

The damage after an Israeli strike on a school housing displaced Palestinians in the Rimal neighbourhood of central Gaza City on August 20. AFP News MENA Back to broken schools: embracing education in wartime Gaza More than 630,000 students have gone a full year without education because of war, officials said Nagham Mohanna Nagham Mohanna 21 August, 2024 Live updates: Follow the latest on Israel–Gaza After more than 10 months of Israeli bombardment that destroyed much of Gaza, including schools and education authorities, parents are wondering whether they will be able to get their children back into class for the new academic year. The estimated 630,000 pupils in the Palestinian enclave have been denied access to education over the past year as Israel's bombardment and ground offensive forced much of the population to flee from place to another in search of safety, with many families struggling to find proper shelter, food and water. AFP The damage after an Israeli strike on a school housing displaced Palestinians in the Rimal neighbourhood of central Gaza City on August 20. "We don't have any new update regarding the start of the educational year and we only started, since the first of August, entertainment activities for students as non-formal education," the agency's spokeswoman, Inas Hamdan, told The National. "The children need a massive programme, supported by the Ministry of Education and UNRWA, to help them regain some of their pre-war lives and reintegrate into the educational process as it was before it began," she said. Schools were turned into shelters for displaced people, with many being struck by Israel in what it said were attacks on militant groups there. The Palestinian Ministry of Education, based in the occupied West Bank, said on Tuesday that 186 schools in Gaza had been severely damaged or completely destroyed. "I'm also against online education, even if the internet and electricity were available, because it will never be like in-person education, which can improve a child's behaviour and correct the bad habits and ideas they've picked up during the war." "The children need a lot of psychological support and rehabilitation, and the Ministry of Education should take these factors into account," Mr Youssef said. "Currently it's not possible to discuss any plans from the education authorities in Gaza because there is no capacity to hold any meeting or consult on details." "Sending students directly back into the educational process without proper rehabilitation and effective awareness won't be suitable at all." "The children's memories of school and education have faded, and their days have become filled with fetching water, searching for food at charity kitchens and dealing with other daily survival challenges." "We lived in UNRWA schools as displaced people for over two months, moving from one house to another," he said.