

(27 August - 10 September)

# HUMANITARIAN ACCESS SNAPSHOT #5



## Gaza and West Bank

### SITUATION UPDATE:

- At least **553** Palestinians were killed and **1291** injured between 27 August and 8 September, with the death toll now rising to **40,988**, and at least **94,825** injured, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza. Thousands of people remain buried under the rubble and are presumed dead.
- On 10 September, Israeli strikes killed at least 40 Palestinians and wounded 60 others in a camp for displaced families in Gaza located in an Israeli military-designated "humanitarian" zone in Al-Mawasi.
- Despite Israeli forces revising some displacement orders on 29 and 30 August, hundreds of thousands of families remain confined to Israeli military-designated "humanitarian" zones, covering **approximately 13%** of Gaza's total land area.
- On 28 August, Israeli forces launched the largest-scale and longest military operation in the West Bank in two decades, raising serious concerns over the excessive use of force, killing at least 36 people, including 8 children. Israeli forces have imposed blockades and seriously damaged road infrastructure, electricity networks, and water supplies.
- Please refer to the [latest OCHA flash](#) update for the latest situation update.



Credit: ActionAid



*"For too long, Gaza's people have faced relentless struggles to access essential needs like clean water, medical care, and safety. The ongoing conflict and blockade continue to shrink the humanitarian space, and repeated relocation orders worsen the situation, displacing families already barely surviving. Each move deepens uncertainty in the face of relentless adversity."*

**Flavia Pugliese, Head of Regional Office for Middle East, WeWorld**



## KEY UPDATES: **HUMANITARIAN ACCESS**

On 9 September, the Israeli forces stopped a UN convoy on its way to northern Gaza for more than eight hours despite prior detailed coordination. Staff on the convoy were travelling to roll out the Polio vaccination campaign for children in the north. All staff and convoy have been released and are back safely at the UN base ([UNRWA](#))

**Solidarités International** temporarily suspended one of its water desalination plants in an area under displacement orders, significantly reducing its ability to distribute drinkable water.

Vital food and medical supplies expired at the crossings due to access delays and denials caused by Israeli government bureaucratic hurdles and changing standard operating procedures (SOPs), according to **CESVI, DanChurchAid (DCA)/Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), and Med Global.**

In August, the number of humanitarian missions and movements within Gaza that have been denied access by Israeli authorities has doubled in the north (34% vs.19%) and almost doubled in the south (27% vs 14%), compared with July.

On 1 September, World Health Organization (WHO), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other partner humanitarian agencies began a Polio vaccination campaign. Constraints included the lack of safety and fuel to keep healthcare centres operational, and maintain the cold chain to store, transport, and distribute vaccines.

A [World Food Programme \(WFP\) convoy](#) and an [Anera convoy](#) were attacked by Israeli forces, and an Israeli strike also hit a UN warehouse in Nuseirat, killing nine Palestinians and injuring others.

On 28 August, Israeli forces launched the largest-scale and longest military operation in the West Bank in more than two decades. **Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)** decided to suspend their activities in Tulkarm and Jenin. **CARE International, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), and Médecins du Monde International Network (Mdm)** also reported halting or delaying activities, including medical services, due to access constraints and safety concerns.

### Call for Action

- States with influence over the parties to the conflict must take concrete actions, beyond mere condemnation, to ensure an immediate and permanent ceasefire is achieved and all parties involved must cease hostilities without delay. States must, in accordance with international law, halt the transfer of weapons, parts, and ammunition to parties to the conflict as these are at risk of being used to commit violations of international humanitarian law (IHL).
- The Government of Israel must immediately halt the forced displacement of civilians in Gaza, which is causing unnecessary suffering and trauma, and severely disrupting access to essential aid. States with influence must act decisively to ensure this practice ends.
- The Government of Israel must guarantee and facilitate safe, unhindered access for all humanitarian assistance, including vaccines, fuel, hygiene kits, associated equipment (including cold chain storage), and specialist staff, through all crossing points into and within Gaza, as well as safe unfettered access for children and families to health points across Gaza.
- The Government of Israel, as the occupying power, must uphold their obligations under international law, protect and uphold the rights of Palestinians, refrain from excessive and lethal use of force, and guarantee unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance, including healthcare and other essential services in the West Bank.
- The safety and security of humanitarian actors must be guaranteed. As they respond to the humanitarian imperative to assist communities, humanitarian agencies must be permitted to bring into Gaza items and means that are essential for their safety and well-being.

