



ISRAEL-GAZA

WHAT COULD HAPPEN NEXT?



Destruction in Gaza following Israeli airstrikes. The UN says more than a million people have had to leave their homes

ISRAEL has been urged to protect innocent people in Gaza as its conflict with Hamas continues.

Hamas is an armed Islamist group that controls the Palestinian territory of Gaza. Two weeks ago, it launched a shocking attack on Israel, killing around 1,300 people. In response, Israel began hitting Gaza with airstrikes, causing widespread destruction in the territory.

Hamas' aim is to destroy Israel, while Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu said last week that every Hamas member is a "dead man". The conflict has led to a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. As *First News* went to press, around 2,800 had been killed there and its population of 2.3 million people were in desperate need of aid.

The next stage of the conflict is likely to see Israel launch a ground assault on Gaza, which is when soldiers enter a territory to fight on land. Ahead of this, Israel told the 1.1 million civilians in the north of Gaza to head south, including 2,000 patients in local hospitals. The World Health Organization criticised this demand and called it a "death sentence" because many of the hospital patients depend on life-support machines and incubators.

Israel previously cut off Gaza's fuel and water supply and left the territory without electricity. Amnesty International said this was "illegal and inhumane."

The UK and the USA have supported Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas, but Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State, said: "The way that Israel does this matters. It needs to do it in a way that affirms the shared values that we have for human life... taking every possible precaution to avoid harming civilians. Civilians should not have to suffer for Hamas' atrocities."

You can read more on the history of the conflict on pages 8–9 and watch a film from 2022 about two young people from both sides at [firstnews.com/palestine](https://www.firstnews.com/palestine). Teachers and parents – see our free resources around this issue at schools.firstnews.co.uk/freeresources.

Social media warned over fake news

THE European Union has warned social media firms to control the spread of violent content, hate speech and fake news during the conflict in Israel and Gaza.

It's investigating X, formerly known as Twitter, to make sure it's obeying a new law called the Digital Services Act, designed to protect

users. X says it's removed hundreds of accounts linked to Hamas since the attacks began and checked "tens of thousands" of posts.

TikTok has just launched a command centre to help it detect harmful content and added: "We do not tolerate attempts to incite violence or spread hate."

A safe route is expected to open up that will allow civilians in the south of Gaza to escape across the border to Egypt. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi thinks Israel has gone too far. He said: "The [Israeli] reaction went beyond the right to self-defence, turning into collective punishment for 2.3 million people in Gaza."

Israel's planned ground assault on Gaza is complicated by the fact that it says Hamas is holding 199 hostages. It's feared one British girl may be among them, after her sister and mother were killed. The United Nations (UN) has ordered Hamas to release these hostages "without conditions". So far, 14 UN workers have been killed in Gaza.



Protests in London

The conflict is leading to protests around the world. France has banned pro-Palestinian protests, as they see them as a threat to the wider public. In the USA, the conflict motivated a landlord to attack his Muslim tenants in a hate crime, killing their six-year-old son.

Here in the UK, anti-Semitic attacks (targeting Jewish people) have quadrupled since Hamas launched its attack and some Jewish schools in London shut last week over concerns for pupils' safety.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

THE conflict between Israel and Gaza is upsetting.

And, you will read in our special report on page 8 and 9, that it is nothing new. It has been going on for decades, with both sides fighting over land.

One of the great tragedies is the effect that war has on children, the innocent bystanders. Nearly every country in the world has signed up to the UN Convention on the rights of children, which states that they should be protected from conflict. Yet, young people on both sides are being caught up in the fighting, with around half of the Palestinian population in Gaza being made up of children.

Go to [firstnews.com/palestine](https://www.firstnews.com/palestine) to watch a film, made in 2022 with our partner Sky Kids, which hears from children on both sides of the conflict.



Nicky Cox MBE

Skittles

THE rainbow-coloured treats narrowly survived a new California law banning certain food additives found in fizzy drinks and sweets.

People started calling the law 'the Skittles Ban' until the chemical found in Skittles was deleted from the ban. Companies have until 2027 to change their recipes. The banned chemicals are all already outlawed in the European Union.



Luton Airport

BOSSES at Luton Airport say it's unlikely that any of the 1,400 vehicles stuck in a car park that caught fire can be saved. The airport was closed for 18 hours and 235 flights were cancelled when the fire broke out earlier this month. The extreme heat of the blaze weakened the structure of the building and it's thought that removing any cars is too dangerous. It's unclear whether people will be able to rescue any belongings from their vehicles.



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