



Photo: NRC Palestine

GAZA CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

APRIL 2024

RESPONSE

Providing multi-sectoral lifesaving and recovery humanitarian assistance to displacement-affected people in coordination with partners.

PROGRESS & TARGETS

From October 2023 to March 2024, **144,506 individuals** supported with immediate emergency assistance in Gaza.

First Line and Second Phase Emergency Response (April to December 2024): more than **200,000** individuals targeted in Gaza with immediate emergency assistance.

Transitional programming and Early Recovery (when conditions allow): close to **300,000** individuals in Gaza.

BUDGET

30 million USD will be necessary to fund NRC's Palestine Crisis Response through December 2024.

An additional **80 million USD** if access improves for lifesaving operations in Middle and North Gaza (20M USD) as well as initiating transitional and early recovery programming (60M USD).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

WWW.NRC.NO

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is providing multi-sectoral life-saving humanitarian assistance to vulnerable civilians affected by the escalation of armed conflict in Palestine, particularly in Gaza, as well as in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Egypt¹. NRC will support the early recovery efforts in Gaza as soon as the armed violence ends.

NRC's emergency response takes a people-centred approach to addressing the acute needs of civilians most adversely affected by the impact of ongoing hostilities, restrictions, and impeded access to basic services. This document sets out the framework by which NRC will respond, based on individual experiences of displacement, with regard for the capacities and choices available at a given time, linked to the conflict dynamics and political context.

NRC's response aims to maximise our capacity to address acute humanitarian needs and adapt as the situation on the ground evolves. Our approach includes advocating with and to donors and the wider humanitarian community to improve conditions for humanitarian actors and affected populations. NRC works as closely as possible with partners to ensure the fastest, most efficient, and most conflict-sensitive delivery of assistance to all people in need.

While NRC will also engage on early recovery efforts in Gaza, this plan focuses on the most urgent humanitarian needs.

¹ West Bank and Egypt emergency response planning are not included in the present document.

1. Context Overview

Just over 200 days since the start of hostilities in Gaza, the escalation is marked by widespread grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including incidents that may amount to atrocity crimes. Pre-existing humanitarian needs that were driven by the protracted Israeli military occupation, blockade and recurrent hostilities have grown exponentially with the Israeli bombardment and widespread destruction of housing and private infrastructure; telecommunications, water and electricity networks; educational facilities; hospitals; and other civilian objects. By the end of April 2024, the Ministry of Health in Gaza has recorded more than 34,000 deaths among more than 110,000 casualties – an average of more than 550 people killed or injured each day. The overwhelming majority of civilians in Gaza are now experiencing tertiary displacement and inestimable personal losses, family separation and a lack of access to basic services. Very few Palestinians have access to safe, adequate shelter, bedding, clothing, and cooking materials, and none have reliable access to safe water. Public services are barely functional, education is suspended, and the few hospitals that are operating on the brink of collapse. A complete siege has left the 2.3 million people in Gaza almost entirely dependent on a pitiful supply of material aid and very limited humanitarian services, nearly all of which are being delivered by Palestinians who are themselves displaced and operating in extremely high-risk conditions. Liquidity has become a major issue with few ATMs operating in Gaza, and the commercial market struggles to remain functional. Despite those challenges, Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) remains the preferred option among displaced Gazans.

2. Humanitarian Access

NRC's April 2024 Gaza Hard to Reach assessment recorded alarming levels of access restrictions throughout the territory, where ongoing hostilities that significantly impede the ability of civilians to access humanitarian assistance are matched or exceeded by bureaucratic constraints and logistical complexities. Under international humanitarian law, all parties to an armed conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need; a responsibility that is not being upheld. The most severe access constraints lie in restrictions that deny civilians their right to assistance - with restrictions on the right to move to where aid is available and on the movement of humanitarian agencies to deliver assistance wherever there are needs. Humanitarian organisations committed to working in accordance with humanitarian principles encounter notable impediments to addressing suffering wherever it is found (humanity), to providing it solely based on need (impartiality) and - arguably most significantly - to doing so on the basis of humanitarian objectives, free from political, economic, military or other motivations (independence). For NRC, as for other actors working in Gaza, it is not only the delivery of the relief that matters but ensuring that how it is delivered is transparent, efficient, and autonomous from the military and political objectives of all parties to the conflict and those supporting them.

Bureaucratic Constraints

Access into Gaza remains heavily hindered by bureaucratic administrative requirements, primarily enforced by Israeli authorities, and complicated by the need for long, overland travel from neighbouring countries. Strict protocols applied to the movement of humanitarian personnel and supplies require significant advanced notice and lengthy approval processes, and in turn encounter further delays and the arbitrary denial of supplies arriving to the Kerem Shalom crossing. Such bureaucratic constraints have significant implications where the delivery of relief is slowed to people in urgent need of assistance, while organisations are forced to absorb the additional cost of holding, transporting, storing, and re-submitting paperwork to clear supplies. Inside Gaza, the de facto division of the north and south further complicates access to populations and drains limited humanitarian resources. Almost half of all proposed humanitarian missions to North Gaza are denied, with additional challenges ensuring that trucks transporting supplies are in turn permitted to return thereafter. Changes to checkpoint operating hours leave humanitarian actors without sufficient daylight hours in which to deliver aid safely and civilians in besieged areas are left with grossly insufficient access to basic supplies.

