
UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities calls for international support to bring much-needed change for Gaza

[منسق الأمم المتحدة للمساعدات الإنسانية والأنشطة الإنمائية يدعو دول العالم إلى تقديم الدعم اللازم بشدة لتحقيق التغيير في غزة](#)

Following a visit today to the occupied Gaza Strip with diplomats from Australia, Belgium, Canada, the EU, and the UK, the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities, Robert Pifer, called for increased diplomatic and donor action to reduce reliance on aid, increase respect for international law and accelerate recovery and reconstruction.

"This week two years ago, Palestinians in Gaza were breathing a sigh of relief following 51 days of hostilities that left over 1,450 civilian deaths, more than 11,000 injuries and two million tons of rubble in its wake," recalled Mr. Pifer, "Today, many of the physical damages have been repaired, once again, but the horizon remains bleak as Gaza's isolation enters its tenth consecutive year".

In Beit Hanoun, the delegation heard from some of the 65,000 Palestinians who remain displaced, two years later, as well as from the victims and families on their expectations for accountability for violations of international humanitarian law that occurred during the hostilities.

The group was briefed about the struggle faced by Gaza's farmers to restart their livelihoods in light of ongoing Israeli restrictions on access to land and the import of materials like fertilizer and water pipes which it considers to have a "dual use" (i.e. civilian or military). With less than 20% of destroyed greenhouses and tree orchards rehabilitated since 2014, and less than half of the damaged water wells, ponds and tanks reconstructed, the agricultural sector as-a-whole is struggling to recover.

Gaza's growing water crisis was the main subject of discussion at the Al Montar water reservoir destroyed in 2014. This critical project is now nearing completion after substantial delays due to restrictions on the import of materials and equipment.

In Karni's Industrial Zone, where export capacity has decreased by 85% since 2005, briefers stressed the role of economic recovery and industry in lifting Gaza out of poverty. This is particularly crucial as unemployment stands at 41% and rises to 60% among youth, with major industries having cut over 60% of their work force since the 2014 hostilities. The mission ended with a meeting with the Paralympics basketball team, where, in spite of tremendous challenges, participants heard a message of hope and possibility from Gaza's resilient youth.

"A consistent call we heard from everyone was for the international community to do all in its power to reverse the situation in Gaza, and especially to avoid another escalation," said Mr. Pifer. "International assistance is vital, but we must also push for profound and sustained policy changes –including lifting the ongoing blockade - so that basic services and the economy can fully function and Palestinians in Gaza are no longer forced to rely on that international assistance" he concluded.

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