

Urgent Humanitarian Appeal: Responding to the Escalating Crisis in the Northern West Bank

The humanitarian crisis in the northern West Bank has reached a critical and alarming juncture. Escalating violence, displacement, and restricted access to essential goods and services are putting thousands of vulnerable individuals—including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities—at extreme risk. Support Juzoor’s commitment to improving access to critical health care and delivering urgent humanitarian assistance during these dire times while fostering long-term community steadfastness.

Situation Update – 6 February 2025

Households across the northern West Bank, particularly in Jenin, Tulkarem, and Tubas, are facing a worsening humanitarian crisis as ongoing military operations and severe movement restrictions push communities to the brink. Following the long-awaited but fragile ceasefire in Gaza after 15 months of an unprecedented military assault, conditions in the northern West Bank have deteriorated further. Major entrances to Palestinian towns and villages have been closed off, with multiple new checkpoints, gates, and road closures restricting movement, limiting access to essential services, jobs, and markets, and paralyzing daily life. The use of heavy weaponry, including airstrikes, bulldozers, and armored vehicles, particularly in refugee camps, has resulted in significant civilian casualties, mass displacement, and the widespread collapse of essential services. Referring to the latest Israeli military offensive in Jenin camp, launched on January 21, 2025, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) reported, *‘In a split second... Jenin camp has been rendered a ghost town... large swathes... completely destroyed in a series of controlled detonations by the Israeli Security Forces.’* Since the start of 2025, at least 65 Palestinians in the West Bank, including a two-year-old girl and a paramedic on duty, have been killed; and more than 20,000 forcibly displaced in Jenin and 6,000 in Tulkarem.

After weeks of siege and use of force by the Israeli army, and at times, Palestinian forces, families have been forced to leave their homes in the middle of the winter. Most of the displaced from camps have sought shelter with relatives, rented temporary accommodation, or taken refuge in buildings belonging to charitable and other local institutions. Roads, homes, and critical infrastructure—such as water supply and electricity—have also been damaged, and health clinics and hospitals affected. *“Frequent attacks on medical personnel and facilities further undermine access to healthcare. Hospitals and healthcare structures {have} often been encircled by military forces, with troops sometimes occupying the buildings themselves, compounding the risks to both patients and staff”,* as reported by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has repeatedly warned that *‘lethal, war-like tactics are being applied.’* As violence intensifies, thousands of displaced and vulnerable individuals – especially those with chronic illnesses and mental health conditions – face grave risks due to disrupted health care, shortages of basic necessities, and relentless military operations.

“We stayed at home until the drone came to us and started calling for us to evacuate the house and... the neighbourhood because they wanted to carry out an explosion,” said 39-year-old Khalil Huwail, a father of four who left with his family. “We left in the clothes we were wearing. We couldn’t carry anything, that was forbidden,” he said. “The camp is completely empty.”

Source: Reuters, 4 Feb 2025

1. Mental Health – A Key Humanitarian and Protection Challenge

The Issue: A Generation at Risk

Even before the recent escalations, mental health represented a significant burden of disease in Palestine, where psychological distress has been reported in 48% of men and 50% of women. These challenges have been exacerbated by relentless incursions by Israeli forces in the northern

West Bank – already at record levels in 2022 – which have escalated dramatically since October 7, 2023, and further intensified after the ceasefire.

Repeated exposure to violence, displacement, and loss is expected to have severe psychological consequences for Palestinians, particularly among vulnerable groups such as children, young adults, older persons, individuals with disabilities, and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Various studies show that prolonged exposure to political violence leads to heightened rates of psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and chronic traumatic stress. Following the July 2023 incursions in Jenin, children and youth who witnessed violence exhibited acute distress – an example of the psychological toll such attacks inflict, with similar patterns now anticipated on a larger scale. Furthermore, studies have shown that forced displacement leads to significant psychological distress especially for women and children. At the same time as the need for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) increases, movement restrictions, near-siege conditions, and repeated damage to health facilities have made access even more limited, leaving thousands without essential care. Without immediate intervention, a growing number of people will suffer deep and lasting emotional and psychological harm, further compounding the humanitarian emergency.