Conflict Constraints

Ongoing hostilities, including an increasingly volatile security situation in Southern Gaza, exacerbate risks for civilians seeking to access to assistance, including at medical facilities and in other sites reserved for the provision of aid. Changing conflict dynamics, including military operations in, and around densely populated urban areas leave humanitarian operations with few assurances, compromising our ability to deliver relief with confidence that we can

do so without exposing people to conflict incidents and other security threats. Humanitarian activities are difficult to plan and frequently postponed due to conflict-related risks, hindering the delivery of essential aid to affected populations, including in “safe” areas to which civilians have been told to evacuate. Explosive remnants of war now present civilians with additional risks when seeking to move to relocate and / or to access assistance, where bombs, shells, grenades, and mines lie unexploded across vast areas of the territory posing an ongoing threat to civilians.

Logistical Constraints

While each category of humanitarian access constraint plays a significant role in impeding the delivery of aid, logistical constraints arguably present as the most materially consequential. Of eight land crossings used in recent years to facilitate the transportation of people and goods into and out of Gaza – Erez, Karni, Kerem Shalom, Kissufim, Nahal Oz, Rafah, Salah Ad-Din, and Sufa – only Kerem Shalom and Rafah remain operational, enabling access from Egypt and Israel respectively. The former necessitates long overland travel from Egypt’s air and seaports, and across the Sinai Peninsula, conferring significant costs and additional requirements for procuring, consigning, and transporting supplies, as well as demurrage charges for shipments waiting to be scanned and approved. In recent months, the heavy reliance of humanitarian actors on this corridor has seen a surge in requests for cargo flights to Egypt, often at high cost and with risk of additional delays, as is likewise the case on arrival to the border, where a limited number of scanning machines are used to check and clear cargo at a slower pace than is required. Erez Gate, formerly used as a passenger crossing on Gaza’s northern border, remains only partially operational, accessible to the World Food Programme for a very limited number of convoys from Jordan each week. While the construction of a temporary port, ostensibly to facilitate a higher volume of aid to Gaza, may enable an increased supply, humanitarian actors lack sufficient information about its intended use and operation to assess the extent to which it might alleviate access constraints and enable actors to uphold principles of neutrality and independence. In any case, land routes to Gaza must remain open for the delivery of humanitarian supplies.

Finally, within Gaza, humanitarian operations are severely hindered by restrictions on both telecommunications and the importation of fuel. A lack of consistent, reliable access to phone networks, 4G and radio communications exacerbates risks for both civilians and humanitarian teams, preventing people from reaching out to humanitarian actors, limiting coordination, and creating occasional communications blackouts. Even more significantly, a severed power supply and widespread damage to solar panelling across Gaza has increased the dependence on generators, and in turn fuel, to manage basic services. Water pumps and sanitation systems, as well as medical facilities and vehicles, all depend on a steady, reliable supply. The insufficient quantities reaching Gaza through the first half of 2024 drive increased dependence on humanitarian assistance while inhibiting our capacity to respond.

3. Intervention strategy

NRC’s intervention strategy, developed based on a people-centred approach, is structured to address the different phases of displacement to maximise the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance tailored to the unique needs of targeted participants. The different phases of displacement considered include the following: Besiegement, New displacement (including recurring displacements), Extended Displacement, Protracted Displacement, Safe and Dignified Return, and Integration within the Gaza Strip. Based on the specific needs of these phases, but also constraints it implies NRC will implement the First Line Emergency Response (FLER), Second Phase Emergency Response, Transitional Programming, and finally, Early Recovery programming.

As part of the **FLER programming**, NRC has developed a comprehensive approach to site management and service provision in displacement sites throughout Gaza, emphasising a holistic and community-driven strategy to the extent possible during the different phases of displacement. Drawing on a decade of experience in the country, NRC implements an integrated response that leverages its core competencies, with cash assistance playing a crucial role as far as possible based on market assessments. The response includes the provision of multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA), Shelter, WASH, Psycho-Social Support (PSS), Education in Emergency (EiE) and Information, counselling, legal assistance (ICLA) as well as support to health services (provided by partners). Currently, NRC supports and acts as a primary responder in 12 collective sites, accommodating around 35,000 people, and is working with other actors in another 15. NRC’s community engagement initiatives foster representative community structures that enhance the safety and living conditions within these sites. This includes care and maintenance of the sites, promoting hygiene, providing necessary furniture and equipment, and implementing small to medium-scale shelter and WASH projects.

