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Aurie Hanna

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Displaced civilians in Gaza City, including older people, and women / Shutterstock, Gaza – Survival story, 2025

Executive summary

This report examines how the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza is disproportionately affecting older people - particularly older women, people with disabilities, and those living alone - and why their needs remain critically overlooked in the current humanitarian response.

While the crisis affects the entire civilian population of Gaza, older people face distinct and compounding risks. Many rely on regular medication for chronic conditions, have limited mobility that restricts their ability to flee danger, and require specific support such as assistive products or appropriate nutrition.

In all their diversity, older people face heightened and preventable risks, as pre-existing health and functional needs are compounded by barriers to protection and assistance arising from the conflict, displacement, and collapse of essential services.

Following the attacks carried out by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and the subsequent escalation in hostilities, military operations led by the Israel Defense Force (IDF) have resulted in widespread death and injury, repeated displacement, and the large-scale destruction of civilian infrastructure across Gaza. The civilian population is facing extreme hardship, characterised by famine, deprivation, mass displacement, and the near-total collapse of essential services, undermining fundamental rights to food, health, shelter, and protection from harm.

This assessment reveals a serious and largely undocumented deterioration in the physical, mental and psychosocial wellbeing of older people.

While the ceasefire has provided limited relief, older people’s poor diet quality, harmful coping strategies, significant barriers to assistance, and high prevalence of chronic illness point to a highly fragile nutritional and health situation. Without immediate age- gender- and