

## Gaza Initial Rapid Assessment

### FINAL REPORT

UN OCHA

November

24 -26, 2012

#### 1 Introduction

This report compiles the preliminary findings of the Multi-Agency Initial Rapid Assessment of Gaza Conducted November 24 – 26. The Principal source of information and figures was key informant interviews conducted with local government officials in the affected areas. While these informants provided responses covering approximately 90 % of the population of the Gaza Strip, the accuracy of these responses were dependent on the how well – informed the individual interviewees were. Unless otherwise noted, these responses represent a 'first look' at potential and real humanitarian impacts and as additional and more extensive assessments are completed, the precision and accuracy of key figures related to the humanitarian impact of the hostilities will improve. Humanitarian needs assessments in emergencies can be seen as a 'rolling process' (see figure 3.1) and as the results of these more detailed and quantitative assessments become available (see appendix 'B' for the current listing) those figures will supplant the earlier accounts found here.

#### 2 Executive Summary

##### 2.1 Hostilities in Gaza

On 14 November the Israeli Air Force (IAF) launched an airstrike that targeted and killed the acting chief of Hamas' armed wing Ahmed Al Jabari, marking the start of the Israeli military offensive ("Operation Defensive Pillar") which lasted for eight days. This event followed several weeks of intermittent escalations in violence in Gaza and southern Israel.

This latest escalation was characterized by IAF airstrikes and firing from Israeli naval vessels and tanks into Gaza and Palestinian rocket fire into Israel. The targeting by the Israeli military of residential properties in Gaza resulted in a high number of civilian casualties. Initial accounts indicate that 103 and 1,399 Palestinians were also injured. Six Israelis (four civilians and two soldiers) were killed and 224 were injured. In Gaza, approximately 450 housing units were destroyed or sustained major damage, while another 8,000 houses sustained minor damage. At the height of the escalation some 15,000 estimated to be displaced at the time of conducting the IRA. Approximately 12,000 individuals in Gaza City and Northern Gaza governorate fled their homes and sought refuge in emergency shelters set up in 14 UNRWA and two government schools.

According to Israeli military, Operation "Pillar of Defense" targeted 1,500 sites in Gaza (compared to 500 during "Operation Cast Lead" in 2008-2009). The subsequent Explosive Remnants of War that are spread all over Gaza need to be dealt with rapidly to mitigate the risk of injury when removing rubble and to allow access to agricultural land.

Following sustained diplomatic efforts, an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas entered into force on 21 November which continues to hold. Following the declaration of a ceasefire on 22 November, most displaced families returned home. However, there are still families 3000 people unsafely living in homes damaged in air-strikes or housed with relatives in precarious conditions.

The escalation was detrimental to an already fragile humanitarian situation in Gaza where some 80 per cent of households are in need of assistance. The vulnerability of the civilian population in the Gaza Strip has been exacerbated by the intensification of the land, air and sea blockade imposed by Israel following the Hamas takeover of Gaza in June 2007. Israeli restrictions linked to the blockade, between 15 June 2007 and 26 November 2012, 35% of Gaza's farmland and 85% of its fishing waters were totally or partially inaccessible.

##### 2.2 Humanitarian Impact

###### 2.2.1 Displacement

The operation led to an estimated internal displacement of 14,920 people from all Gaza governorates. Estimates from local government officials reported the highest incidents of displacement in the Gaza governorate, in which 1.4% of the population sites were been internally displaced, followed by Khan Yunis, North Gaza and the Middle area. Initial reports from communities within these governorates indicated displacement as high as 100% (see figure 4.2 for detailed numbers of IDP). At the time of compiling this report, approximately 3,000 people remain displaced from their homes.

###### 2.2.2 Explosive remnants of war (ERW)

Widespread ERW require a more rapid and prioritized response specifically in Johor Al-Dik, Gaza city and Al-Mughraqa in the Gaza Governorate, as well as Al-Qarara, Al Badawiya (Maslakh) and Bait Hanun in North Gaza Governorate, as they have served as a deterrent in allowing the displaced population to return to their homes, schools and places of work. These areas have also received minimal municipal response in comparison to other areas of Gaza.

