

IN THE  
SPOTLIGHT

# GAZA

## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

APRIL 2016

Since 2008, the Gaza Strip has experienced three major escalations of armed conflict which resulted in significant numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs). At the height of the most recent escalation in July-August 2014, nearly 500,000 people, 28 per cent of the population, were displaced from their homes. From mid-August to December 2015, the IDP Working Group, chaired by UNOCHA, carried out a re-registration and vulnerability profiling survey, targeting the over 16,000 households who lost their homes during the 2014 hostilities. The survey collected detailed information on the current living conditions and needs of these IDPs, and the main findings are released in this report. The findings were made available to all relevant actors in a unified database, to enhance humanitarian coordination, programming and advocacy. As the reconstruction effort progresses, nearly 3,000 homes have been rebuilt; however, an estimated 75,000 people are estimated to remain displaced.



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Shuja'iyyeh January 2016

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United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs occupied Palestinian territory

P. O. Box 38712 East Jerusalem 9138602 | tel +972 (0)2 582 9962 | fax +972 (0)2 582 5841 | [ochaopt@un.org](mailto:ochaopt@un.org) [facebook.com/ochaopt](https://www.facebook.com/ochaopt)

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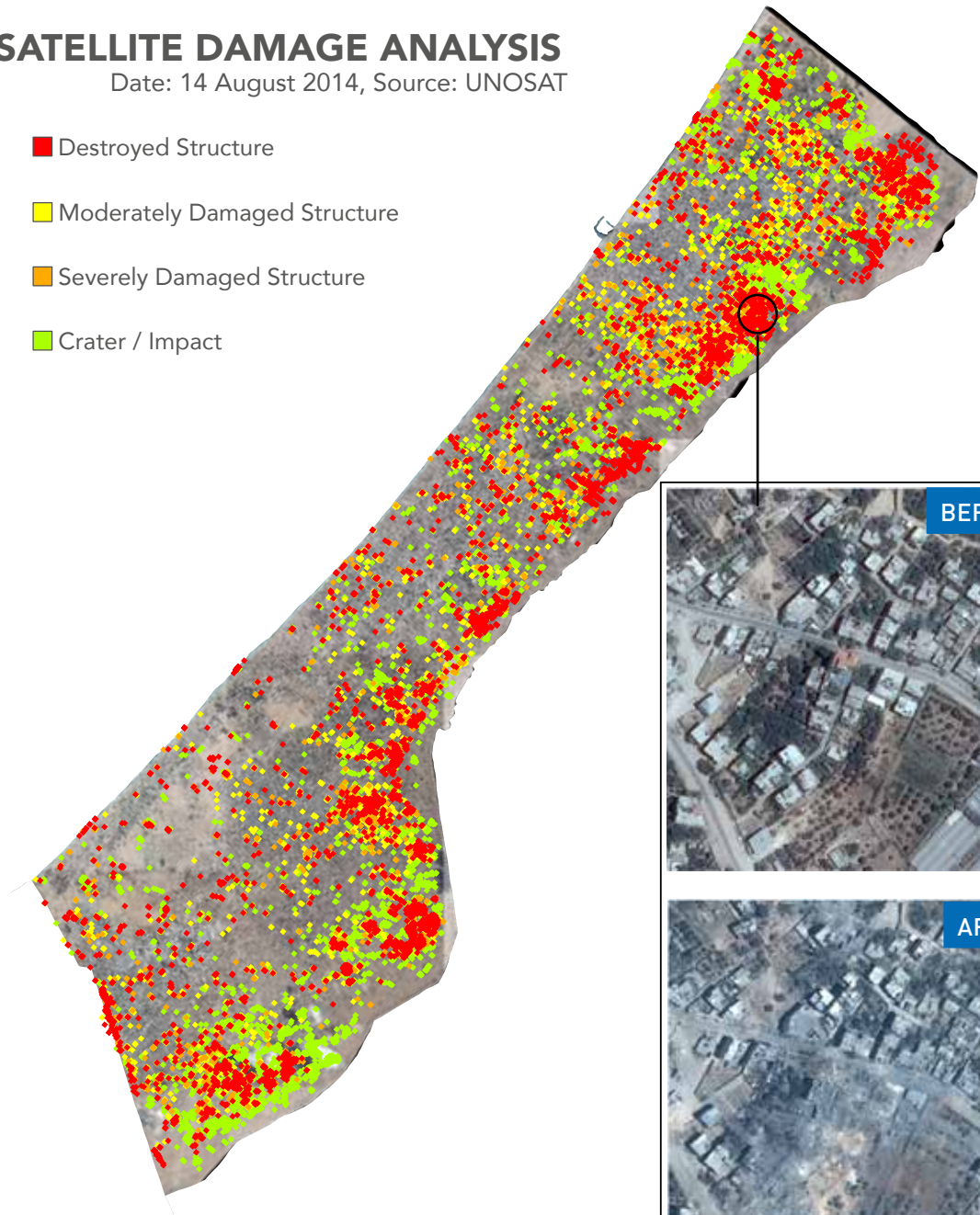
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## SATELLITE DAMAGE ANALYSIS

