
**The Cairo Conference on Palestine
Reconstructing Gaza
Cairo, 12 October 2014
Conclusions by the Chair**

Egypt, Norway and Palestine convened the International Conference on Palestine and Reconstructing Gaza today in order to respond to the needs of the Palestinian people in the aftermath of Israel's military offensive.

The participants commended the Egyptian ceasefire initiative, and expressed their support for its ongoing efforts to reach a permanent ceasefire. The conference aimed to strengthen the basis for such a ceasefire by mobilising international support for the recovery and reconstruction of Gaza within a framework of longer-term sustainable development of Palestine as a whole.

Participants welcomed the convening of the first cabinet meeting in Gaza as a positive step for the Government of Palestine to reinstate their authority in Gaza. They welcomed Egypt's efforts to achieve Palestinian reconciliation that is consistent with Arab League resolutions. A durable ceasefire and the Palestinian Government taking effective control over Gaza are necessary for a successful reconstruction effort by the donor community.

The damage compounds the difficult living conditions that already existed in Gaza previously. Immediately, USD414 million is needed for humanitarian relief, and USD1.2 billion for early recovery. Reconstruction will follow at an estimated cost of USD2.4 billion.

The participants commended the Government of Palestine for the National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza, and agreed to base their assistance on this plan. They thanked the various UN organisations, the EU, the World Bank, the IMF and the Quartet Office for their contributions to the needs assessment and their readiness to support in the implementation of the plan.

The participants emphasised that assistance for recovery and reconstruction of Gaza must come in addition to sustained levels of budget support to the Government of Palestine and development assistance to the West Bank.

The Gaza Strip cannot simply be returned to what it was before.

First, the Gaza Strip constitutes an integral part of the territory occupied in 1967 and is part of a future state of Palestine. Efforts for Gaza will be successful only if placed within the overall framework of support to Palestine.

The Conference called on donors to channel their contributions through established mechanisms and funds, preferably the Palestinian Single Treasury Account. This is necessary in order to empower the role of the Government of Palestine as the legitimate recipient of assistance.

International support for recovery and reconstruction can only take place in a conducive political and security environment. The participants called on the Palestinian factions, Israel, and the donors to support a process that results in the Government of Palestine reinstating all its functions and effective control in Gaza. This includes full control over the Gaza crossings, with the presence of their customs authorities, and civil service reform.

Participants called for breaking the cycle of construction and destruction in Gaza and for protecting the lives and security of all civilians, as is entailed by their demand for compliance with obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law.

Second, reconstruction of Gaza will simply not be possible unless border crossings to Israel are open, socio-economic development is facilitated, and economic recovery is accelerated.

The Palestinian private sector and the civil society will play key roles in the recovery and reconstruction efforts, and will need a proper enabling environment to work efficiently. The Government of Israel needs to remove access and movement restrictions to allow Palestinian entrepreneurs to trade between Gaza and the West Bank, and to access world markets. The participants took note of the measures recently announced by Israel, including the commitment to ease restrictions on movement and access in and between the West Bank and Gaza, and to facilitate rapid recovery and reconstruction in Gaza led by the Government of Palestine.

Access for materials, financing and persons is a condition for effective assistance. Another condition is monitoring to prevent aid being used for non-intended purposes. For this reason, the participants welcomed the establishment of a robust, efficient and temporary monitoring mechanism in Gaza, brokered by the UN, accepted by Israel and Palestine, and financed by donors. Participants expect the mechanism to be urgently implemented in good faith, prioritizing rehabilitation of damage to homes and properties.

Third, the challenges faced in Gaza and the West Bank can only be truly addressed in a final status agreement that resolves all core issues between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The participants reiterated that realising the two-state solution on the basis of agreed international terms of reference for the Middle East peace process is the only viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and necessary to bring lasting Arab-Israeli peace.

The participants pledged approximately USD 5.4 billion, half of which will be dedicated for Gaza reconstruction, and committed themselves to start disbursing their assistance as soon as possible in order to bring about rapid improvements to the daily lives of the Palestinians. The Chair urges the international community to honour its pledges and to provide generous support over the next years.

The Conference also welcomed pledges of important in-kind assistance. The EU announced its readiness to provide operational support on the ground, including a presence at points of entry and exit, and training and assistance in capacity-building, as well as its readiness to explore options for supporting a land link between the West Bank and Gaza, and a maritime link with the outside world.

Norway will convene the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee in March 2015 in Brussels at the invitation of the European Union. There, the major donors and the co-hosts will take stock of the financial situation for Palestine, and assess progress in the Gaza reconstruction and the disbursement of the funding pledged at this Conference.