



**For immediate release**  
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## **Humanitarian access to Gaza needs to be granted without restrictions, say international aid agencies.**

In the aftermath of the Israeli military operation in Gaza, it is critical that full and unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza be granted immediately by all parties to the conflict. International agencies have faced unprecedented denial of access to Gaza since 5 November.

On Friday morning a small group of international humanitarian workers were allowed to enter Gaza for the first time in almost three months. Despite this positive step, humanitarian access remains unreliable and needs to be granted every day without restriction. Before Friday, only a handful of medical emergency staff had managed to cross into Gaza.

"The fact that some international staff entered Gaza yesterday is a positive step in the right direction. However, we need constant and consistent, unfettered humanitarian access in order to better help the desperate civilian families of Gaza who have lost their homes and businesses and are struggling amid shortages of food, supplies, cash, healthcare and fuel. It is unacceptable that staff of international aid agencies with expertise in emergency response are still not given full access into Gaza, and that the crossings are not fully operational for humanitarian and commercial flows of goods and people", said Charles Clayton, Chair of the Association of International Development Agencies.

In the 23 days of conflict, Gaza has sustained severe and widespread destruction to its civilian infrastructure. According to the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, an estimated 21,000 homes have been partially destroyed and 4,000 completely destroyed. In addition, there has been substantial damage to schools, hospitals, clinics, water and sewage facilities, electrical lines and other public facilities. These need to be repaired.

As of 23 January, over 8,500 people remained in temporary shelters such as the UNRWA schools, and many more are lodged with family or friends. The United Nations says 100,000 people are now homeless. The total number of people displaced who require assistance is still unknown. A recent survey conducted by CARE shows that 86% of respondents have cash shortages and half say that food is their most urgent need. To cope families are reducing food consumption. At the same time, people do not have full access to very basic healthcare – such as antibiotics, medicine for fever, diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. Young children, many already malnourished before the conflict began, are extremely vulnerable to the lack of food, water and basic health services.

All crossings into Gaza must be operational 24 hours a day in order to position the following items in Gaza: spare parts and fuel for the power plant, hospitals and water and sewage treatment facilities as well as tons of cement, sand and other construction materials to rebuild the destroyed schools, hospitals, clinics and homes. At the moment roughly 120-125 trucks get into Gaza each day through Kerem Shalom crossing. Only the Karni crossing has the technology and capacity to help meeting the immense needs of the Gazan population.

Gaza needs a broad-based humanitarian response beyond providing medical aid, emergency medical treatment and small-scale relief such as food and water. Humanitarian access is woefully

inadequate and we call for immediate action on the part of all parties to ensure that immediate humanitarian assistance – people and goods – is allowed to enter Gaza freely and that it promptly reaches those in need. Without adequate materials and cash, recovery efforts will be greatly undermined, and the population of Gaza – already heavily reliant on international assistance as a result of the 19-month blockade – will become completely dependent on aid.

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**About AIDA**

The Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) is a membership body and coordination forum of international non-governmental and non-profit organizations (INGOs) that share a common interest in promoting appropriate development and humanitarian programs in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). AIDA seeks to support the Palestinian people's self-development by providing a mechanism for member INGOs to work collaboratively. Its core functions are networking the relief and development assistance community, facilitating information-sharing, and promoting advocacy, security, and training.

AIDA has 75 members.