The Response: Expanding Critical Mental Health Support

Juzoor for Health and Social Development is launching an urgent MHPSS response in northern West Bank, with a particular focus on Jenin, Tulkarem, and Tubas. Drawing on its extensive field experience and technical expertise, Juzoor will implement a multi-layered approach to provide both immediate and sustained support for those in urgent need. Juzoor has a strong track record in MHPSS interventions, particularly in working with adolescents – an often-overlooked category of the population. One of its key programs, implemented with World Vision and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), focuses on Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions (EASE), an innovative, evidence-based intervention derived from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), marking its first introduction in the West Bank.

Juzoor's proposed response consists of:

- *Mental Health Helpline*: Expanding and promoting Juzoor's dedicated helpline to provide psychosocial support, crisis intervention, and emotional counseling, ensuring confidential assistance for individuals experiencing distress, particularly displaced persons, GBV survivors, and those with chronic illnesses.
- *Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) & Individual Assessments*: Equipping community facilitators with the skills to identify individuals experiencing acute distress, provide immediate emotional support, and conduct basic individual assessments to determine the need for further psychological care, including referral to specialized mental health professionals when needed.
- *Community-Based Psychosocial Support (PSS) Sessions*: Training and coaching community facilitators to deliver structured group and individual PSS sessions tailored for children, young adults, older persons, and GBV survivors. Ensuring they receive ongoing supervision and have clear referral pathways for individuals needing specialized mental health care.
- *Capacity Building for Strengthening Local Mental Health Support*: Providing targeted training for frontline responders and educators to enhance community-based mental health support.
- *Referrals for Critical Cases*: Facilitating connections between individuals experiencing severe psychological distress and specialized case management services and mental health professionals, where access is possible.

2. Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) – A Silent Health Crisis

The Issue: Disrupted Access to NCD Care

The northern West Bank has experienced significant challenges in healthcare delivery due to the impacts of recent military operations and restricted access to Jenin camp and, more recently, the two camps in Tulkarem. The destruction of roads in and around the camp in Jenin, including critical routes leading to Jenin Hospital, has made it increasingly difficult for patients to reach medical facilities. In Nur Al Shams camp, the bulldozing and flooding of roads with sewage water have severely disrupted movement within and around the camp, restricted access to medical services, and further deteriorated living conditions for the camp's population. UNRWA has been forced to temporarily suspend health services in refugee camps, further reducing access to essential healthcare. The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has reported obstructions to the movement of its ambulances by Israeli forces, significantly delaying emergency medical care. Additionally, displaced persons have faced financial burdens due to the destruction of homes, the need to rent new accommodation, and the loss of access to their belongings, including medications.

Even before the recent raids, 68% of health service points across the West Bank were unable to function for more than two-three days a week, and hospitals were operating at only 70% capacity due to the fiscal crisis of the Palestinian government and movement restrictions, according to the World Health Organization. The worsening healthcare access is particularly concerning for patients with NCDs, who require consistent monitoring, medication, and follow-up care to prevent complications and manage their conditions effectively. Elderly individuals and those requiring continuous NCD care are at critical risk of complications and mortality. A study on the long-term consequences of movement restrictions for Palestinians has revealed that being barred from travel for medical care was associated with poor health outcomes even 25 years later, underscoring the enduring impact of movement restrictions on health.

The Response: Localized, Community-Driven Approach

By leveraging its experience in community health programs and emergency health services, as well as its strong networks with UNRWA and healthcare providers, Juzoor can play a pivotal role in ensuring continuity of care for individuals with NCDs, including displaced persons, and strengthening community resilience in the face of ongoing challenges.

- *Home Visits for Displaced and Vulnerable Patients:* Deploying CHWs to conduct home visits for displaced persons and vulnerable patients who are unable to reach medical facilities due to road closures and movement restrictions. These visits can provide medication refills, basic health assessments, and guidance on managing chronic conditions, ensuring that patients receive necessary care despite logistical challenges.
- *Community Health Education and Outreach:* Conducting targeted awareness campaigns to educate communities on managing NCDs under current constraints, emphasizing medication adherence, nutrition, and physical activity as key preventive measures. This can include digital outreach initiatives through SMS alerts, radio broadcasts, and social media campaigns to ensure that even individuals with restricted mobility have access to crucial health guidance.
- *Training of Community Health Workers (CHWs):* Expanding training programs for CHWs to deliver essential NCD care in affected areas, especially where access to healthcare facilities is severely limited. This includes monitoring blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and other vital health indicators to ensure early intervention and proper management of chronic diseases.

