



FAO'S ROLE IN EMERGENCIES:

- **PROTECT**—We protect the most vulnerable households from basic food insecurity and long-term reliance on food aid
- **RESTORE**—We restore the food security, local food production capacity, coping mechanisms, rural livelihoods and self-sustainability of rural communities
- **ENHANCE**—We enhance agricultural, livestock and fisheries production for a quick and lasting recovery

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FEBRUARY 2009 WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

GAZA SPECIAL EDITION



A destroyed agricultural storage building in Al Fukhari

As the shaky ceasefires announced in Israel and Gaza on 17 and 18 January continue, FAO staff and partners can survey the full extent of the damage inflicted on agricultural property and assets by the recent armed conflict in the Gaza Strip.

Operation Cast Lead, lasting from 27 December until 17 January, is estimated to have caused hundreds of millions of dollars' damage to the public and private infrastructure of the Gaza Strip, and the agricultural sector is no exception to this. Fields needed for troops' access to military areas have been churned up, agricultural buildings destroyed in direct or collateral damage and livestock killed in the force of explosions. FAO estimates that almost all of Gaza's eleven thousand small-holder farms suffered damage, with thousands of them severely affected or even completely destroyed, whilst many of the three thousand Gazan fishing families have also seen their equipment and assets damaged beyond repair.

This has left the 1.5 million residents of the Strip facing a shortage of fresh, nutritious, locally-produced food, and more Gazans than ever are now relying entirely on food aid imported by humanitarian agencies. The destruction of crops, fertile land, animals, agricultural assets and key infrastructure is preventing the production and distribution of fresh food, with widespread protein and micronutrient deficiencies predicted to worsen. In addition, the around 112 000 Gazans who depend on agricultural livelihoods are facing destitution, weakened already by the 18-month long border closure, the rising cost of inputs and the difficulties in accessing crucial markets in the West Bank, Israel and abroad.

In response to this crisis, and to prevent food security levels from slipping lower, FAO and its partners in agriculture intend to implement a number of emergency interventions through the **Gaza Flash Appeal**, helping Gazan farmers recover their livelihoods and providing much-needed nutritious food for the Gazan market. **This newsletter provides an outline of FAO's projects to tackle the current crisis in the Gaza Strip.**

Current Donor partners:



Gaza Flash Appeal

A UN combined Flash Appeal for Gaza was launched on 2 February, outlining proposed emergency projects by UN agencies and local and international NGOs to respond immediately to the situation in Gaza.

FAO has been coordinating the agricultural submissions, to which 15 organizations have contributed 24 projects, hoping to benefit thousands of farming families. Together, the agriculture sector of the Flash Appeal is requesting USD 29.5 million, out of an Appeal total of more than USD 613 million. A table of agricultural submissions to the Appeal can be found on page 7. Projects presented by FAO to the Flash Appeal comprise: three in the agriculture sector, of which one is a revised CAP 2009 project, one in the food security sector, and one in the coordination sector. Details of these proposed FAO interventions are outlined here. Importantly, the Israeli Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories (CoGAT) recently made explicit assurances that importing agricultural inputs into the Gaza Strip would be prioritized as part of humanitarian shipments, and the UN is now waiting for a formal reply to their request.

1. Emergency support to poor families in the Gaza Strip for backyard food production

This USD 1.5 million intervention aims to provide immediate livelihood relief to poor and vulnerable families in areas most affected by the recent conflict, specifically Beit Lahia, Al Fukhari, Khuzaa, Al Qarara, Al Zeitoun, and Al Shokeh. This assistance will be through in-kind and technical support for backyard food production, namely by providing poultry, pigeons, rabbits, sheep, bees and fish fingerlings to be reared, and the necessary veterinary kits, water tanks and feed. In addition, veterinary services will be provided during the lambing season. At least 4 500 persons from 500 families will benefit directly from this project, including 2 500 children, as well as indirect beneficiaries who will see a greater variety of protein sources on the market. FAO will work with local women's associations in imple-



Agricultural areas worst hit by the fighting include the Gaza City periphery, especially to the north and east; the south and east of Khan Yunis and the south and east of Rafah

menting the project. **2. Immediate interventions to resume irrigated vegetable production in the Gaza Strip in time for the coming season.**

This project will help poor farmers from Beit Lahia, Al Fukhari, Al Qarara, Al Zeitoun, Al Shokeh and Al Sheikh Ijleen whose vegetable production has been halted as a result of the conflict. FAO will provide tailored support including: the rehabilitation of damaged agricultural land; repairing destroyed irrigation pipes, networks, wells and storage ponds; repairing broken greenhouses; and providing good quality seeds, seedlings and fertilizers. One thousand farming households stand to benefit from this USD 2.8 million project, totalling 9 000 persons, of whom around 5 000 will be children. Farmers' associations in Gaza will partner FAO in this initiative.