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*The polio outbreak is another sobering example of how severely restricted humanitarian access and the lack of a lasting ceasefire, 11 months on, will magnify otherwise avoidable and preventable human suffering, and make delivering humanitarian assistance to those in need extremely difficult and inadequate at best.*

*Jolien Veldwijk, CARE West Bank and Gaza Country Director*

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## GAZA: POLIO VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

- **ActionAid partners (Al-Awda and Culture & Free Thought Association (CFTA)), CARE International, MdM, MedGlobal, Project HOPE, Save the Children, and Terre des Hommes (TdH) Italy's local partner (Palestinian Medical Relief Service)** began to administer polio vaccines throughout the Gaza Strip in a vaccination campaign led by the WHO and UNICEF. Despite pauses in military operations in the areas in which designated health points and the populations they serve are located, transporting the vaccines to medical access points throughout the Gaza Strip remains a challenge.
- **MdM and TdH Italy's local partner, the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS)**, reported that the main challenges in the vaccination campaign are the lack of security and the instability within the Gaza Strip.
- **Al-Awda Hospital (Alianza por la Solidaridad/ActionAid partner)** reported that fuel shortages due to restrictions imposed by the Israeli forces are making it difficult to keep healthcare centres operational and maintain the cold chain – the temperature-controlled system that stores, transports and distributes vaccines.

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*“In cooperation with the Ministry of Health in Gaza, the Al Awda Health and Community Association is carrying out a polio vaccination campaign through primary healthcare centres throughout Gaza. However, medical teams face challenges such as fuel shortages due to restrictions imposed by the Israeli army.”*

*Dr Mohammed Salha, Acting Director, Al-Awda Hospital*

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The campaign managed to vaccinate **187,000** children in central Gaza, which exceeded the estimated target of 157,000 children. The second phase of the campaign concluded on 8 September, reaching **256,572** children in Khan Younis and Rafah over four days. The third phase is scheduled to take place in northern Gaza from 10 to 13 September.

## IN-DEPTH: ACCESS CONSTRAINTS FACED BY NGOS

### Outside Gaza: Delays and Denials of Aid

The Israeli government continues to impose strict restrictions on the movement of aid into Gaza. The complex bureaucratic process and changing SOPs result in food and medical supplies nearing expiration before entry. Fresh produce, like vegetables, is frequently denied at key crossings such as Zikim, while meat on cold chain trucks remains stalled, awaiting approval.

**CESVI, DCA/NCA, and Mercy Corps (MC)** have experienced significant delays in getting their supplies across the borders into Gaza due to changes in SOPs that require additional layers of documentation, resulting in prolonged clearance times and, in some cases, outright denial of entry for essential goods.

**MedGlobal** reported that critical medical supplies, including life-saving medications, have been held up due to last-minute changes in documentation requirements, leading to potential shortages in Gaza's already overstretched healthcare system.

**Save the Children** finally received approval for the entry of 40 laptops into Gaza after a near three-month wait. **This is the first telecommunications approval granted to any international NGO (INGO) since May 2024. However, the latest directions state that a separate approval procedure is required for the laptop chargers. The laptops have yet to cross.**

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*“It is really heartbreaking and cruel the suffering of a mother who watches her child endure itching and skin rashes. She is deprived of the most basic necessities to protect her child – clean water, shampoo, and even washing powder that could help with prevention and speed up the treatment process are all out of her reach”.*

**Médecins Du Monde humanitarian worker in Gaza**

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**During this reporting period, NGOs reported continued delays and denials of access for the following, non-exhaustive, list of items:**