Following the same strategy, the **Second Phase Emergency Response** will focus on the needs related to extended displacement, where people have remained in a location for more than four months and require a broader package of services, including MPCA, ongoing access to Emergency Shelter including emergency sealing-off kits (e-SOKs) and self-help shelters, as well as provision of non-food items (NFIs), including core relief items (CRIs) and energy and cooking solutions; hygiene kits (HKs), water trucking, emergency latrines, desludging, hygiene promotion (HP); individual protection assistance (IPA), referrals, Safety Plans, psychological first aid (PFA); Site Management (site mapping, data collection, referrals); Legal Assistance for civil documentation; EiE (Phase 1).

NRC will support **transitional programming** and **early recovery** efforts in Gaza as soon as the security and political situation allows for safe and voluntary returns or integration into areas different from the places they were residing in Gaza prior to this conflict. Early recovery efforts will commence if freedom of movement for people and humanitarian agencies is granted; access to humanitarian supplies in Gaza is maintained; the market is functional; liquidity supports cash assistance; and the capacity of local actors and community structures supports localisation efforts and self-reliance processes. Early recovery will include Transitional Shelter, quick impact WASH projects, ICLA, Protection from Violence (PfV), EiE (Phases 2 and 3), school rehabilitation, youth programming, livelihoods, and MPCA.

Advocacy

NRC has raised public visibility on the immediate and long-term needs of impacted communities through press statements, media interviews and other public advocacy activities, often in cooperation with partners and other humanitarian actors. NRC Palestine's advocacy team has participated in high-level diplomatic engagements, including four UN Security Council briefings, as well as five advocacy missions at capital and multilateral levels conducted after 7 October. NRC's Secretary General has regularly engaged with senior officials including the foreign ministers of EU, US, UK as well as Arab states with key calls on the need for a sustained ceasefire, civilian protection, and ensuring urgent humanitarian access and funding. NRC's representative offices in London, Brussels, Geneva, Berlin, and the US continue to advocate for these key calls through regular engagement at the capital and multilateral levels.

Key Objectives

- Increase and maintain public visibility on the humanitarian impact of the escalation in hostilities.
- Push parties to the conflict, and governments with influence, to ensure humanitarian access to allow urgent aid supplies and safe passage of aid workers in Gaza to assist populations in need.
- Influence government allies of Israel and all parties to ensure restraint in hostilities in line with international humanitarian law.
- Push the international community to seek an urgent cessation of hostilities in Gaza and Israel.
- Push donors for sustainable, adequate and predictable funding for the humanitarian and recovery response in Gaza.

Key Messages








- The international community must urgently demand an immediate cessation of hostilities to facilitate the scale-up of aid efforts and prevent further civilian casualties. Any further military offensives, particularly in Rafah, will result in mass casualties.
- All parties to the conflict must abide by their obligations under international law, prioritising the protection of civilians. They must not deliberately or unlawfully target civilians or civilian infrastructure, refrain from forcibly transferring or deporting the civilian population, and ensure safe, unhindered, and sustained humanitarian access.
- Severe restrictions imposed by Israel are exacerbating the already dire conditions on the ground, leading to widespread starvation and, tragically, the deaths of innocent children due to malnutrition and dehydration. Israel must refrain from the deliberate starvation as a weapon of war, the government must lift its restrictions on aid entry and increase commercial goods into Gaza. Civilians accessing aid and aid convoys must be protected from bombardment.
- The humanitarian crisis is spiralling out of control, compounded by ongoing bombardments and the breakdown of essential services. The chaos and devastation on the ground have severely impeded aid efforts. Despite the best intentions of our dedicated staff, they have been unable to reach and assist the population in need on the scale required. We urgently call for an immediate and lasting ceasefire to address the catastrophic conditions facing the people of Gaza. Without swift and decisive action, the humanitarian toll will only continue to mount.

- Any attempts to deport or forcibly transfer the population of Gaza across borders would be serious breach of international law, this must be prevented. The civilian population must be allowed to return to their areas of origin and Israel must compensate for the destruction and damage caused to housing.
- It is crucial to expand humanitarian access into Gaza and ensure the protection of aid routes, workers, and recipients. All Gaza crossings must be fully opened for the passage of humanitarian and commercial goods. The Israeli government must end its siege on Gaza to alleviate the humanitarian crisis. Israel must abstain from imposing any administrative restrictions on international aid workers, who are vital for the scale-up of the aid response.
- The notification and coordination system needs to be faster and more predictable to ensure the safety of humanitarians delivering aid as well as civilians seeking out humanitarian assistance.
- We unequivocally demand the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. The lives of innocent children, women, and men, as well as the access of aid workers to vulnerable populations, must not be exploited as bargaining chips under any circumstances.
- The breakdown of law and order, compounded by ongoing bombardment, severely hampers the safe distribution of aid. It is imperative to safeguard Gaza's police forces from attacks and ensure their safety to accompany aid convoys, particularly in the north. Israel bears the responsibility to provide security and facilitate the entry of aid.
- States must uphold their obligations to respect and to ensure respect for international law by adopting lawful countermeasures against Israel, such as the conditioning of weapons transfers, include limiting, suspending or refusing arms transfers, until it ceases its internationally wrongful acts.



