



Protection of newborns and infants

The "Via Lattea - Milky Way" for Gaza

NWRG (New Weapons Research Group) odv

POWDERED MILK DELIVERIES CONTINUE



Genoa, 20 February 2026

Dear donors,

we are updating you on the latest results of the **Via Lattea**, project, carried forward by the NWRG association for nearly two years. Started as nutritional support for newborns in a situation of serious hardship for hospitals and many mothers, the project has since become a broader response to hunger.

OUR RESOURCES –The foundation of our funding is a grant from the Otto per Mille of the Waldensian Church, without which the project could hardly have gotten off the ground; to this are added contributions from 3 main donor organisations (PCRF Italia, Salaam Ragazzi dell'Ulivo-Milan, Komera Rwanda) and from a large number of individual donors who have contributed 10, 20, 50, up to 1,000 euros.

Every euro is **spent exclusively on purchasing milk** so every contribution, however small, makes a difference.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Already disastrous from the outset, the situation has continued to worsen over nearly two years of this work, and even after the so-called "Ceasefire" that began at the end of 2025, the difficulties in supplying Gaza's population with basic necessities have not eased. For our association too, 2025 was a very painful year: Paola Manduca, president of the association and the driving force behind all its projects, passed away on 28 March. She worked on this initiative until the very end, managing to get a delivery through even in mid-March, when she had already been ill for some time. A person of exceptional energy and competence, a volcano of ideas, capable of bringing people together and making seemingly impossible things a reality.

Back in October 2024 she had launched an appeal for a qualified medical mission to Kamal Adwan, the only hospital in the northern Gaza Strip still open at that point, providing neonatal intensive care, paediatrics, and dialysis, where only director Hussam Abu Safya, another young doctor — both paediatricians — and a young volunteer surgeon remained on duty. But it did not stay open for long. In December, the Israeli army raided the hospital. Hussam Abu Safya was arrested and remains in detention, [as reported by Amnesty International](#).

In this dramatic moment for Gaza, we are determined not to waste the legacy that Paola left us: the projects she started and the network she built. For this reason, we continue to look for ways to continue the deliveries, which began in March 2024.

MARCH 2024 – In March 2024, a threefold increase in the number of premature births had been reported, along with a shortage of formula milk to feed them. We therefore launched the project in collaboration with the Specialty Hospital. Initially, **the focus was on ensuring that vulnerable babies in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) could be fed.**

Just two months later an even wider problem emerged: **malnutrition affecting even full-term healthy newborns.** We continued to meet the NICUs' needs, while also beginning to send milk for infants aged 0 to 6 months. Enabling these milk shipments was also the partnership with PCRFB, **Palestinian Children's Relief Fund** (www.pcrf.net), an organisation founded in the USA in 1991 that has over the years brought healthcare support to thousands of children and enabled more than two thousand of them to receive treatment in hospitals abroad.

The importance of the project – “We are not the only ones providing milk to newborns in Gaza – wrote Paola Manduca – but UNICEF and other NGOs focus mainly on those women who, for whatever reason, are completely unable to breastfeed and need full replacement with formula milk, as well as on children who have lost their mothers in military attacks. We primarily seek to support mothers who will continue to breastfeed, but whose milk is insufficient in quantity or quality for normal child development. This is a wider group, but one from which an increasing number of malnourished infants are coming forward”.

FROM MARCH TO DECEMBER 2024: EIGHT DELIVERIES

From March to December we organised eight deliveries, for a total quantity of **13,492 tins of 400 grams** and a total cost of over 120,000 euros (exactly 128,381 dollars, or approximately 123,488 euros).

