

## Gaza situation update: 6 February 2024

- According to the latest UN OCHA Update<sup>1</sup>, as at 6 February 2024 the following statistics are updated:
  - Casualties: according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, at least 27,478 Palestinians have been killed and 65,835 Palestinians injured.
  - Internal displacement: As of 3 February, UNRWA estimates that 75% of Gaza's 2.3 million people, more than half of whom are children, are displaced. Intense fighting around Khan Younis is driving thousands of people into Rafah.
  - On 5 February, the Israeli military re-announced evacuation orders that were first issued on 23 and 29 January for residents of areas in Khan Younis and Gaza. 67% of the Gaza strip, home to 1.78 million Palestinians, is now under evacuation orders. It is estimated that Rafah is hosting over half of Gaza's population and 5 times its population prior to 7 October. As of 3 February, UNRWA reported that at least 282 incidents have impacted its facilities sheltering displaced families. As a result, at least 377 IDPs taking refuge in UNRWA shelters (including schools) have been killed and 1,365 injured.
  - Destruction: It is now estimated that the amount of debris generated by the destruction of residential housing units will take over four years to remove.
  - Hospitals: The influx of IDPs to Rafah has overwhelmed hospital capacities.
  - Water and sanitation: 2.25 million people need WASH (water and sanitation) assistance. The public health risks of flooding are being compounded by fuel shortage, acute scarcity of vital hygiene materials and substandard sanitation infrastructure.
  - Humanitarian aid: In January, 56% of humanitarian aid missions planned for northern Gaza and 25% of missions planned for the middle area were denied access by the Israeli authorities. There have been 5 reports of shooting on people gathering to receive humanitarian aid.
  - West Bank: 373 Palestinians have been killed, including 95 children, and 4415 Palestinians, including 670 children, have been injured. Since 7 October OCHA has recorded 506 settler attacks against Palestinians.
- It has emerged that Israel conducted an airstrike on a health facility in Al Mawasi on 18 January 2024, the geocoordinates of which the Israeli authorities had confirmed in December 2023 they had logged as a humanitarian base and de-conflicted (marked it as a protected sensitive and humanitarian site).<sup>2</sup> The residential compound housed medical teams from IRC and Medical Aid for Palestine ("MAP"). Four British doctors were injured in the airstrike. According to IRC and MAP, an independent assessment by the UN concluded that the airstrike most likely involved a GBU32 (MK83) missile package, which only the Israeli military has access to in Gaza. It is believed that the missile package was launched using an F-16 combat aircraft, which has components manufactured in and exported from the UK. As a result of the attack, the medical team was forced to suspend its work at Nasser Hospital and on 26 January 2024 MSF reported that the hospital can no longer provide vital medical services.<sup>3</sup>
- On 31 January 2024, a U.S. court issued a judgment in a case against the U.S. President and the Secretaries of Defense and State, stating that the evidence provided to it concurred with the recent ruling of the ICJ that the current treatment of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip by the

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<sup>1</sup> UNOCHA, *Flash Update #111*, 5 February 2024, available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-111>

<sup>2</sup> Medical Aid for Palestinians, *IRC and MAP condemn Israeli airstrike on Gaza compound housing Emergency Medical Team*, 31 January 2024, available at: <https://www.map.org.uk/news/archive/post/1561-irc-and-map-condemn-israeli-airstrike-on-gaza-compound-housing-emergency-medical-team>

<sup>3</sup> Medecins Sans Frontieres, *Services collapse at Nasser Hospital, leaving Palestinians with few options for care*, 26 January 2024, available at: <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/nasser-hospital-collapse-cutting-access-health-care-southern-gaza>

Israeli military may plausibly constitute a genocide. The Court found that it did not have jurisdiction to order the Defendants not to provide further support to Israel, but implored the Defendants to “*examine the results of their unflagging support of the military siege against the Palestinians in Gaza*”.<sup>4</sup>

- UN and international bodies have made further statements condemning the situation in Gaza:
  - Warnings as to the catastrophic effect on civilians of several nations defunding UNRWA;<sup>5</sup> and
  - The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention condemned the defunding which it says represents “*a shift by several countries from potential complicity in genocide to direct involvement in engineered famine*”, putting those states directly in violation of the Genocide Convention.<sup>6</sup>
- Following the further evacuation orders, thousands of people have fled to Rafah on the southern border with Egypt, where at least 1.4 million people, more than half of Gaza’s population, are now sheltering.<sup>7</sup> The humanitarian situation is further deteriorating.<sup>8</sup> Airstrikes on Rafah have intensified, ahead of an anticipated ground assault.<sup>9</sup> Israel has signified its intent to intensify airstrikes in Rafah to a similar scale and intensity to its operations in other cities in Gaza which