Organisation	Sector	Quantity	Location
ActionAid	Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)	16 truckloads of hygiene and dignity kits	Egypt
		3 trucks of hygiene and dignity kits	KAS/KS
HI	Food, non-food items (NFIs)	260 pallets of dignity kits/diapers/clothes/food/hygiene kits/wound dressing kits	Egypt
International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation (IBC)	Food, WASH	1,800 food parcels, 1,800 hygiene packages and large quantities of canned meat	Egypt
TdH Italy	Health	130 pallets of medical supplies (medications, medical devices, hygiene and maternity kits, first aid kits and lab material)37 pallets of hygiene kits and first aid kits	West Bank Jordan
WeWorld	WASH	5 trucks: 1,534 family hygiene kits	Egypt
MdM	WASH	930 Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) kits (26 pallets, 1 truck)	Egypt
MedGlobal	Health	1,200 food parcels, 400 maternity kits, 6 pallets of medical supplies, 13,500 insulin pens, 10 ultrasound devices	Egypt
MC	Food, NFIs	2100 food kits, 2100 hygiene kits, 1,000 shelter kits (28 trucks load)	Egypt
		5 trucks: 1,030 food kits and 1,350 hygiene kits	KAS/KS
Taawon (Plan International partner)	Shelter	4 truckloads of summer blankets and floor mats	Egypt
Save the Children	Temperature-controlled pallets	16 temperature-controlled pallets of medicines	Al-Arish, Egypt



# AT THE CROSSING: BACKLOG, CLOSURE, AND DANGER

The situation at the crossing points into Gaza is equally dire. The Rafah crossing, which serves as a crucial entry point for aid, remains closed, leading to a significant backlog and reduction of the amount of humanitarian aid entering Gaza. This backlog has created a bottleneck effect, where aid cleared for entry often arrives too late to be effective.

**HI and Plan International** have both reported that supplies such as medical kits and food parcels have been left waiting at border crossings for so long that they have expired or deteriorated, making them unusable.

**CESVI** lost food kits due to inspection, and **ActionAid** lost a truckload of 900 dignity and hygiene kits at **Karem Abu Salem-Kerem Shalom** (KAS/KS) crossing (misplaced or looted).

**MC** is still unable to access food and hygiene kits that were offloaded at KAS/KS in June 2024. While these goods have not been lost, they are currently inaccessible and thus cannot be distributed.

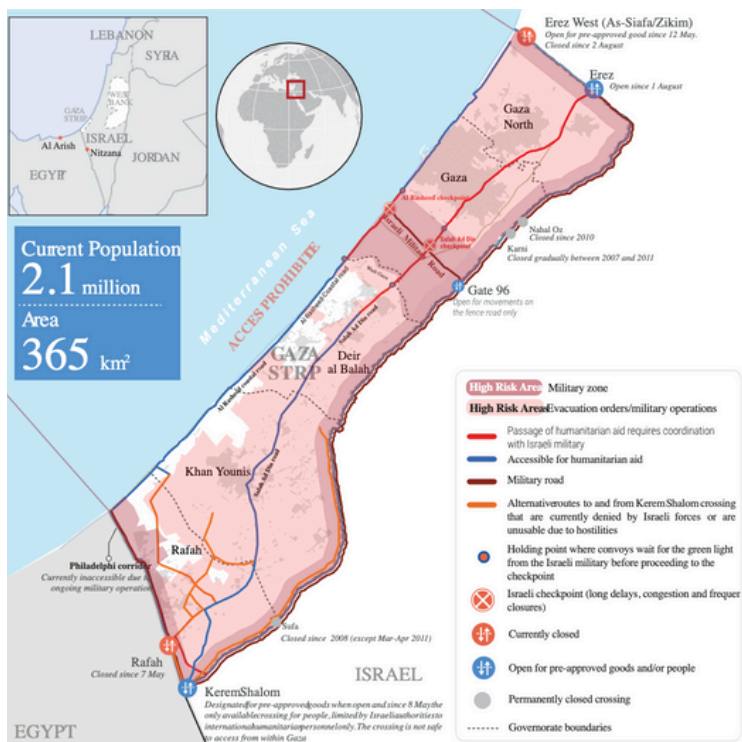
**MdM** has a shipment of medical and sexual and reproductive health, prenatal, and postnatal supplies that has been waiting in Türkiye for four months unable to reach the 5,000 women, girls, and newborns it is intended for due to the heavy congestion and security challenges at KAS/KS.

**Save the Children** has had 16 temperature-controlled pallets of medicines stuck in Al-Arish since July. On 15 August, two non-temperature-controlled pallets that were cleared to cross KAS/KS were not able to enter Gaza as they were rejected. The two pallets were finally delivered to the Logistics Cluster warehouse in Deir Al Balah on 9th September. The closed trucks required for temperature control are not approved to enter Gaza. Thermal blankets are therefore required to maintain temperature control of supplies while in transit in Gaza. However, thermal blankets are considered dual use and therefore require additional approval, which Save the Children has requested and is awaiting.

