



UNSC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UPDATE PAPER

DISCLAIMER: Please note that while this topic constitutes several countries and their inherently political nature over the last several months, the goal of this committee is to address the environmental and human rights issues in the region. There will be no tolerance for snark or rude comments between delegations and we ask that everyone address the topics at hand with the utmost care and respect. Please treat yourselves and each other with patience and understanding. Thank you.

- UNSC HC Sameer Ameen

Women's Reproductive Issues

Many of the women in Palestine and the Gaza Strip are taking menstruation-delaying pills due to the lack of access to clean and sanitary water and menstrual hygiene products (Aljazeera). This is largely due to the displacement and overcrowded conditions that have resulted from the bombardment of missile strikes and phosphorus gas use by the Israeli military. The pill is called norethisterone and side effects include irregular vaginal bleeding, nausea, dizziness, mood swings, and changes to the menstrual cycle. Unfortunately, many of the women in the region feel they have no other choice due to the conditions they face (NPR). The effects of poor water and cleanliness on sexual and reproductive health are dire. Mothers are finding it difficult to produce enough milk to breastfeed their children and to support and care for their families due to the declining availability of food and water (IPPF). Women and children are among the most impacted by the current water crisis.

Health in Children

When examining the health of children post-October 7th, two main facets of health open up: mental and physical. As expected, the conflict in Gaza is taking a tremendous

toll on the children of the region as they simply are not mentally in a place to recognize and truly understand what is going on around them. For example, most, if not all, of the children in Gaza, are subjected to ignoring their grief for dead family and friends with the main focus being to just survive (Schlein). Furthermore, children in Gaza are 2.5 to 17 times more likely to have clinical mental health problems with the most prominent being anxiety. This anxiety has a variety of roots such as warfare, lack of safety and/or a home, and, most prominently, food and water insecurity (D'Andrea et al). In terms of physical health, as of November 10, 2023, over 700,000 children are struggling to access safe water with devastating sanitation conditions. As a result, waterborne diseases are becoming more and more prevalent with kids being most at risk (UNICEF). In the words of UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell, the “children in Gaza have barely a drop to drink” and “are having to use water from unsafe sources that are highly salinated or polluted”. These children are also only getting 1.5 to 2 liters of water a day (the standard being 15 for everyday use) and this combination of water insecurity with a lack of hygiene and sanitation will inevitably lead to disease outbreaks and other unknown long-term effects (Aljazeera).

Current Status of Aids & Assistance + Barriers to Aid

With the current state of war, only one entry point into Gaza is open, the Rafah border crossing from Egypt. Even with the ceasefire conditions, only having one point of entrance meant that only about 200 aid trucks a day were able to cross in for assistance, which is not nearly enough to support a large number of those in need of aid (Aljazeera). Additionally, the UNRWA is the only organization still able to operate its shelters, however without the ability to expand their capacity, the 1.2 million people seeking shelter are crammed in spaces for 150,000 people. Concerns with providing more aid and assistance that this time is endangering employees and infrastructure damage. Countries that are sending aid include Turkey, the UAE, Qatar, Jordan, Tunisia, India, and Rwanda, along with the EU and the United States temporarily in reaction to various Hamas activities (NPR).

Resources:

To stay up to date with what is happening in the Gaza Strip leading up to the conference, you can find news here at [Aljazeera - Palestine](#)

Additionally, there are reporters on the ground in Palestine who use their Instagram to share news. Their handles are:

@hindkhoudary

@byplestia

@wizard_bisan1

WORKS CITED

- Amer, Linah Alsaafin, Ruwaida. “No Privacy, No Water: Gaza Women Use Period-Delaying Pills amid War.” Al Jazeera, 31 Oct. 2023, www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/31/no-privacy-no-water-gaza-women-use-period-delaying-pills-amid-war.
- “Another Layer of Misery: Women in Gaza Struggle to Find Menstrual Pads, Running Water.” NPR, 11 Jan. 2024, www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2024/01/11/1224201620/another-layer-of-misery-women-in-gaza-struggle-to-find-menstrual-pads-running-wa.
- Neuman, Scott. “Delivering Aid in a War Zone Is Always Difficult. In Gaza, It’s Proving Even Harder.” NPR, 9 Dec. 2023, www.npr.org/2023/12/09/1217767373/gaza-humanitarian-aid-refugees-war-is-hamas.
- “No Freedom without Reproductive Freedom for Palestinian Women | IPPF.” www.ippf.org, 8 Dec. 2023, www.ippf.org/featured-perspective/no-freedom-without-reproductive-freedom-palestinian-women#:~:text=For%20sexual%20and%20reproductive%20health. Accessed 2 Feb. 2024.
- Staff, Al Jazeera. ““Barely a Drop”: UN Warns Water Shortages a Deadly Risk for Gaza Children.” Al Jazeera, www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/20/un-warns-lack-of-clean-water-in-gaza-poses-deadly-risk-for-children.
- “UN: Gaza Is World’s Most Dangerous Place for Children.” Voice of America, 19 Dec. 2023, www.voanews.com/a/un-gaza-is-world-s-most-dangerous-place-for-children-/7404592.html.

BERKELEY MODEL UNITED NATIONS

PO box 4306, Berkeley, CA 94704 | bmun.org