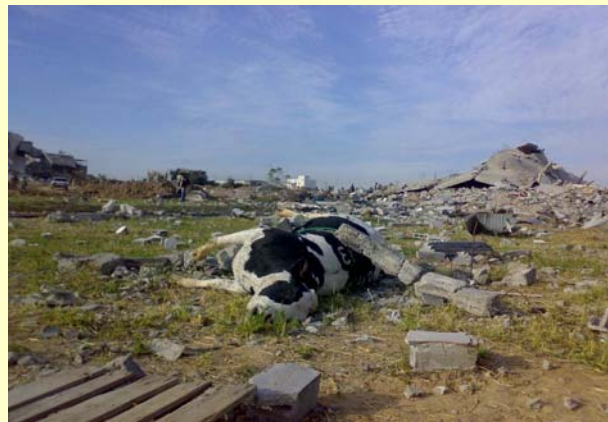


*Destroyed agricultural assets, south of Gaza City
Photo: UNICEF-oPt/ Iyad El Baba*

Gaza Flash Appeal cont.

3. To provide emergency support to livestock keepers in the Gaza Strip to maintain and protect their domestic animals and livelihoods.

This project was originally submitted by FAO to the 2009 Consolidated Appeals Process, and has now been adapted to address the specific needs of Gazan livestock keepers following the conflict. Now, project OPT-09/A/21099 will see 14 000 persons in 2 000 households (including 10 000 children) receive animal feed (barley, corn, feed for poultry, small ruminants and cattle), veterinary drugs, necessary vaccines and other inputs in order to maintain and protect the remaining livestock herds in the Gaza Strip. As a result, FAO hopes that not only will the endangered livelihoods of these small farmers be saved, but also that increased amounts of locally-produced nutritious food will become available to the wider Gazan populace. Project activities will cost around USD 1.3 million.



Agricultural buildings and animals in northern Gaza



A greenhouse sustains irreparable damage in Al Fukhari

4. Socio-economic and food security assessment

FAO intends to implement a USD 760 000 intervention to conduct a comprehensive socio-economic and food security assessment of the Gaza Strip. FAO will monitor the situation in the region in the immediate aftermath of the conflict and keep track of rapidly changing indicators during the rehabilitation phase, so as to inform longer-term policy and programming. Specifically, quantitative and qualitative assessments will be conducted of the following indicators: food availability, accessibility and sources; food consumption and expenditure patterns; the resumption of livelihoods and income levels; the resumption of the cash economy and people's purchasing power; and the appropriateness of food and cash assistance. Policies will then be formulated or adjusted accordingly. FAO will work together with WFP, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the Al Sahel Research Institute and the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS). More details of this are found on page 6.

5. Essential in-field coordination of the emergency activities of the agricultural sector

This USD 400 000 project will improve evidence-based and decentralized coordination of the agriculture sector in the Gaza Strip, as well as conduct livelihood recovery studies and monitoring, ensure best use of available assets, address any gaps in assistance and prevent overlaps. FAO will be coordinating NGOs and other actors.

This will take the total amount FAO intends to devote to its response to the crisis in Gaza to around **USD 7.6 million.**

Losses to Agriculture Sector in Gaza Strip	Value in USD
Plant production	84 786 000
Animal production	18 133 000
Infrastructure	77 800 000
Total direct losses	180 719 000
Total indirect losses	88 242 000
Grand Total	268 961 000

Losses sustained by the Gazan agricultural sector, estimated by the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO/UNDP



Left-to-right from top:
1) crops in the Zeitun area damaged by explosive materials; 2) a destroyed agricultural building in the southern Gaza Strip; 3) a child waits in Rafah for her mother to return with water; 4) destroyed greenhouse in Al Fukhari; 5) hundreds queue for bread in Rafah; 6) destroyed greenhouse in the northern Gaza Strip.

Photographs 3 and 4 courtesy of UNICEF-oPt, Youa El Babir



Left-to-right from top:
1) a destroyed poultry farm in Zeitun;
2) a military head lands in a field in Khoza'a; 3) a woman with her grandchild cooks onions;
4) a dead sheep and damaged equipment in Al Fukhari;
5) dead dogs and cattle in the central Gaza Strip; 6) a destroyed greenhouse and salvaged tomatoes in Beit Lahia.

Photograph 3 courtesy of UNICEF-071, Ismail El Babir



A family eating in the rubble of their home, Rafah. Photo: UNICEF-oPt, Iyad El Baba

To enable the UN to focus its relief efforts in Gaza most efficiently, FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) plan to carry out together a **rapid qualitative assessment** of food security levels in the Gaza Strip, to be implemented immediately and finished within two weeks. The assessment will examine changes in food patterns, coping mechanisms, mar-

ket functionality and livelihoods, and the results collected will allow FAO and WFP to gauge the resilience of the Gazan population to the difficulties they face, which include fuel shortages, water contamination, supply and demand changes, threats to livelihoods and weakened markets. The conclusions will also help the agencies to profile population groups most vulnerable to these risks. The assessment will involve in-depth interviews with 100-120 key informants, including retailers, wholesalers, farmers and fishing workers, cooperatives, charities, vulnerable families and others. The interviews will be organized geographically, with 8-10 localities taking part, including agricultural, urban and refugee-populated areas.

