



PALESTINE COUNTRY REPORT

THE STATE OF THE
HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Marked by a prolonged blockade, repeated cycles of violence and deepening humanitarian need, Gaza represents a critical test case for the effectiveness and integrity of humanitarian action. Drawing on the perspectives of affected populations and frontline responders, this country report contributes to the sixth edition of the **State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS) 2026**, highlighting systemic challenges and lessons for future responses.

Severe and sustained access restrictions have shaped humanitarian action in Gaza. From October 2023, and most acutely between March and October 2025, the closure of entry points halted aid delivery. Supplies were stranded, which contributed to widespread famine conditions. Administrative measures further limited humanitarian presence. The ceasefire in October 2025 brought only marginal improvements.

These constraints exist alongside overwhelming need. The humanitarian response targets Gaza's entire population yet it remains critically underfunded, forcing organisations to reduce coverage and prioritise caseloads. Simultaneously, the collapse of protection systems, widespread destruction and repeated displacement have created an environment where civilians face constant risk with limited access to basic services. The conditions in Gaza reflect a systemic crisis: needs are escalating while response capacity remains structurally restricted.

UN agencies lead the response, with clusters serving as the main platform for operational coordination. While this structure effectively facilitates information-sharing and the division of roles, decision-making power is concentrated among international actors.

Palestinian organisations form the operational backbone of the response, sustaining service delivery under extreme constraints; however, their role is limited by funding structures and by restricted participation in strategic decision-making. Humanitarian actors also rely on private-sector partnerships to sustain operations, though concerns have been raised around accountability and adherence to humanitarian standards. Meanwhile, communities support aid distributions and maintain social order – this reflects their own resilience but also coverage gaps in the formal response.

The erosion of humanitarian principles under conditions of extreme violence and politicisation has also shaped the response in Gaza. The emergence of militarised aid delivery models, such as the Gaza Humanitarian Fund (GHF), exemplify the instrumentalisation of aid. These models have exposed civilians to significant harm, prompting widespread rejection by humanitarian actors.

Organisations have adapted through local partnerships and by modifying modalities, but assistance has not met needs. Prioritisation has focused narrowly on

survival, leaving critical sectors such as protection and psychosocial support underserved.

At the household level, aid has been inconsistent and poorly adapted to prolonged displacement, with uneven targeting and the exclusion of vulnerable groups. Consequently, trust has declined, resource competition has increased and social tensions have grown.

Recommendations

The findings highlight particular learning considerations for humanitarian response actors, international organisations and donors to address structural constraints, improve coordination and localisation dynamics, and safeguard dignity and protection.

- **Address access constraints:** Advocate to remove barriers to aid entry, ensure sustained access, and limit 'dual-use' restrictions.
- **Strengthen coordination:** Expand the participation of national actors, improve data systems and ensure oversight of private-sector engagement.
- **Advance localisation:** Increase direct, flexible funding to Palestinian organisations and strengthen their role in decision-making.
- **Safeguard dignity and humanitarian principles:** Scale dignified delivery practices, strengthen accountability and reject militarised aid modalities.

