

Caritas Australia launches Gaza Appeal to support displaced families.

Following a series of surprise attacks against Israel by Hamas on October 7, hundreds of military air strikes have been launched across the Gaza Strip as a form of retaliation by the Israeli government.

The UN reports that Gaza's entire population is being deprived of electricity, water, fuel supplies, food, and medicine. Ongoing bombardments and shelling have destroyed homes, hospitals and essential water and sanitation infrastructure with growing fears that Gaza will soon run out of drinkable water. Hospitals are packed with injured people and running desperately low on fuel and basic supplies.

An estimated 1 million people have been displaced in Gaza with immediate food, shelter, health, and psychosocial needs. Even before these attacks, 8 out of 10 people were reliant on international aid.

The Patriarchs and Head of the Churches in Jerusalem said of the conflict, "we call upon all parties to de-escalate this war in order to save innocent lives while still serving the cause of justice."

Humanitarian aid access has been blocked to date, but as of today - October 16 - it is expected pathways will open imminently. Once this happens humanitarian aid agencies will be challenged to support tens of thousands of people who have been in dire need for days.

Sally Thomas, Humanitarian Emergencies Lead, Caritas Australia said, "The escalation of violence has only exacerbated needs for the people in Gaza and West Bank, who already live in dire conditions. We are working with our partners on the ground to provide comprehensive and critical support to those affected by this devastating conflict."

Caritas Australia is supporting partner agencies on the ground to provide emergency cash, shelter, and psychosocial support. The efforts of these partner agencies are expected to support 17,000 displaced families, representing around 100,000 of the 1 million people displaced.

To support Caritas Australia's Gaza Appeal, visit www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/gaza-crisis/ or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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