Date: 14 August 2014, Source: UNOSAT

- Destroyed Structure
- Moderately Damaged Structure
- Severely Damaged Structure
- Crater / Impact





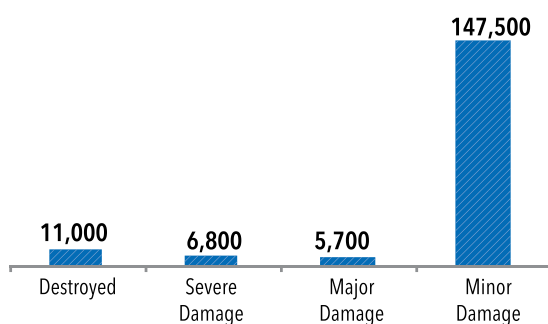
# THE 2014 HOSTILITIES: UNPRECEDENTED DESTRUCTION OF HOMES

In 2014, the Gaza Strip witnessed the deadliest escalation in hostilities since the beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1967. Some 2,251 Palestinians, including 1,462 civilians, were killed and over 11,000 injured.<sup>1</sup> Public infrastructure - including educational and health facilities and water and sanitation and energy installations - suffered heavy damage.<sup>2</sup> (See satellite map).

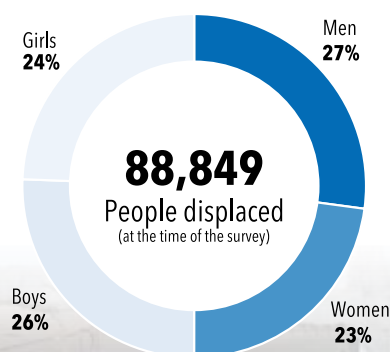
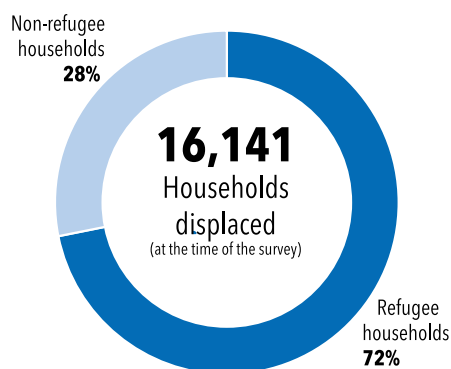
“An estimated 1.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the Gaza Strip in 2016.”

Humanitarian Needs Overview 2016,  
Occupied Palestinian Territory.

## FINAL HOME DAMAGE ASSESSMENT



Some 11,000 housing units were totally destroyed and 6,800 housing units were severely damaged from the 2014 hostilities; combined, almost 18,000 homes were rendered uninhabitable, nearly three times the number resulting from the conflict in December 2008-January 2009.<sup>3</sup> The IDP survey used the number of 18,000 uninhabitable homes as a starting point; however, the home damage assessment focused on the structural damage and not on people's displacement status or other vulnerabilities. The number of households who actually lost their home was lower, 16,965, as some people owned more than one home that was rendered uninhabitable and duplicate records were excluded. Some 16,141 households were still displaced at the time of the survey.