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<sup>4</sup> Center for Constitutional Rights, *U.S. Court Concludes Israel’s Assault on Gaza Is Plausible Case of Genocide*, 31 January 2024, available at: <https://ccrjustice.org/home/press-center/press-releases/us-court-concludes-israel-s-assault-gaza-plausible-case-genocide>

<sup>5</sup> UNRWA, *The Gaza Strip: Humanitarian Crisis Deepens At A Time Funding Suspensions Put Unrwa Aid Operations In Peril*, 1 February 2024, available at: <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/news-releases/gaza-strip-humanitarian-crisis-deepens-time-funding-suspensions-put-unrwa-aid> and UN Security Council meeting, *Humanitarian Response in Gaza ‘Completely Dependent’ on Palestine Refugee Agency, Relief Chief Tells Security Council, Urging Countries to Restore Funding*, 31 January 2024, available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15575.doc.htm>; See also United Nations Secretary General, *Secretary-General’s remarks to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People*, 31 January 2024, available at: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2024-01-31/secretary-generals-remarks-the-committee-the-exercise-of-the-inalienable-rights-of-the-palestinian-people>

<sup>6</sup> Lemkin Institute, *Statement on Recent Threats to UNRWA and the Shift between Potential Complicity and Direct Involvement in the Crime of Genocide against Palestinians by Several Nations*, 31 January 2024, available at: <https://www.lemkininstitute.com/statements-new-page/statement-on-recent-threats-to-unrwa-and-the-shift-between-potential-complicity-and-direct-involvement-in-the-crime-of-genocide-against-palestinians-by-several-nations>

<sup>7</sup> Washington Post, *Israel says it will expand operations in Rafah, Gaza’s last refuge*, 5 February 2024, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/02/israel-rafah-military-operation-maps-photos/>

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Palestine, *Rafah a ‘pressure cooker of despair’ in Gaza; US ambassador to UN stresses vital role of UNRWA*, 5 February 2024, available at: <https://palestine.un.org/en/259667-rafah-%E2%80%99pressure-cooker-despair%E2%80%99-gaza-us-ambassador-un-stresses-vital-role-unrwa>; Washington Post, *Israel says it will expand operations in Rafah, Gaza’s last refuge*, 5 February 2024, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/02/israel-rafah-military-operation-maps-photos/>; Al Haq, *Immediate Action Needed: Urgent Warning from Palestinian Organizations on Impending Israeli Ground Attack in Rafah*, 5 February 2024, available at: <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/22607.html>

<sup>9</sup> The Guardian, *Overnight Israeli airstrikes kill scores in Gaza as fears grow of push into Rafah*, 4 February 2024, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/04/overnight-israeli-airstrikes-kill-gaza-fears-grow-push-rafah#:~:text=Bombardments%20across%20the%20Gaza%20Strip,of%20Gaza's%202.3%20million%20population>; On 5 February, there were reports on social media that Israel was dropping leaflets over Rafah, the contents of which are as yet unknown: [https://twitter.com/abierkhatib/status/1754475148739068305?s=48&t=ZseYV7\\_ocJfotilMxeJ4hQ](https://twitter.com/abierkhatib/status/1754475148739068305?s=48&t=ZseYV7_ocJfotilMxeJ4hQ)

have been flattened.<sup>10</sup> UNOCHA has warned that “*everything possible*” must be done to avoid an Israeli ground invasion on Rafah as it could lead to a “*large scale loss of civilian lives*”.<sup>11</sup>

- Destruction on a mass scale continues to escalate, with over 70% of civilian infrastructure including homes, hospitals, schools, water, and sanitation facilities now destroyed or severely damaged.<sup>12</sup> More than 200 buildings of cultural and historical significance have been reduced to rubble.<sup>13</sup> Further evidence emerged, including Israeli admissions, confirming Israel is creating a security “buffer zone” at the border.<sup>14</sup>
- There have been further reports of unarmed civilians killed by the IDF, including aid workers and a man carrying a white flag.<sup>15</sup>
- Israeli officials and members of the IDF continue to make statements of intent relevant to the UK government’s assessment of Israel’s compliance with international law.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://twitter.com/yoavgallant/status/1753118924390973502?s=20> and

iNews, *Warning of ‘unparalleled killings’ as Israel targets Rafah safe zone in south Gaza*, 5 February 2024, available at: <https://inews.co.uk/news/world/warning-killings-israel-rafah-2890500>

