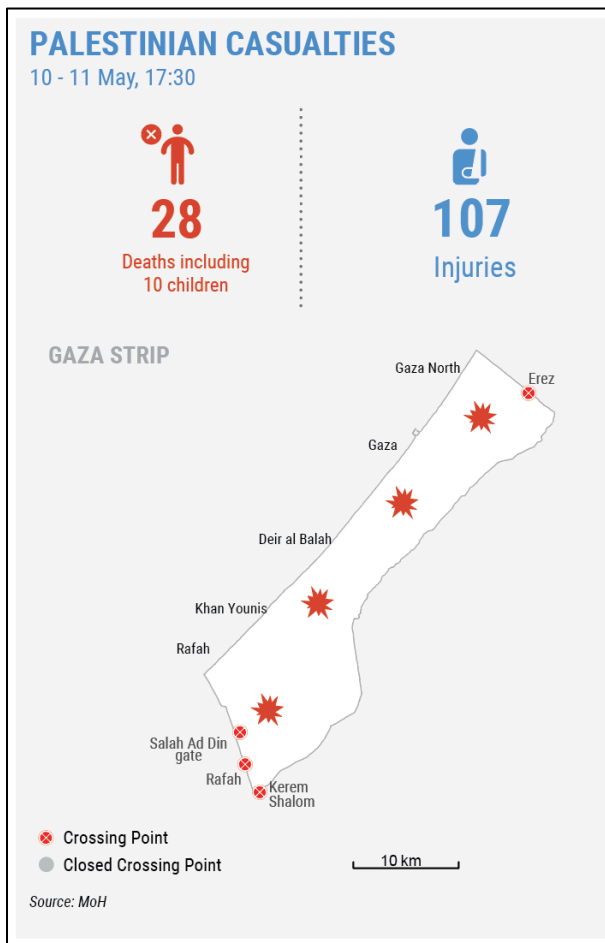


## Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): Flash Update #1

### Escalation in East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and Israel

as of 17:00, 11 May 2021

- Tension in East Jerusalem has been escalating in recent weeks, centring on the Sheikh Jarrah and the Old City areas. Between 7 and 10 May alone, 1,000 Palestinians were injured by Israeli security forces, 735 of these due to rubber bullets.
- Since the 18:00 on the evening of 10 May, over 250 rockets have been launched from the Gaza Strip into Israel spreading unrest in Gaza and into Israel. Up to 17:00 on 11 May, 28 Palestinians, including 10 children are reported killed in Gaza and 154 injured in Israeli airstrikes. Two women have been killed in Israel as a result of the rockets fired from Gaza, with dozens more reported injured.
- The humanitarian community, including UN agencies and the NGO partners, is continuing to deliver assistance to those in need, with the protection of civilians of paramount importance. The current escalation risks worsening an already poor humanitarian situation, especially in Gaza, where the struggling health sector is further burdened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of immediate concern is the shutdown of Gaza's sole power plant by the end of this week due to lack of fuel, with negative consequences for the provision of vital services.



## SITUATION OVERVIEW

Unrest in East Jerusalem has been on the rise since the beginning of Ramadan on 13 April, after the Israeli authorities installed metal barriers outside the Damascus Gate, blocking access to a public area for Palestinians. Although a relative calm was restored on 25 April, with the removal of the obstacles, tensions were also heightened by the Israeli authorities' imminent eviction of four extended Palestinian refugee families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood. Since 28 April, Palestinians have been holding daily protests in Sheikh Jarrah area in solidarity with the families at risk of eviction, triggering clashes with Israeli settlers and Israeli police forces. Following a request by Israel's Attorney General, on 9 May, the Israeli Supreme Court postponed by a month a hearing on the evictions and instructed the Israeli authorities to postpone the evictions until further notice.



*Clashes at the Al Aqsa Mosque, 10 May 2021.*

Between 7 and 10 May, widespread clashes erupted in East Jerusalem, particularly in the Al Aqsa Mosque, and the Damascus Gate area. A heavy Israeli security presence and large numbers of worshippers contributed to the tensions. On 10 May, 657 Palestinians were injured, mostly in the upper bodies, with at least one Palestinian losing his eye. According to Israeli media and Israeli police report, 32 Israeli officers were reportedly injured on 10 May, of which 21 were in the Al Aqsa compound.

In the context of the unrest in East Jerusalem, Israeli sources indicated that an estimated 45 rockets were fired from Gaza between 23 and 25 April, indirectly causing injury to four people, with Israeli air strikes and shelling across Gaza following. Since the evening of 10 May, Palestinian armed groups have launched some 250 rockets towards Israel and Israel has launched multiple airstrikes on Gaza. The casualty toll in Gaza and in Israel continues to rise. In Gaza, the Israel-controlled Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings are closed until further notice and all fishing in the restricted area off the Gaza coast has been prohibited.

