LOCATION
Cairo, Egypt (online and in-person)

DATE
14 December 2023

CHAIR
Palestine Logistics Cluster

PARTICIPANTS
Action Against Hunger Spain (ACF-S), ACTED, Alianza por la Solidaridad, American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Americares, Atlas Logistique/HI, Beit Lahia Development Association (BLDA), CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), CCP Japan, Christian Aid, Crown Agents/Greenshields Cowie, Danish Church Aid (DCA), Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG-ECHO), Emergency NGO, Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (ETC), Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gisha, Global Communities, Global Empowerment Mission (GEM), HELP Logistics, Human Appeal, Humanity and Inclusion (HI), Human Rights Watch, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kuehne + Nagel, Médecins du Monde (MdM), Médecins Sans Frontières France (MSF-F), Médecins Sans Frontières Holland (MSF-H), Médecins Sans Frontières Spain (MSF-S), MedGlobal, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), OXFAM, Parcic, Penny Appeal, Première Urgence Internationale (PUI), Save the Children, ShelterBox, Taawon, Terre des hommes (TdH), Terre des Hommes Italy (TdH), Tony Blair Institute, Relief International (RI), UK-Med, United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), United Palestinian Appeal (UPA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United States Department of State, WeWorld, World Bank, World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), World Vision International (WVI)

ACTION POINTS

• Partners to provide input on their pipeline and stocks in country through the dedicated form circulated by email. Partners who did not receive a form and are interested in sharing their pipeline information are encouraged to reach out to palestine.logcluster@wfp.org.

• The Logistics Cluster to share the online form for submitting aid lists to facilitate the pre-approval process once ready.

• Partners invited to share their focal points contacts in Gaza Strip at palestine.logcluster@wfp.org.

• Partners are advised to sign up to receive the latest communications from the mailing list, Palestine Logistics Cluster WhatsApp group, and the dedicated WhatsApp group on customs.
AGENDA

1. Gaza updates
2. SOPs for Logs Cluster Services
3. Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (ETC) Updates
4. Egypt corridor updates
5. Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) QR Code System – OCHA
6. AOB

1. Gaza Updates

- The Palestine Logistics Cluster provided an update on the current situation in Gaza regarding fuel, trucks, WASH and health, and economy.
- Approximately 1.9 million people, nearly 85% of the population, are currently internally displaced within Gaza, with many experiencing multiple displacements.
- Limited aid is being distributed in Rafah governorate. In the rest of the Gaza Strip, aid distribution has largely ceased due to intense hostilities and movement restrictions.
- The capacity to receive incoming aid is being significantly undermined by the continuing lack of fuel; telecommunications blackouts; and the increasing number of staff unable to reach the Rafah crossing safely, due to the intensity of hostilities. There is an urgent need for more aid and fuel to enter Gaza. Additionally, increased capacity within Gaza is required to efficiently handle the incoming aid.
- overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions in UNRWA shelters, particularly in the south, have led to significant increases in communicable diseases.
- The Ministry of Health in Gaza has reported a depletion of vaccine supplies, leading to catastrophic health consequences for children and the spread of diseases.
- Only 11 out of 36 hospitals in the Gaza Strip are partially operational and capable of admitting new patients, albeit with limited services.
- Recent heavy rains have exacerbated conditions, causing flooding in many areas, compounded by challenges in sewage management and solid waste accumulation, especially in IDP shelters.
- In October, the Gaza Strip operated at only 16% of its productive capacity. Concurrently, there has been an average price increase of 12%.
- According to the World Bank, since the onset of hostilities, about 85% of workers in Gaza have become unemployed, leading to the suspension of operations in most of the region’s 56,000 formal business establishments.

LOGISTICS CLUSTER UPDATES

- The Palestine Logistics Cluster’s mission to Nitzana took place on 7 December. The summary of key findings were presented during the coordination meeting and also circulated with partners through the mailing list.
- Pallets must not exceed a height of 170 cm, including the pallet itself, and while there are no weight restrictions, they should be securely wrapped in transparent, multi-layered thick material to prevent tearing and content shifting during transit.

https://logcluster.org/en/ops/pse23a
• Currently awaiting confirmation from COGAT regarding the allowance of two double-stacked pallets with a combined height of less than 170 cm. In all other instances, double-stacking of pallets is not permitted.

• The Nitzana scanning point uses the same gate for both the entry and exit of trucks.

• The following steps outline the scanning process, which is applied to the aid trucks passing through Nitzana scanning point:
  o Visual Check: trucks are being visually checked and inspected
  o Scanning Machines: two scanners checking the trucks with a total capacity of 20-36 trucks per hour
  o Manual Customs Check: depending on the scanning results (step 2), customs officials perform a more detailed manual inspection.
  o Pallets Scanning: depending on the manual customs check (step 3), individual pallets within the truck can be offloaded and scanned separately per pallet.