Photo: NRC Palestine - Gaza, February 2024

Programme participants reached and targeted

Phases	MPCA 	Shelter 	WASH 	PfV (incl. site management) 	EiE 	ICLA 	LFS 	Total services	Unique participants	Funding required (USD)	Comments
Oct 2023-March 2024 Reached First Line Emergency Response	55,968	56,039	46,614	35,000	1,941	-	-	195,562	144,506	-	* Projections outlined are based on a linear analysis of achievements over the past 6 months and ongoing implementation. * A ceasefire and improved access would allow NRC to scale up its operations in Middle and North Gaza, with an additional 20M USD needed to respond and reestablish full response capacity in these areas.
April-Dec 2024 Targeted First Line and Second Phase Emergency Response	65,000	84,000	70,000	70,000	11,000	32,000	-	332,000	209,600	30 M USD	
End 2024 onwards Projected Transitional Programming and Early Recovery	120,000	70,000	120,000	140,000	15,000	75,000	15,000	555,000	290,500	60 M USD	

Target populations

- Internally displaced in Gaza, particularly those living in the sites managed by NRC (lifesaving)
- Host families/communities in Gaza (lifesaving)
- Internally displaced in Gaza who lost their homes and livelihoods (post-escalation)

4. NRC Response Framework

Displacement phase ²		Programmatic Phase	Timeframe for response	Programmatic priorities	Prioritised Activities	Enabling conditions (cf. context analysis and access)
1.	Besiegement	First Line Emergency Response (FLER)	Lasting until inter-governorate freedom of movement is restored and/or humanitarian aid access is largely enabled.	CCs: Shelter/NFIs, WASH, LFS (FS) ³	Emergency Shelter (e-SOKs and self-help shelters) and NFIs (CRIs); HKs; MPCA ⁴	Access of humanitarian supplies into Gaza is maintained; access of aid into besieged areas is granted; shelter/NFIs response is prioritised; market is functional ⁵ ; liquidity allows for cash assistance and is sufficient to support payment of humanitarian staff; local partners have the capacity and are willing to collaborate with NRC.
2.	New displacement (including recurring displacements)	FLER	Not timebound but linked to conflict dynamics. Lasting 3 months from D1 of displacement.	CCs: Shelter/NFIs, WASH, PfV, SM, ICLA, Education, LFS (FS)	Emergency Shelter (tents and e-SOKs) and NFIs (CRIs); HKs, water trucking, emergency latrines, desludging, HP; Site Management – site mapping, data collection, referrals; PFA, referrals information provision; Legal Identity; EiE (Ph 1); MPCA	Access of humanitarian supplies into Gaza is maintained (and improved); population movements are timely tracked; access is possible in displacement sites; market is functional; liquidity allows for cash assistance.
3.	Extended displacement	Second Phase Emergency Response	From M4 up to 1Y from last movement or until solutions ⁶ pathways are chosen. ⁷	CCs: Shelter/NFIs, WASH, Protection, SM, ICLA, Education	Emergency Shelter (e-SOKs and self-help shelters) and NFIs (CRIs); HKs, water trucking, emergency latrines including maintenance and cleaning, desludging, HP; Site management committee support, data collection, referrals, urgent care & maintenance; Legal Identity; EiE (Ph 1); MPCA	Access of humanitarian supplies into Gaza is maintained; population movements are timely tracked; access is possible in displacement sites; market is functional; liquidity allows for cash assistance.

² The displacement phases listed here are described for the purposes of enabling a people-centred response. They are not linear and will in many cases occur in parallel across different locations and for different segments of the population. Though subject in large part to the evolution of the conflict, the identification of a given displacement phase is not derived from any one overarching scenario so much as the changing needs of people affected by the conflict and related political dynamics.

³ Not activated due to internal capacity limitations but assessed as relevant. Consequently, LFS will not be mentioned in the activities prioritised under FLER/ER response in this plan.

⁴ Prioritising in-person registrations (from NRC or through referrals) according to target population groups priorities over list from Ministry of Social development (MoSD).

⁵ Based on analysis and recommendations primarily issued by the Cash WG.

⁶ Considering that most currently displaced Gazans were previously displaced without rights to self-determination, the right of return, or the ability to benefit from basic principles of international law prior to 7 October, any solutions aimed at the return or integration of these individuals in Gaza Strip will not qualify as Durable Solutions.

⁷ Two phases: 1 year marking a shift to more comprehensive response activities.