In detail:

- 4,166 tins of premature formula (including 400 special AR and LF) for 59,157 dollars
- 7,386 tins of infant formula for 50,224 dollars
- 950 tins of food for 9–12 months (milk and cereals) for 19,000 dollars

THE INTERRUPTION BETWEEN SEPTEMBER AND NOVEMBER 2024

Deliveries suffered a two-month halt towards the end of the year, due to the closure of the Rafah crossing. From September 2024, "for 2 months – wrote Paola Manduca – we were blocked due to the closure of the Rafah entrance, and then to the North, but we were aiming and still aim to build a sustainable flow of milk until it is no longer needed by the children and their mothers". But at the end of November we managed to get another 3,500 boxes of milk through (2,900 for infants aged 0 to 6 months and 600 for premature babies).

FEBRUARY 2025: THE NINTH DELIVERY

In February we managed to deliver another shipment of 3,200 400-gram tins of powdered milk for children aged 0 to 6 months, once again thanks to PCRFB, which handled transport.

The situation in the meantime was becoming ever more catastrophic: “Our intention – wrote Paola – is to continue supplying milk to the children of Gaza who cannot be breastfed by their mothers because they are malnourished, ill, or no longer alive”.

MARCH 2025: TENTH DELIVERY

At the beginning of March all humanitarian aid entry points into the Strip were blocked, but we nonetheless managed to get through a delivery of **over 3,000 400-gram tins**: “The blockade also covers milk for newborns – Paola wrote in a statement – but fortunately our local supplier, before this latest diktat was issued, had already brought in a good quantity of high-quality milk for children aged 0 to 6 months. Prices have risen sharply due to ever-increasing difficulties, but thanks to your generous support we have the means to order over 3,000 400g jars from this stock, which will cover needs for the coming month”.

APRIL 2025: ELEVENTH DELIVERY

Still drawing on the supplier’s stock that had entered before the blockade, we were able to deliver to UNRWA distribution points a supply of **nearly 400 boxes of milk and over 700 boxes of milk flour**. This is a food product **for children over 12 months of age**.

AUGUST 2025: TWELFTH DELIVERY

Thanks to your generous donations, we managed to deliver yet another shipment of powdered milk to Gaza: **8,800 400-gram tins of powdered milk**, 3,400 of which for premature newborns, at a **cost of 10,000 euros** (8,200 Jordanian dinars).

The milk was purchased from **Nutridar** (nutridar.com), a Jordanian company specialising in infant nutrition products, including several lines of powdered milk.

This is the **twelfth delivery** since March 2024; for this delivery we relied on **JHCO** (Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization), with which we had already collaborated the previous year for milk entry, but which this time had to resort to aerial drops organised by Jordan. JHCO (jhco.org.jo), is a non-profit organisation with a record of various humanitarian missions, distributing food and clothing and supporting health in several countries.

Our liaison was Dr [Fawzi Al-Hammouri](#), General Manager of the **Specialty Hospital in Amman**, a [facility](#) that has recently welcomed a number of children from Gaza to provide medical care. A physician with over thirty years of experience, Al-Hammouri is the president of the Gaza Health Initiative, as well as president of the Global Health and Relief Initiative in Jordan. We are also in contact with UN agencies such as UNRWA, UNICEF and OCHA.

OCTOBER 2025 AND JANUARY 2026: THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH DELIVERY

The launch of a new project funded by the Waldensian Church, together with contributions from the above-mentioned organisations and our tireless donors, enabled us to purchase — in two rounds — a new stock of 1,830 tins of milk for newborns aged 0 to 6 months, delivered to UNRWA distribution centres in the Strip, and 176 tins of premature formula, delivered to the Neonatal Intensive Care Units coordinated by Nasser Hospital, at a total cost of over 34,000 euros. This was made possible because a local company had been able to restock its warehouses in Gaza with a good quantity of powdered milk (unfortunately only a small portion for premature babies) which we managed to purchase and have delivered. Currently, however, the possibility of getting more premature formula in — which is particularly needed in the Intensive Care Units — remains blocked.

We had identified the possibility of purchasing more premature formula in Jordan, but JHCO — which we had already relied on for transport into Gaza and with which we are in constant contact — has informed us that it is still impossible to bring anything into the Strip, despite all the much-trumpeted agreements. We hope that with the start of the second phase of the truce, the situation may ease. We will keep you informed...