The number of trucks entering Gaza continues to drop; the daily average in August was 69 trucks per day. Israeli forces activities and blocking of Salah Al-Deen further obstruct the trucks entering from KAS/KS. Since July, the average number of trucks entering Gaza through KAS/KS is about 25 trucks per day.

## STATUS OF THE CROSSING:

- **Erez West:** Closed since 3 August.
- **Erez East:** Open; receiving cargo coming from Amman (Jordan) and Ashdod (Israel). Capacity limitations.
- **Karem Abu Salem-Kerem Shalom:** Collection and pick-up activities are still severely hampered and are performed on an ad hoc basis due to security and access constraints.
- **Rafah Crossing:** Closed since May 2024.
- **Fence road:** A temporary route, and it only allows a limited number of trucks to pass per day.



# INSIDE GAZA: IMPACT OF HOSTILITIES, DISPLACEMENT ORDERS AND LACK OF SAFETY

According to an assessment by the International NGO Safety Organization (INSO), over half of the NGOs surveyed indicated that they increased their presence in Gaza since the start of the conflict, despite significant access challenges and extreme safety concerns. However, 40% of respondents stated that their staff numbers have decreased in the face of these conditions. This indicates - according to INSO - that NGOs are doing more programmatic work but with fewer resources as well as an increase in their risk tolerance. NGOs have been forced to significantly increase their risk tolerance to continue operating in Gaza (2024 08 INSO PAL Gaza Risk Management Overview).



## IMPACT OF HOSTILITIES AND DESTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE:

The constant Israeli forces attacks in Gaza have resulted in the widespread destruction of critical infrastructure, making it increasingly challenging to maintain basic services.

- **WeWorld** has reported significant setbacks due to the destruction of water facilities, which are essential for providing clean water to the population. The loss of these facilities has had a cascading effect, leading to increased risks of waterborne diseases.
- **ActionAid partners, Mdm, Oxfam, and War Child partners** were forced to cancel or delay planned aid operations to ensure staff and people's safety given the risk of airstrikes and unsafe conditions.

Over the past two weeks, **communications** have been severely disrupted, with partners reporting continuous interruptions in internet and communication services, which impede **coordination and notification** efforts, which are facing delays and refusal by the Israeli authorities.

- **Mdm** is using the coordinated notification system for all movements, but frequently faces refusals and delays from the Israeli Gaza Communication and Liaison Administration (CLA), particularly for travel between Nuseirat and Deir Al Balah.



## FORCED DISPLACEMENT ORDERS:

The impact of the Israeli forces' displacement orders continues to complicate aid operations. These orders, often issued with little notice, force entire communities to relocate, making it nearly impossible for humanitarian organisations to deliver consistent support.

- Warehouses for **ActionAid partners (MAAN, WEFAQ, PDWSA) and International Development and Relief Foundation (IDRF)** are now located in "no-go" zones making them impossible to access.
- **Mdm's** office was relocated due to displacement orders issued by Israeli forces. One team managed to secure a standby shelter in Mawasi serving as a destination to go whenever any displacement takes place in Deir Al-Balah. Unfortunately, this shelter is not equipped with a solar system or internet connection.
- **ActionAid, the Danish Refugee Council, HI, and MedGlobal** have documented several instances where the sudden displacement orders have disrupted ongoing aid distributions, leaving many without the essential supplies they desperately need.
- **Mdm** reported overcrowding on the routes they use for their operations as a result of the displacement orders issued by Israeli forces.

- **Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA)** runs community kitchens that provide hot, nourishing meals and have been forced to close two of their kitchen operations.
- **TdH Italy's partner, PMRS**, had to close its medical point near Al-Aqsa Hospital as a result of the displacement orders.
- Several **Save the Children** programme sites and activities were disrupted as a result of the displacement orders, including malnutrition support, child protection case management and referrals, mental health and psychosocial support, and informal education.

The impact of these displacement orders extends beyond the immediate disruption of aid delivery. Displaced families often find themselves in overcrowded shelters with limited access to necessities such as food, water, and medical care. This overcrowding exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and increases the risk of disease outbreaks.