4.	Protracted displacement	Transitional Programming	Not timebound but linked to return waves/conflict and political dynamics. Lasting 1Y from the date of first displacement. ⁸	CCs: Shelter/NFIs, WASH, PfV, SM, ICLA, Education, LFS	Shelter (SOKs), tent replacements and repairs, NFIs (CRIs); HKs, water supply QUIPs (WTP, WSS), latrines operation and maintenance (O&M), desludging, SWM; IPA, referrals case management; SM – community engagement, safety and security plans, population data monitoring, referrals; Legal Identity, HLP; EiE (Ph 2 + youth programming from 1Y+); MPCA, Livelihood (Food production support)	Access of humanitarian supplies into Gaza is maintained; market is functional; liquidity allows for cash assistance; local actors capacity supports the localisation effort.
5.	Safe and dignified returns	Early Recovery	Not timebound but linked to conflict dynamics. Lasting three (3) months from last movement; including decongestion.	CCs: Shelter/NFIs, WASH, PfV, SM, ICLA, Education, LFS	Transitional Shelter (SOKs/LM repairs, CfR, heavy repairs Y1+, and NFIs (CRIs); HKs, water trucking – QUIPs, SWM; IPA, case management, UDOC; Legal Identity, Legal Assistance, HLP, CDR; EiE (Ph 2-3), school rehabilitation, youth programming (Y1+); Livelihood (market restoring through business support, technical trainings, food production support); MPCA	Security and political situation allow for safe and voluntary returns; freedom of movements of people and humanitarian agencies is granted; access of humanitarian supplies into Gaza is maintained; market is functional; liquidity allows for cash assistance; capacity of local actors and community structures supports localisation efforts and population self-reliance processes.
6.	Sustainable Integration	Early Recovery	After 1Y from war ending.	CCs: Shelter/NFIs, WASH, PfV, SM, ICLA, Education, LFS	Transitional Shelter (LM repairs, CfR, heavy repairs Y1+); Transitional Shelter Cash Assistance; QUIPs; IPAs, case management, UDOC; Legal Identity, HLP, CDR; EiE (Ph 2-3), school rehabilitation, youth programming; Livelihood (market restoring through business support, technical trainings, food production support, labour market support); MPCA	Sustainable Integration as solutions pathways process is voluntary chosen and informed decision making; freedom of movements of people and humanitarian agencies is granted; access of humanitarian supplies into Gaza is maintained; market is functional; liquidity allows for cash assistance; capacity of local actors and community structures supports localisation efforts and population self-reliance processes.

⁸ The duration of this phase does not intend to cover the entire Solutions pathway that will likely last several years. The timeline here indicated refers to the emergency response scope of this plan.

Besiegement – First Line Emergency Response (FLER)

NRC aims at supporting access constraint populations through remote assistance. The target group include extremely vulnerable families who voluntarily decided to stay or could not afford to move to safer locations. The assistance will be delivered regardless of their displacement status as long as they are living in besiegement. Currently, this refers to populations in North Gaza and Gaza City governorates.

NRC should respond with emergency shelter assistance, delivered through interagency humanitarian convoys and distributed through local partners. The timeline for this support is contingent to food assistance that is largely prioritised. If cash feasibility and market functionality are confirmed, NRC should also consider delivering MPCA based on the Ministry of Social Development lists⁹ or through reliable referrals, while constantly monitoring the enabling conditions.

Given the complexity of the response and the extreme vulnerability of this population, NRC deems these interventions as highly prioritised under its first-line emergency response. Compliance considerations may be necessary, requiring a no-regret approach or other forms of derogation (e.g. NRC emergency response procedures, waivers, donor approvals).

New displacement (including recurring displacements) – First Line Emergency Response (FLER)

After six months since the war broke out in Gaza, new displacements of populations seeking safety from the two northern governorates into southern Gaza or fleeing their homes within the three southern governorates (namely Middle Area, Khan Younis, Rafah) based on conflict dynamics, are still significant. The vast majority of IDPs in the Gaza Strip have experienced recurring displacements, with some being displaced up to ten times. Each displacement entails significant loss, and financial resources are depleted with each relocation, mainly spent on securing housing and food. Most IDPS report having exhausted their financial resources and running out of coping options. NRC should prioritise these groups supporting them with life-saving assistance, within the first 3 months of their last displacement. Population movements monitoring should inform the response, mainly through Site Management WG tracking, interagency and cluster referrals, and NRC positioning in key displacement sites (e.g. transit, collective and informal sites). Considering the access to aid constraints, NRC response should prioritise the newly displaced accommodated in transit sites, makeshift sites and non-UNRWA shelters.¹⁰

To ensure a timely and dignified first-line emergency response, NRC will primarily respond with an integrate in-kind and soft assistance, mainly delivered through direct implementation or simplified forms of partnership. These would at this stage predominantly be based on cooperating agreements with local actors (e.g. national NGOs/CBOs, site management committees) and INGOs. MPCA should complement the emergency response package, through in-person registrations in the afore-mentioned settings and MOSD lists deduplicated by the Cash Working Group.

Extended displacement – Second Phase Emergency Response

Extended displacement¹¹ concerns many IDPs in Gaza Strip entering their fourth months of displacement since their last displacement and potential subject to increased psychological traumas. NRC should provide first-line response in most underserved settings within 3 months from the day the last displacement takes place. Beyond that first line response NRC will maintain provision of life-saving activities, emergency supplies replenishment, soft activities but with a greater focus on MHPSS¹² and MPCA. The assistance through this phase will bear similarity to that delivered under the FLER but with more expansive modalities and a view to greater sustainability, building new or existing partnerships and working to support community structures.¹³

⁹ As of today, the MoSD lists are not geographically bound, therefore a second layer of information should be gathered to ensure adequate targeting, either through the Civil Register, or through internal assessment capacity.

