



# **Joint Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) *Gaza Strip***

## ***Main findings***

**Jerusalem**

**March 3, 2009**

**Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
World Food Programme (WFP)**

# Objectives

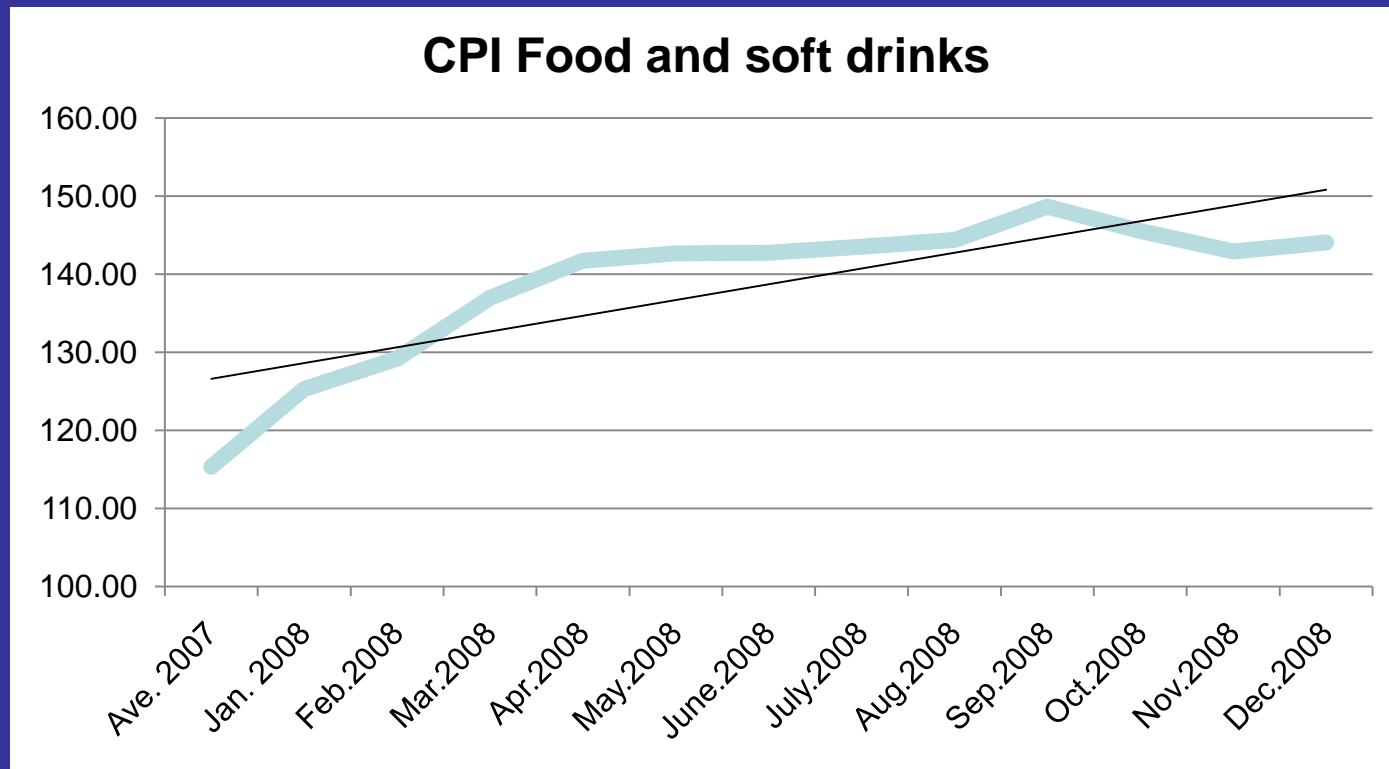
## Main objective

- To guide possible adjustments of food security, agriculture and livelihood interventions in the Gaza Strip in the next 2-6 months planned in response to the damages caused by the war.

## Specific objectives

- To assess changes in Gaza households' food access, food consumption patterns, cash sources to meet other priority basic needs;
- To evaluate Gaza households' resilience capacity;
- To evaluate wholesale and retail markets current functionality and early recovery capacity for supplying food to consumers; and
- To determine the profile of (new) population groups requiring food, agriculture and other livelihood support assistance and the type of assistance required for each of these groups.

