

Japan's Humanitarian Assistance to the Gaza Strip (Fact Sheet)

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

1. The Gaza Strip has regained calm after the ceasefire declarations by Israel and Palestinian militants. However, the series of events which began on December 19, 2008 have resulted in 1,314 fatalities and more than 5,300 injuries. In terms of the number of civilian casualties, this crisis is considered to be the worst since the 1967 war. Gravely concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in and around the Gaza Strip, Prime Minister Mr. Taro Aso and Foreign Minister Mr. Hirofumi Nakasone of the Government of Japan conducted telephone consultations with relevant parties, including Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and dispatched Ambassador Dr. Tatsuo Arima, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for the Middle East, to the region to call for an immediate ceasefire.

2. In conjunction with these efforts, in order to prevent further deterioration in the humanitarian situation, Japan decided to implement emergency humanitarian assistance of around \$10 million (US), as announced by Prime Minister Aso on January 3. As an immediate response to needs in the Gaza Strip, Japan has also decided to provide assistance in-kind. The details are as follows:

(1) Emergency Grant Aid to the Gaza Strip (US \$10 million)

Various kinds of assistance are currently required. Japan has decided to focus on the fields of food, and health and water for children and women, having determined that they are the most necessary and urgent fields.

(a) Emergency Food Aid (US \$7 million)

In the besieged Gaza Strip, approximately eighty percent of the population was dependent on food aid provided by international organizations. Securing basic foods such as rice, flour and oil has become even more difficult due to the military operations. Recognizing that the Gaza Strip's population consists of 1 million Palestine refugees and 0.5 million residents (non-refugees), Japan has decided to provide emergency food aid to both these groups.

(i) Emergency Aid through UNRWA (US \$3 million, announced on Jan 3)

Through this aid, food parcels (flour, rice, sugar, vegetables, oil, whole milk, and ham etc., which will provide sixty percent of daily calorie needs for sixty days) will be distributed to approximately 165,000 Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip.

(ii) Emergency Aid through the WFP (US \$4 million)

Through this aid, a thirty day per capita supply of food packages containing rations (chick peas, wheat flour, sugar, salt, etc), which will provide daily calorie needs (2,100 kcal/day), as well as 300 metric tons of canned meat (thirty days' supply) will be distributed to around 270,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

(b) Emergency Assistance to the Severely Affected Children and Women in the Gaza Strip (US \$3 million)

During the military operations, many children and women suffered greatly. According to figures announced by the PA's Ministry of Health, as of January 18, 1,314 Palestinians had been killed during the military operations; of this number, 412 were children, and 110 were women. The number of injured stands at 5,300, of whom 1855 are children and 795 are women. The situation has worsened further as a result of damage to the water network. To secure access to safe water is an urgent issue, as is emergency medical assistance.

Considering this situation, Japan has decided to extend an emergency aid grant of \$3 million (US) through UNICEF in the fields of medical assistance and water supply. Through this assistance, medicine, micro-nutrients, intensive care equipment, generators, safe drinking water, basic obstetric kits etc. will be provided for approximately 300,000 infants and children, and 50,000 women.

Japan's assistance will fully cover projects in the field of emergency medical assistance and water supply for children and women as listed in UNICEF's Gaza Strip emergency appeal. It is in this field that Japan has made major contributions to the Palestinian territories.

(2) Assistance in Kind for the Afflicted People in the Gaza Strip (around US \$1 million)

The military operations have resulted in the extensive destruction of homes. Approximately 46,000 people are still in emergency shelters. For those in shelters or damaged houses, there is great need for blankets, bedding, and the plastic sheets used for windbreaks and partitions. Based on this situation, in addition to emergency humanitarian assistance, Japan has decided to provide assistance in kind (29,000

blankets, 8,000 plastic sheets and 20,000 sleeping mats), based on the International Peace Cooperation Law, and in response to an appeal from UNRWA. These goods will be used for relief activities conducted by UNRWA for the afflicted Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

(3) Other Assistance (Provision of Medical Equipment to a Hospital by JICA)

Aside from the assistance mentioned above, with the help of UNRWA, medical equipment (a blood cell separator, equivalent to around \$75,000 [US]) arrived at Shifa Hospital in the Gaza Strip on January 14 during the “3-hour humanitarian respite” implemented daily by the Israeli Defense Forces. This equipment had been purchased as Follow-Up support for ex-JICA trainees.

Shifa Hospital is the largest medical facility in the Gaza Strip, and had accepted hundreds of patients per day and treated them during the military operations. Japan had provided medical equipment and training programs for physicians and technicians at this hospital prior to the military operations. The provision of this blood cell separator will enable the hospital to obtain blood platelets sufficient for a blood transfusion for one person from only 2 donors, compared to the ten donors which were required for transfusions using the previous equipment.

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