• Manual customs checks and pallet scanning steps are optional and are only conducted if additional cross-checks are required, based on the results from the scanning machines.

• Ad-hoc in-person coordination meetings are taking place with partners in Gaza, the meeting minutes for 30 November and 6 December meeting can be found on the dedicated operation webpage.

• In the Gaza Strip, the Logistics Cluster has installed and handed over a total of 14 MSUs that have augmented the offloading capacity in the Rafah handover point and the storage capacity of 4 UN Agencies and International NGOs.

• The first shipment for temporary storage has arrived at the common warehouse in Rafah on behalf of the UN Agency. More storage requests from the international NGOs have been accepted and cargo is about to arrive. Partners wishing to access any of the Palestine Logistics Cluster common services should follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

• It is important for partners to properly label and identify cargo to mitigate the risks, particularly for cargo unclaimed within 12 hours. Wherever possible, partners should also mark cargo with their own agency-defined tracking numbers.

• Given the high rotation of staff in Gaza and to enhance coordination, partners are encouraged to share the contact details of organisation’s focal points based in Gaza at palestine.logcluster@wfp.org, stating the contact’s name and title, organisation, WhatsApp number, email address, and governorate in which they are based.

2. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Logistics Cluster Services

• The Logistics Cluster facilitated access to the following common services:

• In Gaza:
  o Common storage services in Gaza Strip include through warehouses managed by ACTED, one in Deir al Balah (495m²), Khan Yunis (170m²) and Rafah (70m²). Additionally, WFP secured 1,000m² in Rafah for the humanitarian community. The common warehouses in Deir al Balah and Khan Yunis are currently on hold until further notice.

https://logcluster.org/en/ops/pse23a
o Transport services from Rafah to the Logistics Cluster common warehouses in the Gaza Strip. There is no last mile delivery or transportation to specific locations as every movement of transport requires deconfliction.

o Cargo notification services to inform partners once their cargo has arrived at the Rafah handover point. The Logistics Cluster will have permanent personnel stationed in Rafah to monitor incoming vehicles and notify requesting partners once their vehicles have arrived.

- In Egypt:
  o Common storage services in Port Said, with 800 pallet positions. Temporary storage is available for up to 30 days.

- Partners wishing to access any of these services can consult the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on the operation webpage. To request storage, partners must submit the online service request form (SRF) or the Excel SRF file to Palestine.ClusterCargo@wfp.org at least 72 hours before cargo is expected to be ready to deliver to the storage facility.

3. Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (ETC) Updates

- Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (ETC) provided an overview of its current activities, challenges and plans.
- The team is currently based in Cairo and Jerusalem, with plans to deploy a team member in Gaza.
- The ETC aims to provide support services to the responding organisations in at least three locations in Gaza, offering internet access and radio communications, also actively coordinating and sharing information with local actors to streamline processes and improve understanding of the situation.
- Humanitarian community faces major challenges in terms of communication in Gaza, including:
  o No authorization granted to date for any ICT equipment.
  o Safe access for personnel and equipment setup remains a significant challenge.
  o The process to import equipment is lengthy, with pending authorizations for the import or use of certain technologies.
  o Managing power requirements and supply for the equipment is an ongoing issue.
- The situation in Gaza in terms of communications is dire, and there are many challenges the ETC is working to solve, including equipment authorization. To date, no approval obtained for any communication equipment, including radios, satellite devices, and networking equipment to enter Gaza.
- The ETC team is engaging with OCHA, UNDSS and COGAT to secure the importation and use of ICT equipment into Gaza as well as liaising with Egyptian authorities and the Egyptian Red Crescent for importation through Rafah.
- On a recent date, Israeli authorities authorized the United Nations to procure 20 radium satellite phones specifically for UN staff. This procurement is in support of UNDSS and is contingent upon the phones being sourced locally from Israeli telecom providers. Also, Israel proposed using the SIM cards of local Israeli mobile operator, which work well in Gaza, and this is to be discussed at the HCT meeting.
- The ITU donated 100 SAT phones with prepaid services, but there are challenges in importing them, and everything needs COGAT approval and through Egypt. Equipment is prepositioned and ready to be shipped once access is granted. Frequencies were allocated before the conflict for UN agencies and possibly NGOs.
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Palestine Logistics Cluster (Gaza response) and Egypt Logistics Cell

- The communication system isn't working due to inaccessible or destroyed equipment like repeaters. ETC is looking to rehabilitate the system and possibly include NGO channels.
- All radios for UN will need programming in Jerusalem and only then can be brought to Gaza, with UNDSS leading the engagement.
- Advocation efforts for fuel and access for Mobile Network Operators to maintain communication lines are ongoing.
- Should partners want to be on the ETC mailing list or need any additional information, they can reach out to Emergency Telecommunication Cluster directly at: palestine.etc@wfp.org.