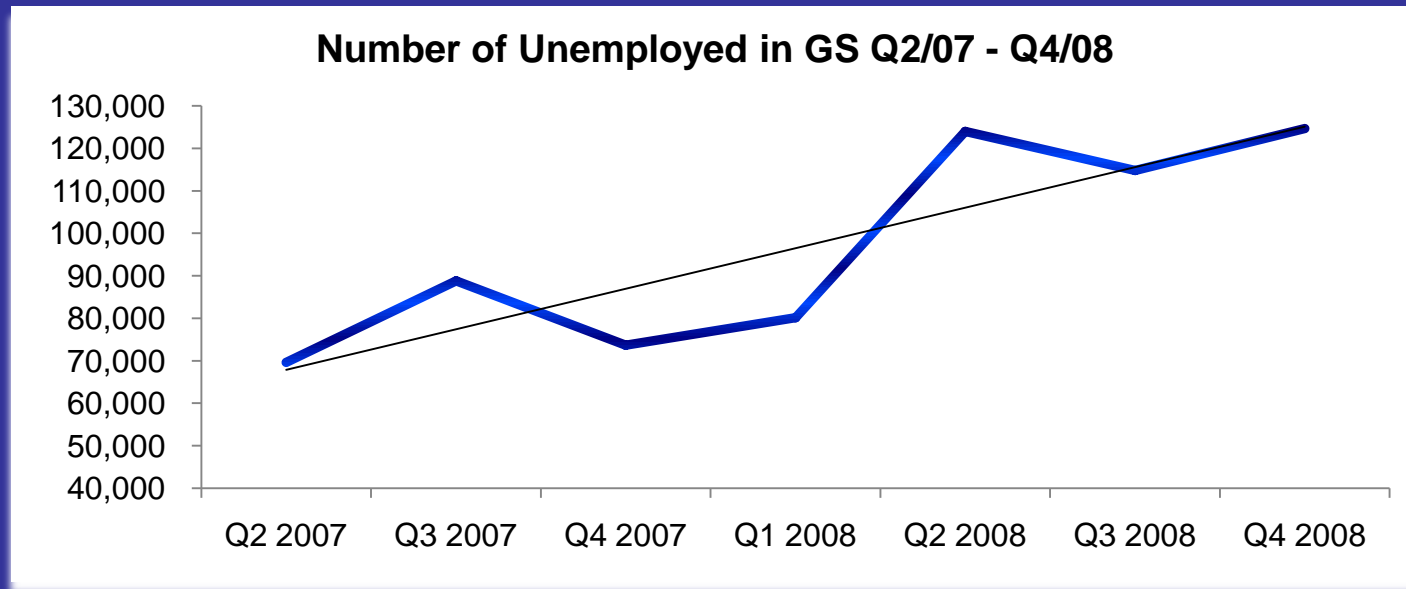
# Snapshot: The Year Before War



**Food CPI: Constant increase since the beginning of 2008.**

**Overall increase in food CPI: 22 percent.**

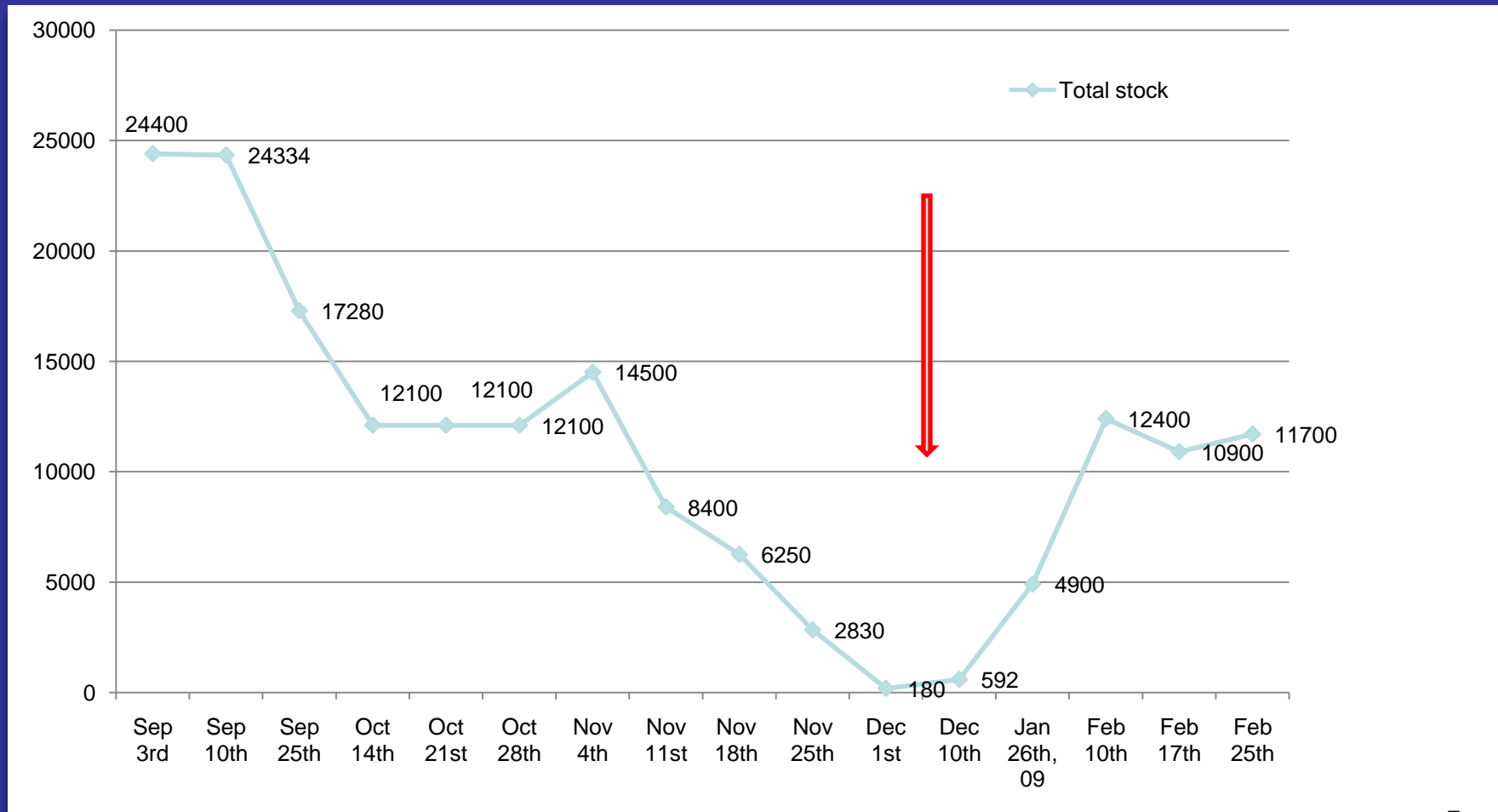
# Snapshot: The Year Before War



Between Q2 -07and Q4-08	
<b>Lost Jobs</b>	<b>34,561</b>
In agriculture	13,751
In construction	10,807
In manufacturing	11,384
<b>New Labour Force Participants</b>	<b>14,440</b>
<b>Unemployed in Q2 07</b>	<b>69,633</b>
<b>Total unemployed</b>	<b>124,634</b>

- Increasing unemployment trend since mid 2007
- 30 thousand jobs were lost in the various sectors
- In total, **124,634 unemployed.**

# Total Wheat Flour stock for all mills in Gaza Strip Sep08 to Feb 09



# Food Energy Consumption 2004-2007

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Average energy consumption (kcal/person/day)	2,552	2,495	2,649	2,388
Change from previous year	n.a.	-2%	6%	-10%

- Average per capita energy consumption decrease by 10 percent during 2007.
- Mainly decrease in consumption of red meat, rice, oils and fats, and confectionary, fruits and dairy products.
- The decrease was moderated by a small increase in consumption of wheat products and pulses and tubers.

*Source: FAO Team estimates based on PCBS data*

# Impact of the WAR

- Substantial damage to infrastructure
  - Substantial damage to agricultural land, livestock and poultry farms
  - Loss of jobs and incomes: private sector, agricultural labor, casual workers
  - Human suffering
- ➔ Further deterioration in the sustainability of livelihoods (already affected by the prolonged closure regime before the war).
- ➔ Previously self-reliant families lost life-long savings, homes and productive assets ➔ are now destitute and completely reliant on assistance.
- ➔ Food security remains poor ➔ threats to nutritional status of a growing proportion of the population (**food insecurity was affecting 56 % of the population Pre war situation**).

# Availability and Prices of Food

1. Food availability is back to pre-war levels but supplies of **local fresh foods are anticipated to decrease seriously by April-June 2009** due to the severe damages sustained by the agricultural sector during the war.
2. Availability of fresh chicken, red meat, and eggs, decreased due to destruction of livestock, sheep and poultry farms during the war. **Prices increased to unaffordable level for many households.**
3. Retailers and wholesalers **voluntarily reduced their usual stock levels of wheat flour and vegetable oil**, because of fear of price fluctuations, and decreased purchases by consumers due to higher levels of humanitarian assistance.
4. Drop in sales levels of about **20-40 percent at both retail and wholesale levels.**



