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## Information bulletin Palestine: Gaza crisis

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

### Information Bulletin n°1 16 November, 2012

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), in close coordination with the ICRC and with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), will determine according to the evolution of the situation whether external assistance is required, and in such a case request assistance from donors.

PRCS volunteers and staff have been responding since the afternoon of November 14<sup>th</sup> to the extensive casualties (18 dead and 280 wounded) generated by the series of airstrikes. The health facilities in Gaza, already suffering from a chronic shortage of medical supplies, are under a severe strain, and the population at large is suffering the psychological consequences of ongoing airstrikes.



A volunteer of PRCS EMS services provides immediate aid to a child hit by an airstrike". Photo: PRCS

## The situation

The present humanitarian crisis in Gaza has already resulted into 18 civilians killed and 280 injured. More than 400 airstrikes have occurred in Gaza and more than 280 rockets were launched from Gaza towards Israel. While it is impossible to predict the duration of the crisis, the attacks and airstrikes have already put an additional strain onto PRCS's and local health authorities' capacities to cope with the large numbers of wounded. It has to be recalled that the health facilities in Gaza, both public and those run by PRCS, have been suffering from a chronic shortage of essential drugs and disposable, reaching in some periods more than 60 % of drugs on zero stock for the whole Gaza strip.

The high number of ongoing airstrikes is also affecting the psychosocial status of large numbers of Gaza population, already severely affected during the war of 2008-09 and the consequences of a 5 years blockade. While no population movements have been observed so far, it will be necessary to monitor the situation closely as it evolves.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the beginning of the airstrikes, PRCS ambulances have been working around the clock to provide Emergency Medical Services through its ambulance and Disaster Management systems to the wounded throughout the Gaza Strip evacuating, treating and transferring casualties to the hospitals in the Gaza Strip. Eleven of the eighteen civilians killed and 164 of the 280 wounded were transported by PRCS ambulances. Upon request by the Ministry of Health in Gaza, PRCS has also immediately provided three of its own kits for emergency surgery to the public hospitals.

PRCS has activated its Gaza operation room, located within its premises at the Al-Quds Hospital in Gaza city, and the national operations room in Ramallah, and has activated its contingency plans. More than 200 volunteers have been deployed in Gaza.

PRCS, ICRC and the IFRC are closely coordinating the response to the present crisis. Focal points from the three organizations have been in constant contact, building on extensive work on preparing for crisis and disasters in Palestine.

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## How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
  2. Enable healthy and safe living.
  3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
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