

## Background

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The escalation of conflict in Gaza on 7 October resulted in shortages of electricity, food, water, and fuel supplies, as well as restricted access to Gaza. The humanitarian response continues to be limited in Gaza due to insecurity and access constraints. These constraints are set against the needs of over 2.2 million people driven to internal displacement by the destruction of infrastructure, leading to a lack of access to clean water, adequate health care, and widespread food shortages. Due to the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis and corresponding access challenges to Gaza, humanitarian organisations face significant logistics challenges in delivering assistance at the scale of humanitarian needs, with Kerem Shalom and Rafah crossing being currently the only entry points for humanitarian goods into the Gaza Strip. In response to these challenges, the Palestine Humanitarian Country Team requested the activation of the Logistics Cluster, which started on 16 October 2023.

To address some of the logistics constraints faced by relief organisations, the Palestine Logistics Cluster has adopted a regional operational and coordination approach, with 5 streams based in Gaza, Jerusalem, Cairo, Al Arish and Amman, to ensure strong coordination, advocate for uninterrupted flow of assistance, and deliver effective support for partners operating into Gaza. The Logistics Cluster is also actively engaged in augmenting the logistics capacity of key relief actors such as the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) and Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) to mitigate bottlenecks, avoid duplication of efforts, increase efficiency where possible in support of the humanitarian community.

## Operational Constraints

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- **Access constraints** to Gaza due to limited entry points and restrictions for staff and relief cargo are limiting the ability of humanitarian organizations to operate. Limited access to transshipment and scanning locations is hampering the ability of the humanitarian community to monitor and trace cargo being transported.
- Movement restrictions and safe humanitarian access within Gaza conflict-affected areas due to ongoing military operations, complex deconfliction processes and sporadic authorizations to operate convoys, general insecurity, damaged roads, overcrowded areas are impeding the deliveries of humanitarian assistance to affected populations.
- **Regulatory and procedural challenges** due to restrictions and limitations on relief items allowed to enter Gaza, unforeseen and frequent entry point closures, lengthy security screening, specific packaging/palletization of cargo, truck specifications and multiple necessary transshipments, have constrained operational fluidity and efficiency.
- **Lack of power and telecommunications:** Electricity blackouts and disruption of mobile networks in Gaza have led to disruptions of communications impacting the ability of humanitarian partners to coordinate and undertake interventions.

## Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

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The humanitarian logistics community is facing several challenges, translating into gaps and bottlenecks that continue to impede the delivery of life-saving assistance, these include:

- **Import transit and entry procedures:** Lack of clarity on import and transit procedures for incoming relief cargo, combined with the unpredictability of entry point openings are hindering humanitarian actors' ability to optimize their supply chain planning and scale up their operations efficiently.
- **Complex clearance and scanning procedures** subsequently create backlog and delays at entry points and limit scalability of operations.
- **Lack of real-time visibility** over cargo along the corridors and convoys inside Gaza hampers the ability of relief actors to monitor and undertake operations. There is a lack of staff capacity to monitor and clear cargo efficiently. Additionally, a

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missing presence of humanitarian personnel at critical entry points to register and monitor trucks during cargo transit to Gaza.

- **Resource Shortages:** Widespread shortages of primary resources, but also power, telecommunications and fuel are significantly impacting movement, markets, and ability to communicate, making assistance difficult to flow in and ensure delivery to affected populations.
- **Infrastructure limitations:** Limited availability of suitable and secure storage facilities for organisations has led to an inability to preposition, store, and distribute assistance effectively in Gaza. At critical crossing areas, there are extreme congestions with significant backlogs.
- **Transport difficulties:** Transport capacity in Gaza is limited by lack of fuel, deteriorated road infrastructure, and difficulties in obtaining spare parts.

## Objectives and Planned Activities

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Based on the current operational constraints and logistics gaps, and in line with the [2023 Flash Appeal](#), the Palestine Logistics Cluster aims to facilitate access to reliable common logistics services, information related to logistics capacities, and supplement the logistics capacity of relief actors to enable a timely and uninterrupted supply of life-saving relief items to affected populations in Gaza.