3. Emergency Distribution

The Issue: Disrupted Access to Basic Goods Due to Military Escalation

Ongoing military operations in the northern West Bank have significantly exacerbated the humanitarian and protection crisis, severely impacting the living conditions of affected populations. The destruction of infrastructure and movement restrictions have impeded access to essential supplies, intensifying food insecurity and public health risks—particularly for women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Vulnerable households in Jenin, Tulkarem, and Tubas – many of whom have been forcibly displaced or whose homes have sustained major or partial damage – are struggling to access basic necessities, including food, water, hygiene products, and winterization supplies. Those trapped in heavily damaged areas, unable to procure basic goods, have urgently appealed for such basic items.

Emergency Shelter Response Note for Displacement in Jenin 6th Feb 2025

	Town/village name	Estimated number of the displaced families	Estimated number of the displaced people
1	Burqin	89	400
2	Alyamoon	40	180
3	Seleh Harthieh	33	150
4	Kufer Dan	18	80
5	Rummanah	44	200
6	Yabad	27	120
7	Jenin	933	4200
8	Qabatiah	44	200
9	Zbabdeh	67	300
10	Annen	11	50
11	Taybeh	7	30
12	Kufer Ra'i	16	70
13	Deir Gazallha	33	150
14	Anza	9	40
15	Jaba	9	40
16	Ajjah	7	30
17	Arrabah	9	40

Juzoor's Response: Feeding Hope through Targeted Distribution

Juzoor is committed to addressing the urgent needs of affected populations by facilitating the distribution of essential relief items in close collaboration with community workers, local women and youth associations, and other humanitarian actors. The response focuses on ensuring the effective and targeted distribution of:

- *Food Baskets*: Providing immediate sustenance to displaced and food-insecure families, as well as baby formula and nutritional support for children.
- *Bedding Kits*: Distribution of (mattress, blanket, pillow) to displaced people in collective centres, host families, and individuals renting unfurnished houses.
- *Winterization Items* Distributing warm clothing, and other essential supplies to protect individuals from harsh winter conditions.

- *Hygiene and Dignity Kits*: Providing essential hygiene products, including soap, sanitary items, and disinfectants, to prevent disease outbreaks and uphold dignity among affected communities.

Juzoor's intervention aligns with broader humanitarian efforts, ensuring coordinated distribution with relevant actors to maximize reach and efficiency and not to leave anyone behind.

4. Emergency Preparedness

The Issue: Escalating Vulnerabilities in Northern West Bank Refugee Camps

Over the past two years, refugee camps and adjacent towns in the northern West Bank have experienced a significant surge in violence, leading to numerous casualties and substantial property damage. The intensification of movement restrictions has further compounded the situation, hindering the rapid response of emergency personnel such as firefighters and paramedics. Alarming, these frontline workers often find themselves targeted during their duties, exacerbating the crisis. The destruction of critical infrastructure, including roads and essential services, has severely compromised the safety and well-being of residents, leaving communities in a state of heightened vulnerability.

Juzoor's Response: Empowering Communities Through Preparedness and Training

By harnessing its expertise in emergency preparedness, health services, and community engagement, Juzoor is equipping local populations with the skills and resources needed to respond to crises effectively. Through a structured, community-driven approach, Juzoor is strengthening grassroots resilience to mitigate casualties, enhance disaster response coordination, and ensure that vulnerable communities can withstand ongoing challenges.

- *Building Local Capacity in First Aid and Basic Life Support (BLS)*: Training local volunteers in essential first aid and life-saving techniques such as CPR and trauma response. Equipping participants with First Aid Kits to ensure they have the necessary supplies to provide immediate assistance in medical emergencies, particularly in areas where emergency medical services are delayed or inaccessible
- *Strengthening the existing Emergency Committees and community members*: Providing community members with specialized training in civil defense, first aid, evacuation procedures, and disaster response coordination. Committees will also be equipped with basic emergency response kits to enable immediate action during crises, mitigating casualties and damage before professional responders can arrive.
- *Enhancing Communication and Crisis Coordination*: Strengthening local emergency communication networks to ensure timely and effective coordination during crises. This includes residents in emergency communication strategies, and leveraging digital platforms to facilitate rapid information-sharing among first responders and community members.

By implementing these initiatives, Juzoor is fostering a culture of preparedness and self-sufficiency, ensuring that communities are not only equipped to handle emergencies but are also more resilient in the face of ongoing instability and threats.

Juzoor urgently calls on the international humanitarian community, donors, and partners to support these life-saving interventions. Immediate funding and resource mobilization are essential to mitigate further deterioration in the northern West Bank.