

Amid escalating conflict, humanitarian partners significantly scaled-up aid efforts in the Gaza Strip in early 2024, despite encountering numerous operational challenges and a limited footprint. January witnessed a near tripling of planned coordinated missions to 175, compared to 65 in the previous quarter. The momentum persisted into February, with 111 coordinated missions planned in just the first 15 days, two-thirds of January's total. This increase is attributed to both the scale-up efforts and the spread of kinetic activity across the Strip, necessitating more coordinated aid movements.

However, deteriorating access and increased volatility directly affected healthcare and humanitarian facilities, as well as aid convoys, debilitating these efforts and limiting the ability of humanitarians to reach people in need. Humanitarians encountered frequent denials and increasing impediments for coordinated missions, with implicit justifications. These included excessive delays and incidents before or at Israeli military checkpoints, additional movement approval requirements before departure, and imposition of multiple holding points en route. Programmatic interference also intensified, from fuel delivery denials – even as other supplies were facilitated to the same locations – to enforced reductions in aid volumes.

February witnessed a number of critical incidents, including attacks affecting aid convoys and health facilities; and the IDF targeting of Gaza police elements. This has resulted in a significant decline in law and order; severely affected the security situation around aid crossing points such as Rafah and Kerem Shalom.

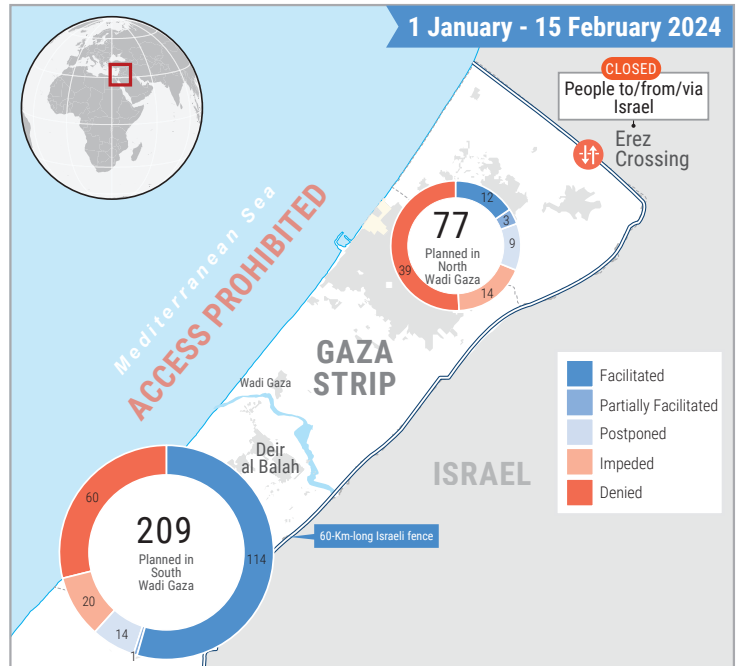
## CRITICAL TRENDS IN FEBRUARY

**Naval fire attack on UN convoy.** On 5 February, a UN coordinated food convoy was directly hit by Israeli naval fire while waiting at an IDF-required holding point, severely damaging one truck. Although no casualties or injuries were reported, the incident illustrates the substantive gaps in safeguarding safety and security for humanitarian actors; including from incidents initiated by the Israeli military. On 6 February, UN staff reported multiple accounts of harassment and intimidation at an Israeli checkpoint – an accusation contested by the Israeli army. The two incidents – following earlier incidents with outstanding investigation results – necessitated a temporary pause in coordinated aid missions to the north of Wadi Gaza to ensure that the necessary framework could be agreed upon between the Israeli military and the UN to ensure that UN personnel as well as their partners and contractors would not be at risk of attack, abuse or detainment on movements to and through Israeli military checkpoints and in areas controlled by Israeli forces.

