding Orange Line, it has confined more than two million Palestinians to less than 40% of Gaza, in breach of the October 2025 ceasefire agreement. States must use all available means to stop the forcible transfer of civilians and the obstruction of essential supplies. These actions violate international law and demand strong international monitoring and accountability mechanisms to investigate violations and hold Israel accountable.

- **Israel's impunity and the failure of third states to employ meaningful diplomatic, legal, and economic measures** as per their obligations under international law underpin the expansion of the regional war. The lack of consequences for Israel's violations of international law has enabled further abuses and deepened the suffering of millions of Palestinians. The international community must end Israel's impunity, ensure independent investigations and accountability for violations of international law, including attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. Compliance with International Court of Justice (ICJ) orders and preventing a genocide in Gaza must be guaranteed, alongside stronger diplomatic engagement and accountability mechanisms to prevent further violations.
- **Governments must also take decisive action, impose arms embargo and halt weapon transfers**, parts, and ammunition to Israel where there is a risk of violations of international law, and support international accountability mechanisms for all individuals implicated in war crimes and other serious breaches of international law.
- **Israeli settlements are illegal under international law**, and concrete measures are needed to end international complicity in sustaining them. We welcome recent commitments by the UK, France, and Canada to take action against settlement expansion, including measures targeting those who facilitate or profit from the settlement enterprise. These steps are consistent with the ICJ's 2024 Advisory Opinion. However, stronger actions are required to move beyond statements by ending all trade, business, and economic relations with illegal settlements, including goods, services and investment and imposing sanctions on organisations and entities that fund, support, or contribute to the illegal occupation.

3. Support Palestinian-led recovery and reconstruction

- **Palestinians are not asking for dependency; they are asking for the opportunity to rebuild their lives with dignity and shape their own future.** Recovery and reconstruction efforts must therefore be Palestinian-led and grounded in local priorities, rights, and expertise. The international community should:
 - Place Palestinian leadership at the centre of reconstruction efforts.
 - Support inclusive and community-driven planning processes.
 - Reject externally imposed frameworks that undermine Palestinian agency.
 - Invest in youth-led recovery and long-term resilience.
 - Ensure reconstruction efforts remain accountable to Palestinian communities.
- **Restore essential services and safeguard recovery.** The humanitarian crisis cannot be addressed through emergency assistance alone. Gaza requires functioning public institutions and the restoration of essential services, including healthcare, education, water, sanitation, electricity, and safe housing.

4. Provide adequate humanitarian funding

- **Donors must provide flexible, predictable, and sufficient funding for the humanitarian response**, including support for UNRWA, Palestinian NGOs, and civil society organisations. Only 40% of the UN OPT flash appeal has been funded as of 5 October. Continuing funding shortfalls are undermining humanitarian operations and limiting the ability of organisations to meet growing needs across Gaza and the West Bank.

5. Address the root causes of the crisis

- **The humanitarian crisis cannot be separated from its political causes.** Addressing humanitarian needs requires action to end Israel's occupation and further annexation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to address international support for the settlement enterprise. A sustainable peace requires compliance with international law, accountability, and the protection of Palestinian rights, including self-determination, freedom of movement, and protection from violence and displacement.

ISLAMIC RELIEF PROGRAMMES AT A GLANCE

Gaza is one of the most difficult and dangerous places in the world to deliver aid. Islamic Relief's staff and partners in Gaza are themselves displaced from their homes, grieving loved ones, and trying to support their families amid ongoing attacks and shortages. They have been working non-stop for the past three years. At the same time, the Israeli blockade restricts vital supplies from entering.

Despite the enormous challenges, they continue to provide vital aid to some of the most vulnerable people in Gaza.

Our operations in 2026:

Sector	Area	Description of Assistance
Orphan sponsorship programme	Gaza Strip	Our orphan sponsorship programme has expanded to support more than 25,258 orphaned children and their guardians. It provides regular financial and welfare support, helping families meet basic needs such as shelter, food and healthcare, and improving children's wellbeing, protection and access to essential services.
Food Security	Gaza Strip	Provision of hot meals (rice and meat) to displaced families residing in shelters across Gaza City in partnership with Natuf. For many families this is the only hot meal they will eat that day and a vital source of nutrition. We also provide food vouchers to vulnerable families, helping them purchase essential food items according to their needs and priorities, and supporting local markets. We particularly target some of the most vulnerable people, such as elderly people, women-headed households, and people with disabilities. We also provide multipurpose cash assistance through electronic wallets to address Gaza's liquidity shortages and enable vulnerable families to meet their most urgent needs with dignity and choice. We also provide meat through our seasonal project (Qurbani) which has supported 248,640 displaced individuals across the Gaza Strip.
Health	Gaza	We provide maternal healthcare for pregnant women, new mothers and newborn infants. Delivered in partnership with Ajyal Association, the project provides comprehensive antenatal care services for pregnant women, including health consultations, monitoring and the provision of vitamins. Beneficiaries also receive tailored maternal and newborn hygiene kits containing baby nappies, baby shampoo, hair shampoo, sanitary pads, tissues, wet wipes, compressed toilet paper, toothpaste, liquid hand soap and toothbrushes.

Sector	Area	Description of Assistance
Education	Khan Younis	We help run 11 temporary learning spaces in Khan Younis for 3,600 placed children with our partner, Ajyal Association. The project trains teachers and provides learning supplies. We also provide hot meals and fortified biscuits to students attending classes.
Psychosocial support	Gaza	Group and individual psychosocial support sessions were delivered for children, alongside engagement sessions for caregivers, reaching 3,600 children and 1,157 caregivers. Inclusive recreational and Mental Health Psychosocial Support activities established positive routines, strengthen emotional wellbeing, improve peer interaction, and build resilience.
Water and Hygiene	Gaza	Provide safe drinking and domestic water to displaced families living in shelters, helping to reduce health risks and improve living conditions. A total of 2,245 m³ of clean drinking water was distributed to 7,172 people. We also distributed 1,118 hygiene kits to families who fled their homes with nothing, helping them maintain sanitation in dire conditions.

Looking ahead, we are committed to continuing our support for vulnerable families by delivering essential humanitarian assistance that helps meet immediate needs. We also plan to deliver eye surgeries to support patients suffering from preventable or treatable eye conditions, restoring sight and improving quality of life for those most in need.

