

## Gaza needs help

Published: January 13, 2026, 5:34 am

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*This article by Fikr Shalltoot, who is the Gaza director at Medical Aid for Palestinians, is in [The National newspaper](#), for whom I write a weekly column, this morning.*

*I reproduce it here to promote support for this cause. I have made a donation:*

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THE temporary ceasefire in Gaza has brought a welcome, but fragile, respite for the two million Palestinians who have endured relentless Israeli military violence for over 15 months.

But for the people of Gaza, this is not peace – it is merely a pause in the suffering. The destruction wrought by Israel's military offensive is everywhere: in the rubble of homes, in the targeted and destroyed health system, and in the eyes of children who can remember no time but war.

This temporary ceasefire has offered Palestinians a chance to breathe, to mourn, and to dare to consider beginning the long, painful process of rebuilding. But even this small respite is under threat. On March 2, [Israel announced a total blockade on aid](#) – a cruel reminder that Israel's control and siege of Gaza is far from over. Without immediate and sustained international action, this temporary ceasefire may well collapse, and Palestinians will be plunged back into despair, starvation, and fear.

*As a Palestinian, I have seen too many ceasefires come and go. Each one brings a flicker of hope, but hope is not enough. What Gaza needs now is justice, accountability, and an end to Israel's illegal blockade that has suffocated the population for years.*

*Over 15 months, Israel's military bombardment has left Gaza's health system in ruins. Healthcare workers have been targeted and killed, and doctors have been arrested. Hospitals are once again running out of medicines, diseases are spreading, and children*

*are dying from hypothermia. Israel's total blockade will only deepen the humanitarian and health crisis, stripping the means of survival from two million people.*

*Meanwhile, in the occupied West Bank, [the situation is deteriorating rapidly](#). Israeli military and settler violence has significantly escalated, and an ongoing Israeli military assault in the northern West Bank is the longest offensive in two decades. Tanks have been deployed in civilian areas. In Jenin, Tulkarem, and Tubas, 40,000 people have been displaced from their homes and told they cannot return. Israel's military violence is not confined to Gaza – it is part of wider actions to erase Palestinians from their land.*

*Despite the tightened blockade, we at Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) continue to provide a lifeline to those in need. Our team is working tirelessly to deliver essential medical and humanitarian services. We are operating medical points across Gaza, providing antenatal care, treating communicable diseases, and offering rehabilitation for people with disabilities. We are screening for malnutrition and distributing food and supplements.*

*We are providing mental health support to survivors of violence, detention, and displacement, with a focus on women and children. And we are trucking water to areas cut off from supplies, rehabilitating water networks, and ensuring that hospitals have the resources they need to function. We have deployed Emergency Medical Teams to treat injuries and infections, and they have conducted thousands of consultations, and performed life-saving surgeries.*

*The scale of the health and humanitarian crisis is overwhelming, and the blockade makes our work even harder. But MAP remains in Gaza and we have not lost hope. We are standing steadfast, but we need the world to stand with us, to demand justice, and to help us rebuild the health system.*

*Your support can make a lifesaving difference. It can help us provide essential medical care, conduct life-saving surgeries, and support mental health services for survivors of trauma. It can help us rehabilitate damaged health facilities and restore critical services.*

*But more than that, your support is a statement of solidarity. It is a reminder to the people of Gaza that they are not alone, and that the world has not forgotten them.*

*The temporary ceasefire is a chance to save lives, but it is also a chance to demand justice. Israel's military occupation, blockade, and violations of international law must end. The international community must take decisive action to hold Israel accountable, and ensure that Palestinians can live in freedom and dignity.*

*This means [suspending arms sales to Israel](#), supporting international accountability*

*mechanisms, and ensuring unrestricted access for humanitarian aid. It means ending the blockade and allowing Gaza to rebuild.*

*The people of Gaza have endured too much for too long. They need more than temporary respite - they need freedom, justice, and the chance to rebuild their lives.*

*Now is the time to act. Now is the time to stand with Palestinians in Gaza.*

*Click [here](#) to donate.*

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*Thank you, if you are able to support this cause.*