



ISLAMIC  
RELIEF  
USA

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# GAZA

— one year later —





## A year of relentless violence and suffering

In early October 2023, the population of Gaza was around 2.1 million, some 50% of whom were children. Despite the difficulties they endured living in what has been called the ‘world’s largest open-air prison’, the people of Gaza went about their daily lives, dreaming of a better future where their human rights would be recognized and upheld.

Since October, these dreams have been shattered. Palestinian families have been forced to endure Israeli bombardment and siege on a previously unimaginable scale during one year of unprecedented destruction and displacement. We have seen complete disregard for international humanitarian law, with relentless attacks on civilians, health facilities, homes, shelters and markets, and severe restrictions on humanitarian aid.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed, with some reports estimating the count to be in the hundreds of thousands. Others have sustained life-changing injuries or simply disappeared, likely lost under the rubble of destroyed homes and shelters. Children have missed almost an entire year of schooling and face a future full of uncertainty and fear.

Entire families have been scattered as they flee repeatedly in search of safety, which cannot be found as bombs continue to rain down on Gaza. People have been ordered to leave one area, only to be bombed in

the place they were told to shelter. The international community has been unable to provide sufficient aid due to Israeli restrictions on supplies into Gaza. Few hospitals remain functional due to shortages of electricity, fuel, and medicine. Trapped in one of the most densely populated areas on Earth, families have minimal access to food, water, and healthcare. People are starving to death, and famine looms.

Islamic Relief USA’s long-term development programs in Gaza were all re-directed to support and scale up our emergency efforts such as providing food, medical aid, hygiene kits, water, clothes, and more to displaced people. Our work has had to continually adapt to meet changing needs and varying availability of items. Humanitarian staff and partners in Gaza are enduring the same challenges as the communities they support, including displacement, with one colleague saying she feels Palestinians have been ‘forgotten by the world’. Despite these enormous challenges, they remain committed to providing aid to vulnerable communities.

In 2012, a United Nations report questioned if Gaza would be a livable place by 2020, pointing to population growth and the Israeli blockade. Now, in 2024, there remains little doubt that conditions inside Gaza have become truly unlivable.

# 365 Days of Crisis

## OCTOBER 2023 - DECEMBER 2023

Violence intensifies throughout Gaza, targeting homes, hospitals, schools, and other civilian infrastructure. Attacks on aid convoys and aid workers also increase. Palestinians across Gaza are issued with so-called 'evacuation orders' and forced into ever-shrinking areas farther south.

IRUSA works with local partners to provide food parcels, hot meals, hygiene kits, psychosocial support, mobile medical teams, and medical supplies to health facilities in Gaza.



## DECEMBER 2023 - APRIL 2024

The blockade continues to severely restrict aid entering Gaza, as starvation is used as a weapon of war. Hunger and diseases spread across the territory, with hundreds of thousands of people at imminent risk of famine.

In addition to ongoing interventions, IRUSA also worked to provide winter clothing, household items, and emergency shelter to internally displaced people.



## MAY 2024

People are forced out of Rafah in the south. The Rafah border with Egypt and the Erez crossing in the north was closed, cutting off the supply route for many international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).

IRUSA also provided medical supplies to Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, supporting around 24,000 people. This included treatment for burn injuries, outpatient clinic services, and psychosocial support for children and adults alike.



## JULY 19, 2024

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivers a historic ruling, concluding that Israel's occupation and annexation of the Palestinian territories are unlawful and they must withdraw their forces from all parts of the occupied territories, including Gaza, and remove all settlers from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.



## AUGUST 2024

Gaza health officials report that the death toll surpasses a horrific 40,000 people in Gaza after more than 10 months of attacks. Experts say civilians have been killed and wounded at a faster rate than any conflict this century.

IRUSA successfully delivers Qurbani meat to families in need through the Karem Abu Salem crossing, serving an estimated 259,600 people.



## SEPTEMBER 2024

IRUSA continues to deliver humanitarian aid across Gaza, reaching vulnerable people every day with hot meals, food parcels, access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, medical care, psychosocial support, clothing, temporary shelter, and so much more.





# Hot meals and food parcels

After one year of continued violence in Gaza, which has halted food imports and destroyed agriculture, the entire population is classified in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 3 [Crisis], IPC 4 [Emergency], or IPC 5 [Catastrophe/Famine].

As early as December 2023, the IPC found nearly all households were skipping meals or going entire days and nights without any sustenance. Today, approximately 96% of internally displaced households have been forced to resort to a significant decrease in caloric intake, little or no-protein rich foods, and the consumption of unconventional rations, such as ground barely, which was previously used in animal feed.

Prior to the current escalation, food insecurity contributed to deteriorating nutritional status among Palestine's most vulnerable communities; today, severe acute malnutrition threatens all Palestinians in Gaza.

IRUSA has helped provide food to **591,725** people including hot meals, fresh produce baskets, food parcels, and food vouchers.

Our team in Gaza is working to distribute the following:



**Over 7 million hot meals**



**19,200 fresh produce baskets**



**Food parcels and food vouchers to 468,214 people**



## How is IRUSA still getting food into Gaza?

The blockade of food and other supplies into Gaza is a major concern that many organizations are experiencing as they work to deliver humanitarian aid inside Palestine.

Local procurement is happening where possible, but largely, things are being brought in from outside based on whatever crossings are open at the time. The crossings and their openings constantly shift. There are major delays in getting items through, but our partners are able to do so.



IRUSA strongly supports the establishment of a permanent humanitarian corridor, which would allow the safe transit of humanitarian aid, to support the people of Palestine.

