

HEKS/EPER launches deliveries of relief supplies to civilians in Gaza

The brutal attacks by Hamas and other armed groups on Israel and civilians in Israel have led to an escalation of violence in Israel/Palestine. The number of casualties on both sides is rising daily, and about a million people have been displaced. *HEKS/EPER has been present in the region for many years and, thanks to reliable partner organisations, has already been able to launch emergency relief operations, initially worth 500,000 Swiss francs, to assist suffering civilians in the Gaza Strip.*

Since the start of hostilities, the toll on both sides has surpassed 6000 killed and 20,000 injured, some gravely. In addition, there are about a million internally displaced people who have been forced by the latest surge in violence either to flee to the southern Gaza Strip or to be evacuated inside Israel. The rocket attacks mainly by Hamas on Israel, and Israeli bombing of the Gaza Strip have either destroyed or badly damaged tens of thousands of buildings and also key infrastructure such as hospitals and schools.

Furthermore, there could be outbreaks of diseases and epidemics stemming from the almost complete blockade of the Gaza Strip now in place, the lack of or extremely limited access to clean water and electricity, and from the fact that the medical services are already stretched almost to capacity. If the hostilities continue, the number of casualties can be expected to rise substantially, especially among civilians on both sides.

First emergency measures

HEKS/EPER is following developments in Israel/Palestine with the utmost concern. To assist as many as possible of the affected persons, a ceasefire as well as secure and sufficient access for humanitarian aid are urgently needed. HEKS/EPER operates a country office in Jerusalem and has been working in the Gaza Strip since 2006. Thanks to close cooperation with its long-standing Israeli and Palestinian partner organisations and with other international aid agencies working in the conflict zone, it has been possible to launch the first relief operations for internally displaced people in Gaza.

SWISS CHURCH AID

Head Office +41 44 360 88 00
Seminarstrasse 28 info@heks.ch
P. O. Box heks.ch
CH-8042 Zürich IBAN CH37 0900 0000 8000 1115 1





Some 20,000 people will be receiving food parcels in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. Others who have fled south are receiving cash to be able to purchase essentials for themselves. In Egypt, HEKS/EPER is making arrangements for the earliest possible delivery of supplies to the Gaza Strip via the Rafah border crossing. Efforts are under way in Gaza, Israel and the West Bank to determine additional ways of getting aid to the people being impacted by the conflict.

The items that will be most urgently needed in the coming weeks and months are food, hygiene products, access to water, electricity and medical supplies, and also materials for ensuring that emergency shelters are fit for winter. Besides these vitally important items, the affected people also need psycho-social support.

HEKS/EPER calls on all parties to the conflict to immediately cease all hostilities and breaches of international humanitarian law, in the interests of suffering civilians on both sides. All persons taken as hostages to the Gaza Strip must be released immediately and unconditionally, and the bombing of civilians in Gaza must stop. The warring parties must open the way for the international community and aid agencies to deliver emergency relief in order to avert a humanitarian disaster of even greater proportions.

Account for donations:

IBAN CH37 0900 0000 8000 1115 1, mentioning "Emergency aid Israel/Palestine"

www.heks.ch/nothilfe-israel-palaestina

Contact:

Dieter Wüthrich, Media and Information, dieter.wuethrich@heks.ch, Tel. 076 461 88 70

HEKS/EPER pursues the vision of a just world where the dignity of everyone is respected, peace reigns, and the natural environment is conserved. In the framework of the 2030 Agenda, we work in the four thematic priority areas of "Climate justice", "Right to land and food", "Refugees and migration", and "Inclusion". HEKS/EPER also provides humanitarian aid for people affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts. The goal is to induce change at the social, economic and political levels. HEKS/EPER helps improve the living conditions of people in Switzerland and around the world, claims their rights and, to this end, mobilizes and raises awareness on the part of society, policymakers, business and churches.