

Media Release

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At least 1,000 children injured in Gaza protests as casualties rise in deadliest day of protests yet

The number of child casualties in Gaza since the protests began more than six weeks ago has now passed 1,000 as scores of injured flooded in following one of the most violent days seen so far, Save the Children warns.

Protests today saw many more people injured and deeply worrying reports that a 14-year-old was among a [reported](#) five children killed today, making him one of the youngest fatalities since the protests first broke out more than six weeks ago. Before today, at least [seven children](#) have been killed, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, in Gaza.

The ever-rising number of casualties in Gaza is having a devastating impact on children. At least 600 children have been hospitalised so far, [according to data](#) from the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza. The total number of injuries of all protestors has now reportedly [passed 10,000](#), with around [50 percent](#) requiring hospitalisation. The sheer volume of wounded has left medical workers struggling to keep pace and has further pushed services and families to breaking point.

With fresh violence at the protests in Gaza expected on Tuesday and the possibility of the violence spreading to Jerusalem and the West Bank in the coming days, even more children may be exposed to an increased risk of violence.

“The situation in Gaza is deteriorating quickly and we are deeply concerned about the physical, and also psychological impact that the current violence is having on children and families,” said Jennifer Moorehead, Save the Children’s Occupied Palestinian Territory Country Director.

“Already more than ten children have been killed and a thousand have been hurt, many suffering from life changing injuries. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, there are dozens of cases of children suffering extreme injuries. These include having to have limbs amputated or have had their bones shattered by shrapnel or live ammunition. Some have been hit in the torso, face, neck and head. The effect this is having on the children and their families cannot be overstated.

“Families are already suffering the consequences of a 10 year blockade and three wide-scale conflicts. They are struggling to cope with severely injured and distressed children who are only able to receive limited medical support. It’s truly heart breaking. Parents of those who have been injured tell us they don’t know how to support their children, while children are telling us that the violence is making them feel hopeless, insecure and afraid. A 14-year-old boy who was badly wounded in both legs told us he felt he would go ‘crazy’ after learning that he would not be able to walk for two years because of his injury.”

According to data from an inter-agency protection working group at the start of the week, almost [600 children](#) are believed to require psychosocial support, a figure which rises after every wave of protests.

An [analysis carried out last week](#) by Save the Children and our partner organisation MAAN Development Centre, found that out of 500 injuries to children for which detailed information was obtained, 250 children (almost 50 percent) had been hit with live ammunition.

It has been reported that there have been Palestinian attempts to cross the border into Israel. Protestors have also thrown rocks, set tires ablaze and flown kites over the border wall, which have at times had flammable materials attached.

The EU, UN Secretary General, as well as aid agencies and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [have all expressed concern](#) that excessive force was used in response, and the [UN Secretary General](#) has called for an independent investigation to be carried out.

“We strongly urge all protests to remain peaceful, and call on all sides to tackle the long-term causes of this conflict and promote dignity and security for both Israelis and Palestinians,” said Moorehead.

“In line with international humanitarian and human rights law, we are also calling for an end to this long-standing blockade, as lifting it will be essential to achieve any sustainable solution and establish a durable peace, reconstruction, recovery, and longer-term development.

“At a time when families’ needs are only getting higher, the international community must step up and to do more to assist the people and families of Gaza. Despite this, funding is lower than it has ever been at this point in the year.”

Gaza has been under a ten-year blockade by Israel that has hit almost all aspects of daily life – from education and employment to health and sanitation. The stalled reconciliation process between the Palestinian Authority that governs the West Bank and the de facto authority in Gaza have further deepened the economic and social distress of children and their families in Gaza, with power cuts across the strip and salary cuts of thousands of PA employees. A general reduction in donor assistance and the pending cuts to the UNRWA budget have further exacerbated woes.

*****Notes to editors*****

Following protests that took place last Friday 11th, the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza announced that it had recorded 9,800 injuries in the six weeks of protests. On Monday the Ministry said it had received at least 1,600 more injuries, bringing the total to above [10,000](#).

Following protests on 4th May, the Ministry announced that [793](#) children had been hospitalized to date. A further [973](#) people were reportedly injured the following Friday, 11th May. Although the breakdown of child injuries has not yet been confirmed, children have accounted for 14 – 20 per cent of all injuries each week since the protests began. As such, with the most conservative estimates, at least 136 injuries occurred on Friday. Added to the [200](#) children confirmed to have been injured on Monday, this brings the total to 1,129. On Sunday, before the Monday protests began, the Ministry of Health told Save the Children that a total of 1010 children (920 M, 90 F) had been injured.

Protests in Gaza are scheduled to culminate on 15 May when a general strike has been called in the Strip to mark Israeli Independence Day also known as the Nakba or “catastrophe” by Palestinians who found themselves displaced by the ensuing conflict.

Some [1.3 million of Gaza’s 1.9 million](#) inhabitants are refugees or are descendant from those who were displaced by the fighting that broke out 70 years ago.

Save the Children is one of the largest non-governmental organisations working in Gaza, addressing the immediate humanitarian and long-term development needs of children and adults. We have over 30 years of experience on the ground and currently implement programs in the areas of education,

child protection, livelihoods and economic opportunities, and psychosocial support. We also provide some water and sanitation services and work through partners to provide a range of other services.

MAAN Development Centre, one of our partners on the ground, is an independent Palestinian development and training institution established in 1989. It works throughout the country, in the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank including East Jerusalem.

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About Save the Children New Zealand

Save the Children works in 120 countries across the world. The organisation responds to emergencies and works with children and their communities to ensure they survive, learn and are protected.

Save the Children NZ currently supports international programmes in Fiji, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal, Indonesia, Thailand, and Mozambique. Areas of work include education and literacy, disaster risk reduction, and alleviating child poverty.

Media Contact:

Spokespeople from Save the Children International are available tonight and tomorrow. Please call Simona Sikimic-French | **Save the Children** | Global Media Manager +962 791 799 287 to arrange an interview or call the 24 hour media line on +44 7831 650 409.

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