# Delivering vital medical care

The attack on the health system has been particularly devastating. One year since the beginning of this escalation, a staggering 41,000 people have been killed and more than 95,000 have been wounded due to relentless aerial and ground bombardment. With many still unaccounted for, we fear the actual figures could be far higher. A July 2024 study in *The Lancet*, a peer-reviewed general medical journal, has found the true death toll could reach more than 186,000 people.

Almost nothing remains of Gaza's medical infrastructure. The crisis has seen an increase in the spread of disease among displaced communities, with the most common health issues reported being skin diseases and intestinal problems. Poor nutrition, unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, and the crowded conditions of camps are all contributing factors. In August, polio re-emerged in Gaza for the first time in 25 years due to the desperate conditions.

Thanks to donors like you, IRUSA has helped provide emergency medical supplies for hospitals, benefiting **847,222** people; medical care for **841,240** people including treatment and outpatient clinic services, and psychosocial support for **371,686** people including self-care workshops, mind-body skills groups, counseling sessions, and even recreational activities for children.



## Additional health work:

- Emergency first aid training for 120 people
- Midwifery training for 40 people

# Campaigning to save lives

Our advocacy work reaches all levels of government and our IRUSA Advocates carry the voices of those most vulnerable around the world. IRUSA Advocates sent letters to both congressional representatives and to the President of the United States [POTUS] to advocate for a ceasefire in Palestine and to allow for the entry of humanitarian aid.

Alhamdulillah, we've sent a total of 46,854 letters to Congress and 6,414 letters to the POTUS to date. We will continue to advocate for the people of Palestine until there is a complete and lasting resolution.

[IRUSA.ORG/GAZACEASEFIREPOTUS](https://IRUSA.ORG/GAZACEASEFIREPOTUS)

# A Ramadan unlike any other

The bombardment of Gaza continued throughout the holy month, as millions of people carried out the sacred act of fasting during Ramadan amid unbearable conditions.

IRUSA worked with five *tekia*, or community kitchens, in Khan Younis, the Middle Area, and Rafah, feeding about 90,000 displaced people per day for iftar. Each kitchen was staffed with multiple chefs and staff who made scores of large pots of filling, hot meals.



## Your donations also helped provide:



**62,000** individual meals



**42,472** food parcels



**39,066** family meals



**39,053** vegetable parcels



**2,750** food vouchers in the West Bank





## Providing Qurbani/ Udhiyah meat

At a time when millions of Muslims from around the world are traveling to the sacred house in Mecca to perform Hajj, Palestinians in Gaza were confined to makeshift tents and forced to sit through stifling, intense heat due to the destruction of their homes.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, IRUSA is working to provide **100,000** meat-based hot meals and 10,640 meat parcels to **259,600** internally displaced people across Gaza, helping them access a vital source of nutrition amid widespread food shortages.





# Disease, dehydration, and displacement

Before the escalation began, the people of Gaza were already very exposed to unsafe drinking water. Now, hundreds of thousands of people are suffering the effects of contaminated water sources in the form of dehydration and diseases such as hepatitis – a suspected 40,000 people have now contracted the virus. At least 577,000 cases of acute watery diarrhea have been recorded, many in young infants.

What little water infrastructure that existed prior to the escalation has now been almost decimated by the bombardment.

IRUSA has provided over 10 million liters of clean drinking water in Gaza over the past year. We are also working to distribute hygiene kits to 42,665 people to help them reduce the spread of disease and are distributing polio vaccines to children in Gaza.

To add, up to 1.9 million people – that's nine in 10 people – have been displaced multiple times from their homes since October 2023. A crucial element of our support has been delivering essential items such as clothing, bedding, and tents to displaced families to help them cope with this nightmarish reality.



Our team in Gaza is working to distribute the following:



**10 million** liters of clean drinking water



**5,717** beddings kits



Clothing for **24,200** people



Tents for **13,075** people



**7,140** hygiene kits



# Hope and healing

IRUSA's partner on the ground has been providing essential psychosocial support so that people can cope with the trauma that they were inflicted with. This project has been extremely successful with many of the participants feeling much better after the sessions. Here are some of their voices:

*"We faced a very harsh and terrifying war in which we experienced loss, homelessness, and displacement. As a woman, I faced great difficulties in all aspects of life when we lost our home and were displaced from the north to the south of Gaza. The psychological support from [the project] has alleviated the suffering and provided us with wonderful exercises, energy, strength, and will. Praise be to God, there is a great impact in terms of my health, and [I've] returned to [smiling again]. I am grateful for everyone who helped us be able to face our harsh circumstances." - Najwa, 53*

*"Before the sessions, I used to suffer from severe anger, nervousness, and irritability – accompanied by extreme fear. I used to live a boring routine and meaningless life. After the sessions, I feel calmness and self-control, I'm full of positivity and optimism, [and as] I practice the things that I love and enjoy, I'm now in control of my day and of my life and not the other way around." - Daa'a, 25*

*"After my rescue from under the rubble of our bombed house, I used to feel pain in my joints, shortness of breath, and I did not sleep well because of nightmares. Taking part in the sessions, particularly the breathing and movement session, helped me get over my joint pain issue and start breathing normally again. The exercises greatly improved my sleep quality and helped me get rid of my nightmares. I am grateful for these helpful sessions." - Tala, 8*

*"My nightmares scared me so much that I couldn't sleep." In addition, his mother added: "Mohammed was experiencing frightening dreams that contributed to his fear of everything: loneliness, not playing with [other] kids, and starvation. But after attending the sessions and picking up the necessary abilities, he lost the terror inside of him, has pleasant dreams, and has grown more assimilated with the kids." - Mohammed, 8*



**Thank you** for helping your brothers and sisters in Palestine in their time of need.





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