

Emergency Response in Israel

Ensuring Support for those Affected by the Israel – Gaza Armed Conflict (Oct 2023)

HIAS

Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

The situation

On the morning of October 7, Palestinian armed groups launched an unprecedented incursion into southern Israel while firing thousands of indiscriminate rockets at heavily populated civilian centers across the country, **killing at least 900 people, wounding over 2,300, and taking an estimated 150 men, women, and children hostage**, the majority of them from villages and kibbutzim near Gaza.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that Israel was at war and ordered air strikes in the densely populated Gaza Strip, **which to date have claimed 560 lives and wounded another 5,900 people**. An estimated 123,000 people in Gaza have already been displaced. On October 9, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant ordered a “complete siege” of Gaza as Israeli combat troops and armored vehicles massed around the territory for a possible incursion.

Humanitarian needs

Less than one week into the conflict, the magnitude and severity of humanitarian need in all areas of conflict is still being assessed. Tragically, daily news reports bring increasing numbers of casualties and those displaced. Many locations also are too dangerous to access. What is known at this point is that **thousands have been killed, thousands more injured, tens of thousands displaced, and over one hundred held hostage**. From its extensive emergency experience (even in higher income countries such as Israel), HIAS understands that significant displacement often results in the need for basic food and household supplies, cash assistance, housing support, psychosocial support and community-building programs. HIAS will contribute alongside the network of strong emergency and humanitarian actors to closely monitor the emerging needs and coordinate its programming to address them.

HIAS emergency response

Within 24 hours of the initial conflict, HIAS rapidly activated its Emergency Response capacities to provide life-saving support to those displaced. As an organization, HIAS initiated rapid internal funding

and roster deployments in preparation. With the expectation of a change context, developed an initial 30-day response plan seeking to focus critical needs as well HIAS core emergency capacities. These include:



Basic Needs / Non-Food Items: Urgent items such as hygiene supplies, blankets, school supplies or dignity kits.



Cash-based assistance: Cash and voucher assistance to those affected by the crisis, especially those currently in shelters.



Supporting our Partners: Expanding impact through local partners for additional health, protection, housing/shelter and legal services.



Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MPHASS): Psychological First Aid, psychoeducation and stress management group support, individual and community-based support, multilingual MHPSS hotline and appropriate service referrals.



Child Protection: Psychosocial and recreational interventions for children, with linkages to referral pathways.



Protection: Refer and provide information (in appropriate languages) to affected populations for services as well as international and national agencies (e.g., International Committee of the Red Cross).



An Israeli missile launched from the Iron Dome defence missile system attempts to intercept a rocket, fired from the Gaza Strip, over the city of Netivot in southern Israel on October 8, 2023. (Photo by MAHMUD HAMS/AFP via Getty Images)



Smoke rises as the clashes between Palestinian groups and Israeli forces continue in Gaza City, Gaza on October 07, 2023. At least 198 people killed, 1,610 others injured in Israeli attacks on Gaza, according to Gaza Strip's Health Ministry. (Photo by Mustafa Hassona/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

HIAS' Commitment to Global Emergencies

For decades, HIAS has responded to emergencies around the world to better assist displaced populations — including refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people — and vulnerable host communities. HIAS is committed to serving in crises, whether in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Venezuela, or Chad; whether complex protracted conflict or natural disasters, because it stands for a world in which displaced persons find welcome, safety, and opportunity.

Partnerships

HIAS works closely with its national network of refugee community leaders, centers, and organizations, including the Sudanese Community Center in south Tel Aviv, and will continue to collaborate and provide support the emergency phase and beyond. Our more than 20 partners include: Shelters for victims of human trafficking, the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), ASSAF, the Ruth Clinic for undocumented migrants, the mobile health clinic in Haifa, UNHCR, MESILA, the Public Defender's Office, the Jerusalem African Community Center (JACC), the African Refugee Development Center (ARDC), the Carmel Shelter for Undocumented Women, Isha L'Isha (Woman to Woman), Achoti Social Movement, the Ministry of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Justice (the anti-trafficking coordination unit), the Tel Aviv University Refugee Rights Clinic, and the Clinic for the Rights of the Elderly.

About HIAS in Israel

Since 1950, HIAS' work in Israel is led and staffed by a team of Israelis who work closely with Israeli civil society to protect and support refugees so they can build new lives and reunite with family members in safety and freedom. HIAS worked with the Israeli government to develop its asylum system until the government's approach to asylum seekers changed to focus on detention and forced return. Since then, HIAS has worked within the Israeli legal system and partnered with Israeli lawyers, human rights activists, and legal aid organizations to provide services to asylum seekers, mainly from Eritrea and Sudan, and offer higher education support to Jewish immigrants to Israel. HIAS Israel also responded quickly to the influx of Ukrainian refugees in 2022, providing legal aid to prevent deportation and reunite families.

About HIAS

HIAS is the international Jewish humanitarian organization that provides vital services to refugees and asylum seekers in more than 20 countries. We advocate for the rights of all forcibly displaced people to rebuild their lives and seek to create a world in which they find welcome, safety, and opportunity.

Contact

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