- **ActionAid** and **MedGlobal** reported that many displaced families are now living in temporary shelters without adequate sanitation facilities or access to basic hygiene items such as soap and shampoo.



## CASH LIQUIDITY:

The cash liquidity crisis in Gaza has led to significant operational challenges for various humanitarian organisations.

- **ActionAid partners, the Gaza Protection Consortium, MECA partners, and Oxfam** have reported that the lack of cash severely impacts their ability to procure aid supplies, often forcing them to pay higher commissions to local providers. They also face delays in finding suppliers willing to accept bank transfers, further complicating aid distribution.
- **CARE** and **War Child** reported that **cash withdrawal commissions have surged to 30%**. The situation has worsened as most suppliers demand cash payments, rejecting bank transfers entirely.
- **MdM** has been forced to meticulously prioritise activities due to the cash shortage. They face challenges in obtaining supporting documents for cash purchases, as the unofficial market favours cash over bank transactions.
- **CFTA, Community Training Centre and Crisis Management (CTCCM), Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP), Palestine Save the Children Foundation (PSCF) and Save Youth Future Society (SYFS)** have experienced delays in disbursements due to restrictions imposed by intermediary banks. They had to reduce the size and scope of aid provided, such as food parcels and clothing packages, due to increased procurement costs.



## LACK OF SAFETY FOR HUMANITARIAN WORKERS:

According to INSO, who are collecting data on security incidents in Gaza, due to its small size, the strip has the highest density of incidents in the countries INSO works in, including Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Nigeria, and Ukraine (2024 08 INSO PAL Gaza Risk Management Overview).

The ongoing military actions and lack of safety in Gaza significantly impede humanitarian operations. **To this date, very few organisations have reportedly been granted permission to enter critical items** such as satellite phones, VHF/HF radio equipment, Personal Protective Equipment armoured vehicles and even first aid kits **as they are classified as dual use**. Thus working as a humanitarian aid worker in Gaza under constant risk of bombardment, missiles and artillery with extremely limited ability to mitigate risk creates one of the most dangerous environments to be an aid worker globally. Furthermore, vicarious trauma, direct trauma, and stress deeply affect the psychological well-being of workers. While both international and national aid workers face these threats, Palestinian NGOs and Palestinian aid workers are still the most exposed and with the least resources resulting in a high degree of transfer of risk.

- **ActionAid partners, HI, TdH Italy's partner, and War Child partners** have had to suspend operations frequently due to security concerns.
- **MdM** reported severe security challenges, including targeted attacks within "humanitarian" zones and navigating dangerous routes. Even with strict security protocols, the risks remain high. The Israeli displacement orders have forced **at least 15 members of MdM staff** out of the areas where they were residing. This deeply affects humanitarian workers and disrupts the planning and programming in the clinics.
- **ActionAid's own staff and partners (PNGO and WEFAQ), and War Child partners** face repeated displacement orders, forcing them to flee under the threat of bombing, quadcopters and drone attacks.
- **Taawon (Plan International partner)** reported limitations on accommodation and cash, extended stays, and shortages of food, water, and shelter for their staff.
- **MC** reported that consistent displacement orders have continued to endanger their staff's safety and security, forcibly displacing their team members and requiring the temporary closure of MC's offices and shelters in both Rafah and Deir Al Balah.

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*"We face big challenges in our work, especially for us as women, including going out and leaving our homes behind to provide humanitarian aid. In providing these services, we too live in a state of fear and tension. When we leave the house, we entrust our home and our children to God: only God knows if we will be returning to them. I will not hide from you that most humanitarian workers, including myself, suffer from anxiety. We can't sleep; we can't have sound, uninterrupted sleep. Our sleep is intermittent as a result of the fear we all feel living in the Gaza Strip. Fear haunts us in every step we take to provide humanitarian aid."*

**Buthaina, Director, Wefaq Association for Women and Childcare (WEFAQ)**

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## WEST BANK

Since 7 October, **652** Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Israeli forces have intensified its operations in the northern West Bank and Hebron, deploying reinforcements to Jenin, Tulkarm, and Bethlehem.