¹⁰ Reference to terminology suggested by the “Site Management Working Group, Paper on site terminology and definition, Mar 2024”.

¹¹ Extended displacement starts approximately 4 months after the last displacement.

¹² In line with NRC global programme policy.

¹³ Local partners may be engaged through different modalities, including cash grants, flexible min-grants/donations, Project Implementation Agreements.

Protracted displacement – Transitional programming

After the first year from displacement, NRC will consider the population as in protracted displacement. Considering the scale of the humanitarian needs across the territory, where 75% of the population is currently displaced, the response to protracted displacement will focus on targeting the most vulnerable living in underserved settings or those identified as protection cases. The population needs in this displacement phase requires a shift in the type of assistance towards self-reliance, longer term in nature, as well as in the implementation modalities. NRC will employ market-based approaches, with a stronger community engagement and through localised initiatives and private sector engagement¹⁴. In case of technically complex activities (e.g. water supply systems rehabilitation, safe learning spaces construction), direct implementation will be still considered as preferred modality under this response phase.

Safe and dignified Return – Early recovery

NRC should support people voluntary returns to the areas they were residing in Gaza aiming at sustainable (re)integration. The process may include returning to people's former houses, if still accessible and safe, or in their proximity. The return process might be triggered by several scenarios, not entirely linked to pure conflict dynamics but depending on political decisions.

A return package comprising both in-kind and cash-based assistance should be offered to the most vulnerable across the whole Gaza Strip. Notably, the return is not exclusively considered to the northern governorates but to any place where people are able and intend to return.

The type of response will not be timebound but conceived as addressing basic needs in nature during the first 6 months from the date of return, while transitioning towards early recovery programme thereafter. The second phase aims to generate self-reliance, locally owned processes for post-crisis recovery. Similar to the protracted displacement phase, cash and market-based solutions through local actors and initiatives will be prioritised with a market system strengthening approach, leaving the most technically complex activities to direct implementation where relevant.

Sustainable Integration – Early recovery

Integration as part of the solutions pathway should be considered by NRC under its emergency response after approximately 1 year¹⁵ since the end of the war is declared. This will include integration in displacement locations or in third areas within Gaza Strip, different from the areas they were residing in Gaza prior to this crisis. The decision to integrate locally on a more permanent basis, even though return is feasible, should be entirely on a voluntary basis and not preclude the people's freedom to later choose to move elsewhere, including to their pre-conflict home¹⁶. NRC will target extremely vulnerable individuals or families under this response, who lost their homes and livelihoods and are less equipped to self-recover. Implementation modalities will replicate those adopted under *the safe and dignified return* phase.

Programmatic priorities

Cash and Markets

Building upon its extensive experience with cash-based interventions in Palestine, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is providing large scale MPCA to Palestinians in Gaza through a cash plus approach. NRC has been providing cash assistance in Palestine since 2014, notably as lead of the Gaza Protection Consortium (GPC) and in close collaboration with the Cash Working Group (CWG). From October 2023 to April 2024, NRC has provided a first round of cash assistance to 55,968 individuals across the five governorates of the Gaza Strip. NRC is committed to provide

¹⁴ PIAs will be the primary engagement modality with local actors in this phase, although simplified solutions to collaborate with less formal local community entities will be also promoted.

¹⁵ A solution may become durable only years, or even decades, after the physical movement to the place of origin or place of settlement has taken place.

¹⁶ This is particularly relevant under this response considering the risk of political instrumentalization of the humanitarian assistance.

three additional rounds of multipurpose cash assistance to this same caseload through the end of the year, for which more than 11M USD are being fundraised within this Response Plan.

Shelter

In Gaza, NRC has been actively providing emergency shelter and non-food item support to displaced households, benefitting over 56,039 individuals by March 2024 with a majority in IDP collective centers and makeshift sites. As the conflict continues, NRC emphasizes the importance of shelter and NFIs in restoring privacy, protection, and dignity for displaced individuals, and will prioritize the provision of essential items like sealing-off kits and family tents while exploring longer-term transitional solutions such as repairs and cash assistance. Moreover, NRC serves as the lead of the Palestine shelter cluster, co-leading the transitional shelter working group and provides support for shelter and NFI supplies to local cluster members in Gaza.

WASH

NRC has been delivering essential WASH interventions in seven IDP collective centers and makeshift sites in Rafah. The response to date prioritised water trucking, resulting in the delivery of 3.9 million liters of water, which has provided crucial support to 46,614 individuals. Additionally, NRC has mobilized over 13,000 hygiene kits to complement their WASH and NFI interventions. Looking ahead, NRC is committed to maintaining its support in addressing site-level challenges related to drainage, sanitation, and water distribution. NRC plans to continue this assistance through both direct intervention and community-led approaches, recognizing the importance of sustainable solutions. NRC has initiated efforts to explore more permanent solutions through infrastructure interventions for IDP sites and intends to extend similar strategies to returnee sites.