###### 2.2.3 Psychosocial Impact

Psychosocial impact and stress caused by the intensity of the hostilities was reported in all meetings. North Gaza and the Middle area have reported the highest counts of psychosocial incidents among both adults and children ranging from fear, anxiety to PTSD, while children additionally suffered insomnia, hyperactivity, nocturnal enuresis (bedwetting). The results emphasize the need for psychosocial support and intervention for both children and adults alike.

###### 2.2.4 WASH

Damages and/or interruptions to the supply/network of water services/storage and sanitation were reported in all municipalities. Some governorates such as Khan Yunis have higher counts but specific communities and even governorates require an equally vital immediate response. The most recurring need, occurring in all governorates, in terms of sanitation is the provision of garbage containers followed by destruction to waste collection vehicles. Moreover, in addition to the evidence of damages or interruptions to WASH facilities, certain communities and/or governorates have been rendered disproportionately vulnerable by pre-existing conditions such as limited access to water, the presence of solid waste close to shelters (20 m) and unprotected hazard areas close to water supplies; such is the case in the governorates of North Gaza, Khan Yunis and Gaza.

###### 2.2.5 Health

The most pressing health issues across all governorates include access to PHC drugs, medical disposable materials, medical equipment, support for the creation of fully equipped day cares & emergency centers, emergency health units and the provision of ambulances.

###### 2.2.6 Livelihoods

Damage to farm lands was reported affecting farmers and vulnerable population in Khan Yunis, North Gaza and Deir El Balah. Family income depends on crops and small industries. Agricultural destruction of this magnitude has serious implications on the livelihood of famers in these areas.

##### 2.3 Immediate Priorities:

1. Provision of psychosocial support to children, clearance of explosive remnants of war, legal remedies;
2. Supply of essential drugs and disposables out of stock;
3. Shelter and NFIs: Addressing the basic humanitarian needs of approx. 3,000 people still displaced due to the loss of, or damage, sustained to their homes.
4. Emergency support to damaged residences, basic social infrastructure including schools and water and sanitation networks.

#### 3 The Initial Rapid Needs Assessment

##### 3.1 Context

On 21 November, the Inter-Cluster mechanism in Gaza agreed on launching a rapid needs assessment to determine the scope of the immediate humanitarian impact on the ground after eight days of hostilities using a joint methodology and questionnaire (IRA) that was part of the Inter-Agency Contingency Plan for Gaza to ensure a uniform humanitarian response approach. The Humanitarian Coordinator and the HCT endorsed the approach on 22 November as part of an extraordinary HCT. The assessment was designed to gain an overall picture of any changes in the humanitarian situation since the most recent hostilities, guide immediate humanitarian response and where appropriate the results will be used to guide further in-depth assessments. Prior to the assessment OCHA circulated a matrix to the clusters containing the most updated information on basic socio-economic indicators.

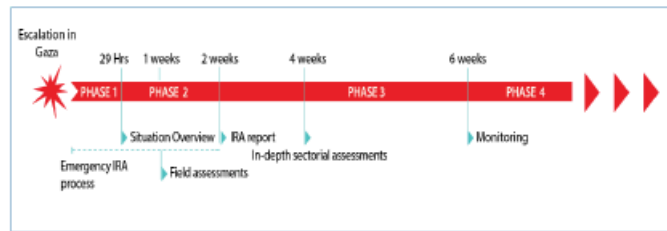


Figure A: Humanitarian needs assessment timeline

### 3.2 Methodology

The GAZA IRA methodology utilised three strategies: key informant interviews, secondary data review, and focus group discussions. From Saturday, 24 November until Monday, 26 November the assessment teams led by OCHA visited the 21 most affected municipalities in Gaza where they conducted key informant interviews with the local government officials. The field teams were composed of approximately 40 humanitarian workers from UN agencies and NGOs representing all the humanitarian clusters and sectors active in the oPt, including cluster leads based in Jerusalem who came to support the work of the Gaza team.

The Municipal level in Gaza had not previously compiled most of the information that was required by the IRA questionnaire, with the exception of the WASH information resulting from the work of the CMWU. Desegregated data (women, children, elderly, handicap, female headed households) was also not available at the local level. In order to cover for these information gaps, secondary data was gathered from relevant line ministries based on official assessments carried out at the central level in Gaza. The results of this secondary data review were integrated with the findings from the field and as a result quantitative estimates in this report represent a survey of the entire Gaza Strip.