The humanitarian situation is dire, with displaced Palestinians describing difficult conditions. Settler violence has also escalated, forcing many communities to flee, further compounding the crisis. **Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)** stated escalating settler violence and illegal land confiscation. CMEP remains concerned about the community of Um Raqba, Al-Khader in the Bethlehem Governorate and their risk of forcible transfer.





*“For more than 17 hours, the Jenin [refugee] camp and city and the surrounding villages and towns have been under siege. All entrances are completely closed. Dirt barriers have been placed. No one is allowed to enter or leave the camp. There are raids on homes, bombing of homes, and the destruction of infrastructure. There is a state of fear and tension among women and children... Of course, the basis of this fear is what is happening in Gaza, which is affecting people’s [psychological well-being] and causing them to live in a state of high tension.”*

**Head of Kay la Nansa (Not to Forget), ActionAid partner in Jenin refugee camp**



For aid organisations, the military operations and increased restrictions have severely disrupted activities. Roadblocks, closures, and infrastructure damage have caused delays in project implementation, procurement, and movement of staff. The destruction of homes and displacement have led to further postponements of planned aid programmes.

- **Kay la Nansa (Not to Forget), ActionAid partner** in Jenin refugee camp, said residents of the camp have been terrified and unable to leave their homes, while medical teams are unable to reach injured people.
- **MdM** could only reach displaced civilians in Jenin governorate six days after the Israeli forces’s operation began due to movement restrictions and safety risks, delaying critical medical and psychological support. As of 5 September, the security situation still prevents access to Jenin city and camp.
- **CARE** had to halt some of its activities due to safety concerns, with staff unable to access sites in Jenin since 28 August. Checkpoints and roadblocks are severely disrupting daily life and adding stress to the team. Military operations have caused delays in procurement and the distribution of essential equipment, further impacting programme implementation.
- **HI and War Child** suspended activities in Hebron, Jenin, and Tulkarm last week due to access and security issues. Teams in Bethlehem, Hebron, and Jenin were unable to reach their workplaces.
- The crisis modifier for **HI** was activated to release NFI kits and assistive devices from HI warehouses to support displaced families, especially those with disabilities, in coordination with local actors.



## LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

**UK legal assessment concluded that there is a clear risk certain military exports to Israel might be used in violations of International Humanitarian Law. The UK government announced on 2 September the immediate suspension of around 30 licences for items used in the current conflict in Gaza which go to the Israeli forces, from a total of approximately 350 licences to Israel. The UK exempted the F-35 fighter jet programme from this suspension despite knowing that F-35s are being used extensively in Gaza.**

Under the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the Government of Israel, as the occupying power and a party to the conflict, is obligated to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the population in the occupied territory are met. This includes facilitating humanitarian aid and creating conditions that enable the provision of essential services and supplies. In this case, the Government of Israel, as the occupying power, has the duty to ensure that aid is not only allowed into the entire occupied Palestinian territory but also delivered safely to those in need. Humanitarian organisations are crucial in providing support but cannot do so without safe delivery procedures and an enabling environment - a responsibility beyond our remit. The facilitation of aid must be principled, safe, secure, and unimpeded across all areas of the occupied Palestinian territory.

Under IHL, parties to the conflict must respect and protect humanitarian personnel, facilities and transportation. Third States have an obligation to act to enforce respect for IHL in the Gaza Strip, including by leveraging their influence with the parties.

On 26 January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered that Israel must take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. On 24 May 2024, the ICJ ordered that Israel must keep the Rafah crossing open for unhindered provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale, and must immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah governorate.

On 19 July 2024, the ICJ concluded that Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory - which includes the Gaza Strip - was unlawful and that Israel must bring its occupation to an end, while third States also have an obligation not to recognise as legal the unlawful presence of Israel in occupied territory, nor to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation. Third States also have a responsibility to bring Grave Breaches of IHL in Gaza to an end, including, but not limited to, forcible transfer and extensive destruction of property.

Israel has issued multiple so-called "evacuation orders", resulting in mass displacements, without providing adequate accommodation, or satisfactory conditions of health, safety and hygiene to meet the requirements of a lawful evacuation under IHL. IHL also requires that a lawful evacuation be temporary. Due to massive damage and destruction to residential buildings in Gaza it is likely that many such evacuations will not be temporary, and so would not constitute a lawful evacuation but rather a proscribed act of forcible transfer.