<sup>11</sup> Al Jazeera, *Rafah attack could result in ‘large scale’ loss of civilian lives: UN*, 6 February 2024, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/2/6/israels-war-on-gaza-live-staggering-destruction-in-north-gaza-unrwa?update=2682926>

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Secretary General, *Secretary-General’s remarks to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People*, 31 January 2024, available at: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2024-01-31/secretary-generals-remarks-the-committee-the-exercise-of-the-inalienable-rights-of-the-palestinian-people>; BBC, *At least half of Gaza’s buildings damaged or destroyed, new analysis shows*, 1 February 2024, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-68006607>; <https://twitter.com/ShaykhSulaiman/status/1752421170761056722?s=20>

<sup>13</sup> The Guardian, *‘Everything beautiful has been destroyed’: Palestinians mourn a city in tatters*, 4 February 2024, available at: [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/04/everything-beautiful-has-been-destroyed-palestinians-mourn-a-city-in-tatters?fbclid=IwAR3So5SPpNhPVm3Mfo2gD2X2nOrPF-dPzcr\\_gvjQUhHhXRzRoFpFqCs\\_UM](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/04/everything-beautiful-has-been-destroyed-palestinians-mourn-a-city-in-tatters?fbclid=IwAR3So5SPpNhPVm3Mfo2gD2X2nOrPF-dPzcr_gvjQUhHhXRzRoFpFqCs_UM). See also;

<https://twitter.com/NemoAnno/status/1753175124281377221?s=20>

<sup>14</sup> The New York Times, *Israel’s Controlled Demolitions Are Razing Neighborhoods in Gaza*, 1 February 2024, available at: [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/02/01/world/middleeast/Israel-gaza-war-demolish.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.SE0.CNtY.774TkAy66IK2&bgrp=t&smid=url-share](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/02/01/world/middleeast/Israel-gaza-war-demolish.html?unlocked_article_code=1.SE0.CNtY.774TkAy66IK2&bgrp=t&smid=url-share)

<sup>15</sup> <https://twitter.com/itvnews/status/1752320450099626306?s=20>; CNN, *She was fleeing with her grandson, who was holding a white flag. Then she was shot*, 26 January 2024, available at:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/26/middleeast/hala-khreis-white-flag-shooting-gaza-cmd-intl/index.html>;

Euromed Monitor, *Gaza: Israeli army executes two brothers who were following orders to evacuate Khan Yunis*, 26 January 2024, available at: <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6121/Gaza:-Israeli-army-executes-two-brothers-who-were-following-orders-to-evacuate-Khan-Yunis>. See also;

<https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1752682953564418096?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/NaksBilal/status/1752427501714866330?s=20> and

<https://twitter.com/PalestineRCS/status/1753849364030599188?s=20>

<sup>16</sup> For example, the IDF has just admitted (having previously denied) that the IDF was indeed responsible for operating a Telegram channel called ‘72 Virgins Uncensored’ which posted graphic content of Palestinians being killed, abused and mocked, which had been accused of constituting “*genocidal rhetoric*” with statements such as calling Palestinians “*roaches*” to be “*exterminated*”: see Haaretz, *Israeli Army Admits Running Unauthorized Graphic Gaza Influence Op*, 4 February 2024, available at: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2024-02-04/ty-article/.premium/israeli-army-its-admits-staff-was-behind-graphic-gaza-telegram-channel/0000018d-70b4-dd6e-a98d-f4b6a9c00000>; Haaretz, *Graphic Videos and Incitement: How the IDF Is Misleading Israelis on Telegram*, 12 December 2024, available at: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2023-12-12/ty-article/.premium/graphic-videos-and-incitement-how-the-idf-is-misleading-israelis-on-telegram/0000018c-5ab5-df2f-adac-febd01c30000> and Middle East Monitor, *Israel army operates channel to share gruesome killing of Palestinians*, 13 December 2023, available at:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231213-israel-army-operates-channel-to-share-gruesome-killing-of-palestinians/> and Middle East Eye, *Israel-Palestine war: How an Israeli Telegram channel is used to incite violence against Palestinians*, 14 December 2024, available at: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-war-telegram-incite-violence-psychological-warfare-palestinians>. See also

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<https://twitter.com/Sprinter99800/status/1752926995086799039?s=20>