The focus groups strategy provided some community based samples to illustrate needs at the community level, particularly regarding special needs of vulnerable groups with particular emphasis on gender. Preliminary results of these focus groups highlighted the following needs among the interviewed women population: the need for psychosocial attention and training on coping mechanisms for women in particular; quick house repair/rehabilitation programmes in order to end displacement; placing schools in safer areas and quick rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure; and addressing chronic vulnerabilities such as continuous lack of electricity, security, water networks and sewage problems. While the findings of this exercise are integrated throughout the report, Annex A contains a more detailed report.

#### 3.2.1 Assessment Locations

The survey sample encompassed all 5 governorates in the Gaza Strip and the communities of each governorate (with sample locations and sizes shown in the map and graph below);

- Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanun, Al Qaraya, Al-BadawiyaBadawiyaBadawiya – Maslakh and Jabalya in the North Gaza governorate;
- Juhor Al-Dik, Gaza City and Al- qqMugharaqa in the Gaza Governorate;
- Al Bureij, Nuseirat, Maghazi, Wadi Salqa, Az Zawayda and Deir El-Balah in Deir El-Balah - Middle Area Governorate;
- Abasan Al-Kabira, Abasan Al- Jadida, Al Qarara, Khuza'a, Khan Yunis and Bani Suheila in the Khan Yunis Governorate;
- Rafah in the Rafah Governorate.

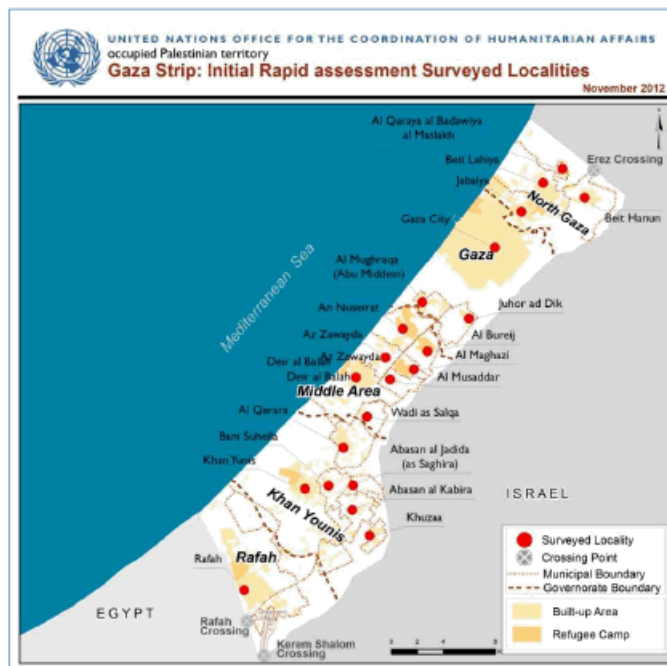


Figure B: Locations of key informant interviews

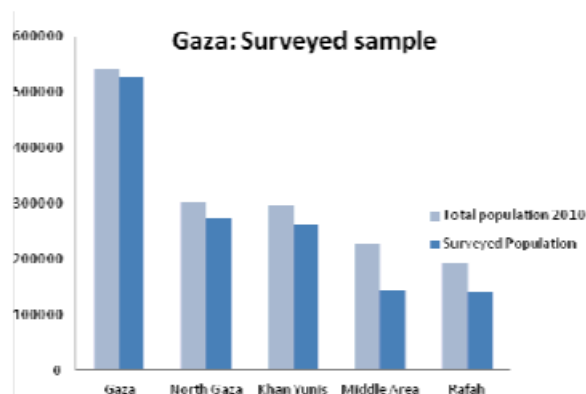


Figure C: Relationship between total community populations at the sites of key informant interviews and the total populations of the governorates

#### 3.2.2 Further Information

For access to the raw IRA data, the IRA Questionnaire, secondary and baseline data, please refer to Annex 'B' of this report.

Complete document in PDF format (Requires Acrobat Reader)