This Concept of Operations aims to deliver on the following objectives:

1. **Coordination and Information Management:** Leveraging logistics knowledge and expertise of responding humanitarian organisations to jointly evaluate the operational situation and ensure coordinated humanitarian logistics response. Consolidating, analysing, and sharing relevant logistics information to promote continuity in operations, monitor changing needs for support and continuously identify potential gaps and bottlenecks in operational capabilities of the humanitarian community and address them. Additionally, the Logistics Cluster will continually advocate for more logistical access for partners interventions.
2. **Capacity Augmentation and Common Services:** Support key relief actors by providing equipment, services, and technical expertise to augment the logistics capabilities to deliver assistance on behalf of the humanitarian community. Additionally, the Logistics Cluster will facilitate the provision of key common services to address identified gaps – such as cargo storage, consolidation through cargo reception, transportation, and tracking. This is outlined in the [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOPs\)](#)

The following services will be made available to the humanitarian community and may be reviewed based on the context. The Logistics Cluster is closely monitoring the situation and continuing to assess partners' capacity and needs in the event of situational changes that could lead to a scale-up in the humanitarian access and intervention.

### 1. Coordination and Information Management

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The following coordination and information management services will be provided to mitigate any duplication efforts by humanitarian actors, maximise the use of available logistics assets/resources, and support operational decision-making:

- **Engaging Partners:** Coordination with national authorities, Red Crescent Societies, inter-cluster group, National and International NGOs, UNRWA, UN Access Support Unit (ASU), and participation in key coordination forums to address issues on behalf of logistics partners and facilitate continuous operations. The Logistics Cluster is working closely with relevant authorities and humanitarian actors to help standardize guidelines for the items that are allowed in

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humanitarian convoys, including packing and truck loading specifications. Updated information and communication are disseminated to partners regularly.

- **Advocacy:** Liaise with relevant national authorities and organisations in Gaza, Egypt, Jordan, and Israel to gather up-to-date information on customs, border control, and route accesses.
- **Coordination:** Hold regular logistics meetings in Gaza, Jerusalem, Cairo, and Amman to strengthen overall coordination efforts amongst partners and discuss collaboration on common logistics and operational challenges, enhancing the response.
- **Operational Information Sharing:** Consolidate, analyse and share relevant information, operational overviews, SOPs, fast-track processes for cargo, and other essential documents via a [webpage](#), dedicated WhatsApp groups, and mailing lists.
- **Mapping and Capacity Assessments:** Develop and disseminate logistics planning maps, update information-sharing platforms (LogIE) and Logistics Capacity Assessments.
- **Supply Chain Monitoring and Analysis:** Continuous monitoring and analysis of the status of entry points and corridors to Gaza, logistics provider and supplier's markets & disruptions ensuring that up-to-date information guides logistics planning and response efforts.

## 2. Logistics Augmentation and Common Services

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The following range of activities and services are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual agencies or organisations. Instead, they are intended to augment national and partner capacities to increase efficiency, mitigate bottlenecks, avoid duplication of efforts. The services are designed to fill identified gaps in the humanitarian supply chain that limit the ability of the humanitarian community to meet the needs of the affected population.

Access permitting, the following activities and services may be provided at no cost to the user, or on a partial/full cost-recovery basis, depending on the availability of funds.

### Gaza

- Augment the storage capacity of humanitarian organisations and enhance the warehousing capacity of transshipment Hubs in Gaza through provision of mobile storage tents and handling equipment.
- Support the management of transshipment operations in Rafah and all sides of the Kerem Shalom entry point, with dedicated staff and equipment to facilitate operations and visibility on cargo movement.
- Notify partners once their cargo has arrived at the handover points in Rafah and Kerem Shalom to mitigate risks of unattended cargo and ensure timely transshipment/transfer of commodities.
- Facilitate access to common temporary storage facilities in Rafah, Deir al Balah and Khan Younis and any other location as required based on needs, access and security.
- Facilitate access to road transport services to receive cargo at handover points and ensure its transfer to common warehouses in Gaza prior to collection by partners.

### Jordan

- Consolidate relief cargo in Amman for its pre-positioning to facilitate timely loading of trucks for inter-agency convoys from Jordan to Gaza.
- Provide access to cargo transportation services on the route: Amman - King Hussein Bridge/Allenby – Nitzana – Kerem Shalom
- Facilitate coordination of road convoys on the route Amman – Aqaba – Nuweibaa – Arish – Rafah or Kerem Shalom - Gaza

### Egypt:

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- Augment the capacity of the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) through the provision of:
  - Logistics equipment - including temporary warehousing, handling equipment, and temperature-controlled storage, to enhance storage capacity and consolidate cargo at ERC-managed logistics hubs in Al-Arish and other locations if needed.
  - Support with staff with technical expertise in logistics.
  - Road transport capacity to facilitate the movement of cargo between Al-Arish and Gaza.
- Common storage services in Port Said.

## Annex I ConOps Map

