

Caritas Australia says a total end to the violence is the only humanitarian response as casualties exceed 10,000

A grim milestone has been passed, with over 10,000 deaths reported in Gaza since the outbreak of violence in the region on October 7th, including more than 4,000 children. Upwards of 1,400 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed, with 240 still being held hostage in Gaza.

Despite the uncertainties surrounding humanitarian access, Caritas Australia can confirm that over 9,000 households have been supported with cash assistance, essential supplies, and psychological first aid via partner agencies on the ground.

Four churches have been established as temporary shelter locations for 1,200 displaced people. Partners are also focusing on winterisation with blankets, mattresses, and mats for about 1,100 households, as well as working to explore temporary shelter options.

Sally Thomas, Humanitarian Emergencies Lead at Caritas Australia said, "To date we have supported families and church shelters as they procure and purchase what is available to support their survival – but make no mistake, these supplies are running out.

"Day by day it is hard to imagine the situation becoming more unbearable, but that is what is happening and those in Gaza have no avenues of escape. The human suffering must end, and it must end now – with human rights and dignity restored on all sides.

A pause in fighting at this point is not enough. It would see aid organisations help people only to be forced to retreat once violence re-escalates, with those helped then subjected to the same or worse all over again. A total end to the violence is the only adequate humanitarian response at this point."

Caritas Australia echoes calls from Pope Francis for the violence to stop in the name of God and urges the church community to pray and reflect on the words of his holiness who said, "let's think about the children, all the children involved in this war, like in Ukraine and in other conflicts, their future is being killed".

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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