## INTERNATIONAL LAW

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Regarding evictions in East Jerusalem, in his briefing to the Security Council on 10 May, the UN Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland, stated “I have repeatedly called on Israel – including in this Council – to cease all evictions and demolitions, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law. I underscore that East Jerusalem remains part of the occupied Palestinian territory to which international humanitarian law applies and I note that UN resolutions addressing the situation in East Jerusalem have

rejected all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.”

The Office of the High Commissioner for human Rights (OHCHR) has called on Israeli security forces to allow and ensure the exercise of the right to freedoms of expression, association and assembly. No force should be used against those exercising their rights peacefully. When use of force is necessary, it should comply fully with international human rights standards. This includes the prohibition of unnecessary or disproportionate use of force. Israel must also refrain from punitive measures, such as additional closures and restrictions that punish the entire civilian population of Gaza.

In her statement on the recent escalation, the Humanitarian Coordinator, Lynn Hastings, [stated](#) that ‘all parties have obligations under international humanitarian law; the principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality in the use of force must be adhered to. Airstrikes in densely populated areas risk violating these principles. Rockets are indiscriminate by nature and as such violate international law. “

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE & ONGOING NEEDS

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### Protection

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**West Bank, including East Jerusalem:** Cluster partners have provided legal aid, monitoring and documentation of violations, in addition to Child Protection and Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support Services (MHPSS) responses. Remote services will be considered if the situation deteriorates further. More psycho-social staff have been deployed to East Jerusalem, providing legal assistance to children prior to interrogation. A further increase of protection needs for minors and youth is expected in relation to further demonstrations supporting families under imminent threat of eviction Sheikh Jarrah.

**Gaza:** The Cluster is assessing the impact on vulnerable groups, especially female-headed households and children, and foresees the need for expanded Mental Health services. UNMAS is working on Explosive Remnant of War (ERW) risk mitigation messaging to reduce secondary, injuries when people start clearing debris. Currently, partners are observing an increased need for MHPSS and health services. In the event of designated emergency shelters (DES) opening, the cluster will look into activating the Protection Monitoring System.

### Health

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**West Bank, including East Jerusalem:** The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) and the East Jerusalem Hospital Network provided first aid and further treatment to victims suffering injuries from rubber bullets, gas inhalation, sound bombs, and direct physical attack over the last few weeks. Patients were treated on the field at the point of injury, and, in case of need, referred to the Emergency Department of Al-Makassed Hospital and St Joseph Hospital. Six patients were hospitalized in critical condition. PRCS, with MSF support in terms of equipment, supplies and medical staff, established a Field Clinic on the Mountain of Olives for on field treatment. Augusta Victoria Hospital provided services to a small, unconfirmed. number of patients.

Since the start of Ramadan, East Jerusalem has witnessed escalating attacks against health care, with at least 30 attacks recorded by the World Health Organization (WHO), including beating and arrest of paramedics, prevention of access for ambulances and paramedic teams, physical attacks against ambulances and incursions into healthcare facilities. On 7 May, three PRCS ambulances were detained for over 30 minutes and were prevented from reaching Lion's Gate to evacuate the injured from the Al Aqsa mosque. On 10 May, a PRCS paramedic was beaten and arrested and his vehicle that was used to access Al Aqsa was confiscated, although he was released after coordination with ICRC.

**Gaza:** MoH hospitals are properly managing patients. PRCS allocated dedicated ICU beds in Al Quds Hospital (Gaza City) and Amal Clinic (Khan Yunis), deployed Pre-Triage tents as preparedness measures, and set up TSPs in Jabalia, Deir Al Balah and Rafah. No specific needs have been identified, as yet.



*Casualties following airstrike on Gaza, 11 May 2021.  
Photo by Samar Abu Elouf, photographer*

## Shelter

**Gaza:** the ministry of Social Development (MoSD) reported that the homes of five refugee families were destroyed, resulting in 30 people displaced, requiring shelter and NFI. Other needs are under assessment.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

**Gaza:** The North Gaza Seawater Desalination Plant has had to stop operations due to the risk to workers and a damaged electrical supply line, affecting about 250,000 people. The main electricity feeder from Israel to Rafah was damaged two days ago, affecting about 65 per cent of Gaza WASH facilities, including water wells and reservoirs and the wastewater treatment plant is, currently out of order. Access to some WASH facilities is problematic for operators due to security concern.

## Education

**Gaza:** One UNRWA school and at least five additional schools have been affected in different areas.