

Middle East Situation Report

HelpAge International

November 2024



Highlights of HelpAge work:

- Working with local partners, HelpAge International reached 1,373 people in Gaza, providing them with assistive devices, like wheelchairs, medication, hygiene kits and clothing.
- In the coming months, HelpAge plans to support 9,873 people of all ages in Gaza. This will include the delivery of food, kits for hygiene, dignity and winterisation, as well as assistive devices, medication, and the provision of primary health care services.
- In Lebanon HelpAge plans to support 1,150 people of all ages. This will include the delivery of hygiene and winterisation kits, as well as providing protection support services, offering case management, referrals, awareness raising and psychosocial support with mental health consultations and support sessions which will ensure their safety, well-being, and dignity throughout the provision of humanitarian assistance.

Context

Lebanon: The escalation in the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel exacerbated Lebanon's existing challenges as host to the highest number of refugees per capita and per square kilometre globally, according to UNHCR. Since 8 October 2024, the conflict has claimed 4,047 lives, with 16,520 injured according to the Ministry of Public Health and has resulted in more than 1.2 million people being displaced from their homes, as stated by the government of Lebanon.

While a ceasefire came into effect on 27 November, offering a reprieve after 66 days of intense attacks, it did not put an end to the high level of displacement and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that 899,725 people had been displaced from their homes by 25 November. Since the ceasefire, 786,443 displaced people have begun moving back towards their places of origin despite significant challenges including extensive damage, destruction, and restrictions imposed by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF).

Palestine: The 2024 crisis in Palestine is the latest development in a protracted political crisis characterised by years of conflict, the Gaza blockade, and recurrent hostilities between the IDF and Palestinian armed groups. Following the attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023, the IDF declared "a state of war alert," and began striking targets in the Gaza Strip. These attacks, which continue until this date, have led to the death of more than 43,391 people in Gaza, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), while a further 102,347 have been injured. More than 1.9 million of Gaza's population of 2.1 million people (90%) have also been internally displaced¹. After more than one year of hostilities and restricted access for humanitarian aid, the entire population of Gaza is facing acute food insecurity, compounded by limited access to healthcare, and insufficient supplies to meet people's basic needs.

People reached by HelpAge:

Palestine: (from April to November 2024)

- 583 assistive devices were distributed to older people in Gaza. The assistive devices included wheelchairs, elbow crutch, walkers, and axillary crutches.
- 372 people received medications for noncommunicable diseases (NCD).
- 549 older men and women received clothing.

People HelpAge International plans to reach:

Lebanon - until the end of April 2025, HelpAge will work with local partners to:

- Distribute Non-Food Items (NFIs) and winterisation kits to 700 internally displaced people in collective shelters. This will include winter clothes and carpets to improve living conditions by enhancing warmth, reducing exposure to cold floors, and reducing older people's risk of slips and falls.
- Distribute 350 hygiene kits to families living in collective shelters.
- Provide Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) consultations to 50 people in need of mental health support in collective shelters, with each patient receiving at least five consultations.

- Raise awareness of how to manage psychological well-being through sessions conducted by our partner's specialist team of professional psychologists and social workers, targeting an additional 50 IDPs.

Palestine - until end of April 2025, HelpAge will work through its local partners to:

- Distribute 1,086 hygiene kits inside Gaza. These kits will consist of sanitary items, personal care products, as well as specific items to support the wellbeing of children and older people.
- Distribute 1,127 fresh and nutrient-dense food parcels to vulnerable households in Gaza, taking into account the special dietary needs of households with children, pregnant or nursing mothers, and older people.
- Scale up the distribution of another 150 assistive devices and medications to 300 older people for NCD.
- Distribute 600 winterisation kits to vulnerable households in Gaza, which will include essential non-food items such as mattresses, pillows, and blankets.
- Provide 5,000 primary health care consultations through our partner's medical points in the IDP shelters to older patients.

Partners:

Lebanon: We are providing lifesaving support in Lebanon through the work of our local partner, the Institute for Development, Research, Advocacy and Applied Care (IDRAAC).

Palestine: We are providing lifesaving support in Gaza through our local partners, the Palestinian Agricultural Development Association and Juzoor for Health and Social Development.

Advocacy calls:

- Adequate funding is urgently needed to address the scale of these crises, particularly with the arrival of another harsh winter which has made the situation across the Middle East increasingly dire. Humanitarian responses, strained by severe underfunding and overwhelming demand, are nearing their limits.
- More than a year of conflict in **Gaza** has inflicted devastating hardship, with conditions across the Strip "unfit for human survival"² particularly in northern areas, with older people among those most severely affected. An immediate and full ceasefire is essential to end the ongoing suffering and protect civilians. Adherence to international humanitarian law and safe, full and unimpeded humanitarian access must be ensured to deliver life-saving assistance to all those affected, including older people and those with disabilities.
- The situation of the 97 hostages abducted by Hamas on 7 October 2023, including 13 older people, remains deeply concerning. Their immediate, unconditional release and access to necessary medical treatment is urgently needed.
- Immediate attention is required in the **West Bank**, where military operations, settler violence, and settlement expansion continue to cause deaths, displacement, and rising humanitarian needs.
- The ceasefire in **Lebanon** is a positive step but requires full implementation by all parties. Significant humanitarian needs remain, particularly among older people, including Syrian refugees who face ageism and increasing anti-refugee discrimination. To ensure an effective and inclusive response, older people's perspectives, experiences, and capacities must be central to planning, delivering and monitoring the humanitarian response.

Communications:

Working through an independent film maker and our local partners, HelpAge gathered powerful stories of resilience from older people in Gaza and Lebanon, showcasing their strength and spirit. We produced five stories from Gaza and six from Lebanon. You can read them all here: <https://www.helpage.org/stories/>

Donors:



¹ Home Page | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory

² Conditions in Gaza 'unfit for human survival,' acting UN relief chief tells Security Council | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory