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The ceasefire is the beginning of a long journey

The ceasefire that began this weekend is crucial for the survival of children in Gaza. They urgently need food, water and essential supplies, as well as safety and psychological support. As families across Gaza return to their homes, they need support to rebuild their lives and those of their children.

Children in our tent camp in Gaza. Photo: SOS Children's Villages in Palestine

“After more than a year of a war in which the majority of victims are civilians, with children making up almost half of all victims*, families urgently need not only humanitarian assistance but also the opportunity to be reunited and return to the place they call home. The ceasefire is the beginning of a long journey to ensure that children in Palestine are well and feel safe again,” says Ana Chaurio, Program Manager for SOS Children’s Villages’ disaster response.

But many families will have nowhere to live. As many as 9 out of 10 homes in the Gaza Strip are destroyed or damaged.** And many will be missing one or both of their parents, other family members and friends.

"Families will need urgent psychological support to process everything that has been lost and all the loved ones who have passed away. Our teams will be there with support, so that they can process their experiences and the situation they are in," says Ana Chaurio.

In addition to psychological support, families returning to a home in ruins will receive tents from us to live in.

The children's village is destroyed

In May last year, all the children and families who had sought shelter in our children's village in Rafah in southern Gaza were forced to flee to our tent camps. The bombs came closer and closer to the children's village and finally the situation was untenable. Now that the ceasefire has come into effect, we have understood that we evacuated at the right time. The children's village is no longer standing.

"A lot of work remains to be done to see how we will operate in Gaza in the future. The children's village needs to be built up and a lot of work is required to investigate how we can best support the children in the new situation, but it is still uncertain whether the ceasefire will be respected so that the long-term work can begin," says Ana Chaurio.

For now, children in our organization will remain living in our tent camp, where we will continue to support them with, among other things, security, necessities, psychological support and education.

*Source: Based on UN-verified figures between November 2023 and April 2024

**Source: The Guardian

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Published: 2025-01-20

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