Protection from Violence

NRC is focusing in Gaza on Site Management Support in collective and makeshift sites, providing care and maintenance, communication, and capacity development for Site Managers. A total of 12 sites have been supported to date, hosting an estimated 35,000 individuals. NRC also supports the Site Management Working Group with tool development, maintenance, and data collection, transitioning towards an Area Based Approach as population movements stabilize. In Protection, NRC provides Individual Response Services, including protective accompaniments and psychosocial support, with a focus on Individual Protection Assistance through cash assistance and referrals. NRC works closely with site-level committees to address urgent protection concerns such as congestion, aid denial, emotional distress, and violence against women and children within collective sites.

Education

In Gaza, NRC is implementing an Education in Emergencies (EiE) response aligned with the Education Sector Emergency Response Plan, focusing initially on delivering mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) sessions to affected children in displacement sites. These sessions, conducted by trained local facilitators, aim to address trauma and provide structured recreational activities, with ongoing engagement of parents and caregivers. To date, a total of 1,941 children and youth were provided with access to EiE services. As the context evolves, NRC plans to expand activities into the second phase of the response, focusing on establishing temporary learning spaces, providing necessary materials, and delivering sustained learning sessions to children, alongside continued MHPSS support and capacity building for educators.

ICLA

The NRC leads the Legal Taskforce (LTF) in Gaza, which was re-activated in January 2024. The taskforce holds bi-weekly meetings, gathering local and international legal aid actors to exchange information and formulate advocacy objectives. In April, the LTF established the HLP Technical Working Group (TWG) to provide technical support on property rights and related issues in Gaza, enhancing the efficiency of humanitarian responses. Additionally, ICLA, collaborating with the Palestinian Bar Association, is establishing a temporary legal framework to help individuals access essential aid by acquiring identification statements confirmed by witnesses, with further efforts to assist in document recovery and address various legal concerns, including children's rights and compensation for affected workers.

5. NRC's Contribution to the Humanitarian Response Coordination

Local Collaboration and Partnerships

NRC's response in Gaza depends on effective coordination, cooperation, and partnerships with other humanitarian actors, with a particular interest in mutually reinforcing relationships with local organisations. Each response phase identified in the above response framework includes partnerships as a critical response modality, including by way of cooperating and service agreements (as deemed appropriate) during first-line emergency response, use of NRC's mini-grants modality for local actors, and with more formal partnerships that build longer term co-ownership of project design and implementation during other phases. In Shelter and WASH initiatives, NRC collaborates with local partners such as IDCO, Bayader, and the Coastal Municipality Water Utility (CMWU) to support program implementation and design sewage networks. Under Protection from Violence, NRC works with local partners like Ma'an and has initiated the Site Management Working Group, advocating for standardised tools and agency start-up.

Cluster Leadership and humanitarian coordination

NRC plays a pivotal role within humanitarian clusters and groups, affirming its commitment to effective coordination and advocacy. Serving as the lead of the Palestine shelter cluster, co-leading the transitional shelter working group, and co-leading the legal task force in the protection cluster, NRC remains actively engaged in education, shelter, NFI, WASH, and protection clusters, alongside the Gaza cash working group and the education in emergencies working group. NRC fosters strong partnerships with national and local authorities, particularly with the MoSD in Gaza and the West Bank, ensuring targeted assistance through the Gaza Protection Consortium's cash programming.

NRC plays a proactive role in humanitarian advocacy, collaborating closely with UN agencies, participating in INGO and sector meetings, and contributing to advocacy efforts on pressing issues such as recent demolitions and escalation of violence. As the consortium lead for the West Bank and the Gaza Protection Consortia, NRC spearheads advocacy efforts to ensure coordination in the protection space. Contributing to the OPT Flash Appeals (Nov. 2023 and Apr. 2024) as well as to the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2023, NRC advocates for addressing the acute needs of civilians most adversely affected by the ongoing impact of violence, restrictions, and impeded access to basic services in Gaza as well as those facing rights violations in the West Bank.

The Gaza Protection Consortium

NRC leads the Gaza Protection Consortium (GPC), delivering an integrated and multi-sectoral intervention to households impacted by the current emergency. The GPC unites the efforts of three key partners of NRC, including Humanity and Inclusion, Médecins du Monde, and Mercy Corps. This collaboration enables a comprehensive and coordinated response that includes specialised services in protection, health, shelter, and WASH, as well as in-kind assistance and multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA). The GPC partners employ a site-based approach to ensure an integrated intervention at collective sites sheltering IDPs.