In addition to this, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics intends to work with FAO, WFP and other actors in conducting a separate **quantitative assessment** of food security indicators. It is hoped that a large sample of thousands of Gazan households will take part, providing statistically valid evidence of the current food security levels in Gaza. This assessment will also be carried out immediately and rapidly, with results expected out in April. Based on this baseline survey, a lighter monitoring system is envisaged to gauge humanitarian needs and response impact.

Project update

FAO is currently managing a portfolio of twenty projects across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, benefiting more than 8 000 households, and with a budget totalling over USD 17 600 000. These projects are funded by the Governments of **Canada, Italy, Japan, Norway, Spain, and Sweden**.

FAO's main objective in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is to provide a safety net for food insecure farming/herding households whose traditional livelihoods are endangered and whose coping mechanisms are overstretched. Food security information and analysis is also a key area for FAO in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, promoting inter-agency cooperation to address social protection concerns.

Gaza fishers badly hit by the fighting

The Gazan fishing industry has been suffering in recent years from restrictions on fishing areas: workers are permitted to operate only six nautical miles from the coast, reducing their yields and forcing them to catch younger and smaller fish, which in turn negatively affects fish breeding and stock replacement. The three thousand Gazans who rely on fishing for a living have now been further hit by direct damages estimated at USD 1.52 million at least to their equipment and buildings, including destruction of USD 213 000 to a private aquaculture farm and tens of thousands of dollars' worth of damage to a government hatchery, leaving the sector on the brink of collapse. At least 78 boats have been damaged or completely destroyed, as well as nets, engines and cold storage facilities.

FAO project OSRO/GAZ/804/ITA, which started in December 2008, is tackling the livelihoods crisis facing Gazan fishermen, by providing 100 fishing households with aquaculture training, inputs for water storage ponds and fish fingerlings. FAO has resumed project activities following the end of the conflict, and hopes that the intervention will prevent the loss of more fishing livelihoods in Gaza.



Gazan fishermen have seen extensive damage to their equipment

List of Gaza Flash Appeal Projects

ORGANIZATION	TOTAL FUNDING REQUEST	NO. OF PRO-JECTS	AREA OF ASSISTANCE
Arab Agronomists' Association (AAA)	850 000	1	Livestock herding
Action Contre la Faim (ACF)	950 000	1	Agricultural road rehabilitation; cash-for-work
Asamblea De Cooperacion Por La Paz (ACPP)	375 000	1	Greenhouse and well rehab.; vegetable production
Associates for International Resources and Development (AIRD)	750 000	1	Vegetable production
Economic & Social Development Centre of Palestine (ESDC)	3 157 000	4	Beekeeping; herding; irrigated farms; greenhouse rehab.
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	5 606 000	3	Livestock herding; irrigated vegetable production; backyard food production
Oxfam Great Britain	2 694 000	2	Backyard food production (women); small farms and livestock breeding
Oxfam NOVIB	1 765 000	2	Backyard food production; land rehab.
Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC)	700 000	1	Backyard food production (women)
Palestinian Centre of Organic Agriculture (PCOA)	300 000	1	Land and greenhouse rehab.
Palestinian Farmers' Union (PFU)	621 000	1	Land rehab.
Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG)	262 000	1	Well rehab.
Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)	1 620 000	3	Greenhouse/ nursery rehab.; irrigation reconstruction
Union of Cooperative Associations for Saving and Credit (UCASC)	250 000	1	Backyard food production
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	9 618 016	1	Livestock and poultry rearing; irrigated vegetables; fisheries
TOTAL	29 518 016	24	

FAO Gaza office escapes serious damage

On Sunday, 28 December 2008 the UNSCO compound in Gaza City, in which the FAO GAZA field office is located, was hit by collateral damage from an airstrike on the Guest Palace Hotel directly behind the compound. The proximity of the hotel caused heavy debris to fall on UN agency buildings and cars, leaving thousands of dollars' worth of repairs. In addition, the force of the explosions shattered the windows of the offices and damaged equipment inside. In accordance with UN security rules, all UN staff were work from home, meaning that fortunately no FAO or other UN employees were hurt. The FAO office escaped the worst damage and FAO staff have returned to the office following the ceasefires.



UN cars destroyed during the airstrike on the Guest Palace Hotel, 28 December 2008



A Palestinian boy in Rafah, with bread and water, UNICEF-oPt, Iyad El Baba



helping to build a world without hunger

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