# Access to Food

## Particularly affected groups:

- a. **Households whose lands have been completely ravaged and/or lost farm assets;**
- b. **Households of agricultural labourers who have been laid off;**
- c. **Labourers and employees of private sector establishments destroyed during the war (particularly metal shops);**
- d. **Households of fishermen whose boats or the boats on which they used to work were destroyed or damaged;**
- e. **Households whose agricultural lands have become inaccessible after the war due to the fact it is located within one kilometre from the border with Israel (buffer zone).**

# Food Utilization

1. Most households interviewed reported feeling the water crunch, stressing that **water supply** has not yet returned to its pre-war levels.
2. The problem of water supply was most frequently repeated by **displaced households** in Khuza'a, Al-Attatra, Izbet Abed Rabbo, Al-Fukari and Juhf Al-Deek,
3. **Cooking constraints:** shortages and high prices of cooking gas → use of **alternative fuels for cooking** (wood ovens, kerosene ranges)  
  
→ **reduced consumption of cooked foods**, particularly those that require long cooking time.

# Impact on Agriculture and Fisheries

1. Farmers whose land was not damaged have resumed their livelihood activities. But **lower input levels**, due to lower credit ceiling granted by suppliers
2. Unsustainable, **old and/or used assets** to temporarily fix the damages in their farms
3. **Laid-off of agricultural laborers**, to reduce production costs and due to uncertainty about future
4. An estimated 2,000 fishermen households who have either lost fishing assets and/or fishing jobs as a result of the war and the ensuing restriction on fishing distance (**only 35 percent of the fishing boats resumed fishing**).

# Households Coping Strategies

- **Households' coping mechanisms** (humanitarian assistance, pooling of resources among members of the extended family) **have been reactivated quickly**, enabling most of them to secure their pre-war food consumption patterns and levels to a large extent.
- **Lower quality/cheaper foods, food on credit** from local retailers have been the most widely used coping mechanisms.
- **Lack of cash** → exhaustion of coping strategies, particularly the ability of host families to continue hosting the IDPs and the ability of suppliers and retailers to extend credit etc.
- The protracted use of distress coping mechanisms before the war and the additional shock of the war require rapid economic and material responses → difficult arbitrages are not made on the allocation of resources to food vs. non-food requirements.

# Humanitarian Emergency Aid and Priority needs

1. The assessment revealed that food aid and cash aid played a major role in preventing a further increase in food insecurity.
2. Interviewed farmers, fishermen, displaced households and hosting families stated that these families were targeted by the humanitarian emergency aid providers.
3. Priority need were reported to be cash, materials and shelter for farmers households, replenishing lost assets for fisheries households, reconstruction of dwellings for displaced households.

# **Profiles of Vulnerable sub-Groups**

# **Group 1: IDPs and other directly war-Affected households including: farmers, fishermen, self employed workers**

**1-House destroyed and fully depend on others for their shelter**

**2-Have lost their main source of income**

**3-Have lost their productive assets (destroyed or inaccessible)**

## **Group 2: Indirectly war-affected households including laid-off agricultural Laborers, laid off fishermen, laid off other casual workers**

**1-Lost job as a result of the employers having been affected by the war**

**2-Member of households already food insecure before the war (e.g. large families)**



## **Group 3: Families Hosting IDPs**

**1-Households already food insecure before the war (e.g. large families) hosting IDP**

**2-Limited income sources**

# To Conclude

- Job levels and economic activity levels were very low before the war, indicators showed continuing deteriorating trend.
- War caused further losses in businesses, farms and agricultural land, undermining more peoples livelihoods and ability to cope and survive.
- Cash and food transfers and PA wages constitute the majority of sources of living. However, cash transfers to Gaza is restricted.
- People have grown heavily reliant on food aid, **the situation will not be reversed unless borders are opened and economic infrastructure is rehabilitation**
- **Situation remains extremely sensitive to external factors (border crossings, local production, availability of cash, etc.)**

# Recommendations in the Short Term

- Continue providing food assistance to the pre-war destitute at the same pre-war levels.
- Extend food assistance to the households who have suffered direct housing, productive assets and/or job losses due to the war.
- Tailor type of assistance to the profile of the vulnerable group → avoid pushing more people in to aid dependency.

# ***Recommendations continued***

- **Progressively decrease the GFD caseload and promote and or scale up other activities such as school feeding, food-for-work, voucher programme, cash grants, temporary job employment and/or in-kind assistance for repairs and rebuilding of assets, as well as land rehabilitation.**
- **Restore agricultural productive assets and capacity in order to mitigate the risk of raising food insecurity for the short and medium term.**
- **Support resumption of market and cash economy through cash transfers, employment schemes, and rehabilitation of livelihoods.**
- **Further develop the Food Security Monitoring and Early Warning System in the Gaza Strip.**