6. Note on quality funding

NRC calls on donors to champion quality funding by committing to and fulfilling their promises of upfront, predictable financing. Such funding is crucial for ensuring operational viability, allowing Humanitarian actors to engage in better strategic decision-making and to optimise resource allocation. This focus enhances our capacity to concentrate fully on responsive and effective humanitarian action.

Understanding the extreme operational constraints faced in the field, donor support and flexibility are vital. They allow NRC to adapt to evolving conditions and implement necessary responses effectively, ensuring that aid reaches those who need it most in a timely and efficient manner.

Seeking understanding and flexibility from the donor community is paramount as we navigate staffing constraints, salary provisions, and operational challenges exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The complexities of procurement and transnational supply chains, coupled with access issues, make strict compliance with donor requirements difficult while ensuring uninterrupted humanitarian aid delivery. Engaging in dialogue on risk sharing

and recognizing the humanitarian imperative is vital to sustain planning, implementation, and the continuity of life-saving interventions. Given the 'priority crisis' status of the Gaza crisis, alternative procedures have been swiftly enacted by NRC to address supply chain, human resources, and financial challenges, ensuring the timely delivery of critical humanitarian assistance.

The operational landscape in Gaza poses significant challenges for INGOs, including unstable market conditions, material shortages, payment difficulties, and complexities in importing emergency supplies. The costs associated with premises and transportation have surged, with expenses now at least 3.5 times higher than before the onset of the crisis on 7 October. In light of these challenges, we appeal to donors for both financial and operational flexibility to cover the increased costs of sustaining humanitarian operations within Gaza. This support is crucial in enabling us to continue providing life-saving assistance to those in desperate need during this challenging time.



Photo: NRC Palestine - Gaza, February 2024



Annex 1: Response Framework Glossary

Collaborative Dispute Resolution (CDR): NRC main in-house tool in supporting dispute resolution specifically for NRC's work on Housing, Land and Property and includes a suite of design, mediation, facilitation, and capacity building training approaches. CDR offers a less formal approach to resolving disputes, particularly applicable in cases where more adversarial alternatives could be counterproductive.

CfR (Cash for Rent): rent support program intended to support households in short to medium-term rentals (3 to 12 months usually), through the provision of monthly cash payments to cover rent, in addition to other support required in securing safe tenure.

Education in Emergencies (EiE Ph 1 and Ph 2): Education in Emergencies activities focusing – in alignment with the Education Cluster - focused on delivering MHPSS and structured recreational activities to support wellbeing of children and youth and retain a line of continuity of education (phase 1). On early recovery through restoration of learning in non-formal settings with a full-scale Education in Emergencies (EiE) response, including continuation of MHPSS and structured recreational activities (Phase 2).

Emergency Sealing Off Kits (e-SOKs): Tool kit including items like rope, tarpaulin sheet, tape, and plastic film, accompanied by shelter tools which support installation.

Self-help shelters: this are project participant driven shelter solution which include in kind materials such as sealing off kits, tools with the local materials such as poles, to make makeshift temporary shelters.

Heavy repairs Y1+ : Works on project participant homes that include structural repairs, and improvements on structural integrity of the structures.

HLP (Housing, Land and Property): rights entitle displaced people to having a safe home, free from the fear of forced eviction, a place that offers safety, and the ability to seek livelihood opportunities. Full package of support on HLP rights including helping displaced persons with leases, disputes with landlords, access to property documents and legal challenges to property violations, including arbitrary evictions, demolition orders and unlawful land seizure.

IPA (Individual Protection Assistance): IPA is a one-off protection assistance with limited follow-up to mitigate a protection risk. This can include cash, in-kind, accompaniments, facilitated referrals, and psychosocial support/psychological first aid.

LM repairs (Light and Medium repairs): include non-structural repairs targeting improving insulation, doors, windows, repairs on fire burnt surfaces and improving access to common areas such as kitchen, bathroom, lighting, etc.

PFA (Psychological First Aid): direct method of assisting people in distress, so they feel calm and supported in coping with challenges and decisions. It involves active listening and practical assistance such as problem solving or helping to access basic needs.

QUIP (Quick Implementation Projects): communal projects, usually aiming to bring quick improvements to the conditions and quality of infrastructure serving a community in displacement.

SWM (Solid Waste Management): includes handling collection, disposal, and handling of waste from collective centres, communities, etc.

UDOC (Urban Displacement and Outside of Camp): it addresses vulnerabilities and needs of people displaced outside of camps by enabling their better access to information and services; promoting their participation in displacement management and enhancing collaboration and communication between the humanitarian and affected communities and existing governance structures. The key areas of work are communication with affected communities, community engagement, and support to coordination.

WSS (Water Supply and Sanitation): services aiming to supply a population affected by displaced with safe and sufficient water supply for their daily domestic and personal usage, in addition to clean and safe sanitation solutions that mitigates water-borne and vector-borne diseases.

WTP (Water Treatment Plants): Construction to disinfect water being supplied to a certain served population.

Annex 2: Hardest to Reach Areas and Access Constraints in Gaza



Hardest to Reach Areas and Access Constraints in Gaza
(April 2024, source NRC)