4. Egypt Corridor Updates

- Kerem Shalom is now open as an additional scanning point for UN and INGO cargo, while Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) trucks continue going through Nitzana for scanning. It is only being used for scanning and not as an entry point, after scanning, all trucks return back to Rafah and proceed to the handover point.
- The IMPACCT Working Group continues working with various government entities for further clarifications on the aid importation and customs procedures. IMPACCT had met twice with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also engaged the INGO Forum to develop a unified approach with the Ministry of Social Solidarity to address the challenges mentioned during the meeting.
- Humanitarian organisations who have questions remain unclear regarding customs procedures are encouraged to submit them through the dedicated form. The Logistics Cluster shared a visual of the current set-up in Al Arish, updated with the latest information, including key locations and Mobile Storage Units (MSUs), inflatable cold rooms, temperature-controlled units, and prefabs already installed and planned to be installed by the Logistics Cluster.
- The Logistics Cluster has resumed reporting on convoys based on UNRWA reports confirming aid received in Gaza. From 21 October until 13 December, 3,708 confirmed trucks have crossed into Gaza.
- The Logistics Coordination Cell shared the results of the ongoing pipeline exercise as of 8 December. Partners are strongly encouraged to continue providing their inputs on a weekly basis until COB Friday. The Logistics Cluster shares the updated pipeline with OCHA, and the ERC to inform their planning.

5. Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) QR Code System – OCHA

- OCHA presented the new QR code system being implemented by the Egyptian Red Crescent to track trucks on their way between Al Arish and Rafah and explained the process.
- The QR code system is designed to provide visibility over the cargo and trucks’ locations and monitor truck movements. It does not offer real-time tracking but can provide timestamps at key locations, which helps in estimating the time needed for trucks to cross borders and aids in planning for cargo receipt.
- QR codes are generated for trucks that have been manifested. These QR codes are then physically fixed onto each truck by the Egyptian Red Crescent.
- After the trucks are received in Gaza, they are scanned to confirm their arrival and offloading. This scanning provides details about the truck and its cargo based on the information encoded in the QR code.
• The data from the QR codes are submitted offline due to limited internet connectivity at scanning locations. The submitted data includes timestamps of when the truck was originally scanned. The system aims to generate daily reports on the status of all trucks, which will be shared with all partners.

• There are difficulties in scanning due to some locations being hard to access or being in military areas. Solutions for these challenges are being worked on in collaboration with ERC.

• The QR code system is currently in beta testing. During this phase, they are identifying and addressing various issues, including the practical challenges of fixing QR codes on the trucks and scanning at different locations. It is planned to have the QR code system fully operational within the next 10 days, despite some challenges.

• In this regard, the Logistics Cluster has emphasized the complementarity of the ERC QR code system and the Logistics Cluster transshipment notification service. While QR codes are designed for tracking and providing visibility of trucks and cargo, the transshipment notification’s primary function is to notify partners when their cargo arrives to Rafah handover point. This is crucial for logistics coordination, ensuring that partners are timely informed about the arrival of their shipments.

• The QR code system aids in the monitoring and reporting of cargo locations and movements, while the transshipment notification ensures that partners are alerted upon the arrival of their goods in Rafah.

• Together, these systems aim to address several logistical challenges, such as the timely and accurate tracking of cargo, ensuring proper communication with partners, and streamlining the process of cargo reception.

6. AoB

• OCHA was noted that the current system, involving trucks going for scanning in and out through Kerem Shalom, is not alleviating congestion. This is because trucks scanned at Nitzana are also re-entering and contributing to traffic on Philadelphia Road. She compared this to the pre-conflict situation where the movement of trucks from Israel was more of a one-way loop, whereas now it involves going from Egypt back in and out.

• The Logistics Cluster continues compiling a list of aid items for pre-approval from COGAT to enter Gaza in case partners would like to clarify if certain items are allowed to enter Gaza. Partners are invited to share the list of items with Diala Khalaf (diala.khalaf@nrc.no) and Jackson de Concini (deconcini@medglobal.org). The Logistics Cluster will share the consolidated list with COGAT on a weekly basis. The list of items was shared with COGAT on 2 and 8 December, and partners will be notified once a response has been received.

• The Logistics Cluster together with OCHA are developing the online form to streamline the organisations’ inputs for the pre-approval process. This initiative aims to simplify and expedite the procedure for obtaining necessary approvals. The Logistics Cluster will share the online form through the mailing list once ready.

The next Logistics Cluster Coordination meeting will be held in Cairo on 21 December 2023 at 11:00

Contacts

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