**Law and order challenges.** Between 1 and 15 February, at least five separate attacks by Israeli forces against Gaza police elements were reported, resulting in a decreased presence in open areas, such as border crossings where humanitarian aid enters Gaza and a deterioration in security. The combination of massive displacements, high levels of vulnerability and need, and degraded security has led to incidents of looting of aid convoys and violence, and created preventable gaps in the movement of aid into Gaza. The UN is working to address this issue with the Israeli army, who has taken a firm stance that police are members of the armed opposition. Until law and order is restored, the entry and facilitation of humanitarian aid will be severely hampered.

**Continued attacks against the health sector.** Despite assurances from the Israeli military regarding the protection and accessibility of health facilities, critical hospitals in Gaza continued to be affected by conflict activities throughout the first half of February. Moreover, there was an uptick in incidents hindering medical evacuations, impeding the delivery of essential supplies, and delaying the repairs of essential facilities. Nasser medical complex in Khan Younis, for instance, faced significant disruptions due to heavy military operations. On 13 February, following concerns expressed by the Israeli army regarding non-state actor group activity within the premises, Israeli forces order the evacuation of displaced people sheltering in the complex. Then, on 15 February, they initiated heavy military operations inside the hospital. During the same time frame, the UN made 16 attempts to reach Nasser hospital to deliver fuel, conduct damage assessments, or evacuate patients. However, the only successful mission was the delivery of fuel on 9 February. As of this Snapshot's publication, after four consecutive denials for damage assessment and aid supply to Nasser hospital, and another four denials for emergency medical evacuations, fuel delivery was facilitated by the Israeli army again on 17 February; and the first medical evacuation mission was facilitated on 18 February; the fifth attempt since 15 February, after multiple reports of intensive care patient deaths.

Al-Amal Hospital also reported multiple and severe impacts from conflict activity; as well as the detainment of staff and volunteers when Israeli forces raided the hospital on 9 February, amidst acute shortages of supplies and operational challenges. At the same time, efforts by the UN to assess and provide aid to the hospital were denied on multiple occasions. Moreover, a medical evacuation mission consisting of five ambulances were reportedly hit by the Israeli army on 07 February, marking the third incident against a coordinated convoy within a three-day period. The broader health situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate, with only 12 of 36 hospitals partially functional, in addition to three partly functional field hospitals, after continued attacks.



## BETWEEN 1 JANUARY AND 15 FEBRUARY

**Planned Aid Missions Facilitated: only 16% north and 55% south.** In the north, 12 (16%) out of 77 planned missions were facilitated, primarily for food distribution and assessments. Thirty-nine missions (51%) were denied, notably those aimed at hospitals and WASH facilities. Furthermore, 14 missions were impeded by impassable routes or delays at checkpoints/holding points. Three missions received partial facilitation, including the facilitation of assessments but the denial of aid delivery; or were limited to one of several locations planned. Nine missions were postponed. The challenges at military checkpoints remained significant. None of the 31 requests for checkpoints to open at 06:00 were facilitated despite a formal mechanism established to facilitate early checkpoint openings. On one occasion, a convoy could only cross the checkpoint 11.5 hours after the requested opening time. In the south, 209 missions were planned; with 114 (55%) facilitated, with one additionally only partially facilitated. 60 of 209 missions (29%) were denied, and 20 were impeded; in three of these 20 cases, missions were aborted due to attacks on and around the aid organizations' residences, affecting their planned movement. Fourteen missions were postponed due to logistical and security reasons. These statistics exclude areas in southern Gaza where coordination is not required.

**Fuel Deliveries: only 10% to the north and 60% to the south were facilitated.**

Between 1 and 15 February, only two out of 21 planned fuel missions to the north of Wadi Gaza were facilitated, allowing the delivery of a mere 38,400 liters of fuel over a span of 46 days. This troubling trend is compounded by the denial of all the 16 planned fuel or assessment missions to water and wastewater pumping stations in the north. In contrast, 25 out of 42 fuel missions to the south were facilitated, resulting in the delivery of 457,000 liters of fuel.