# CURRENT SHELTER STATUS OF IDPS



Almost 500,000 people were internally displaced at the height of the 2014 hostilities in UNRWA schools, government schools and informal shelters, and with host families. Following the ceasefire in August 2014, the majority of IDPs left their emergency shelters or host families but approximately 90,000 people were still displaced at the time of the survey, most of whom have moved multiple times.

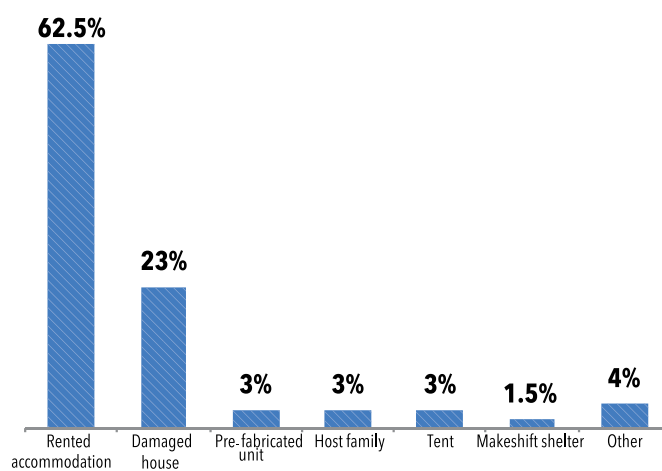
IDPs are living in a variety of shelter conditions, with almost a quarter living in the rubble of their damaged homes. The majority of those surveyed reporting that they are renting; given the shortage of formal rental units available on the Gaza market, many IDPs who define themselves as living in rented accommodation have made alternative arrangements. These includes living in store rooms, unfinished units, substandard apartments in relatives' or neighbours' buildings, or with extended families while using Transitional Shelter Cash Assistance to subsidize their most urgent needs or contribute to household expenses. Their vulnerability is underlined by almost 50 per cent expressing concern that they may be forced to leave their current place of residence.

**62%** of IDP households who owned their original residences are now renting.

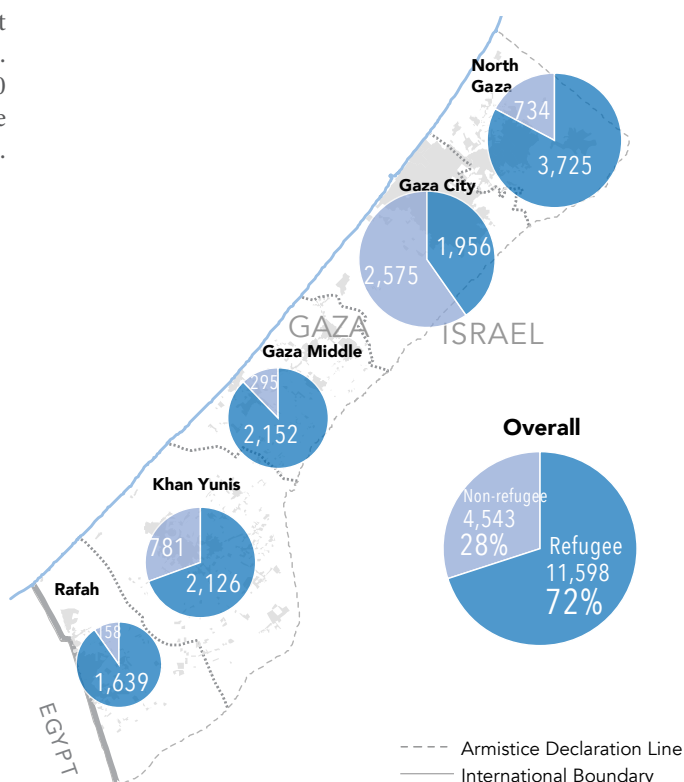
**49%** of IDP households fear having to move from current location.

**23%** of IDP households live in their damaged homes.

## CURRENT ACCOMMODATION



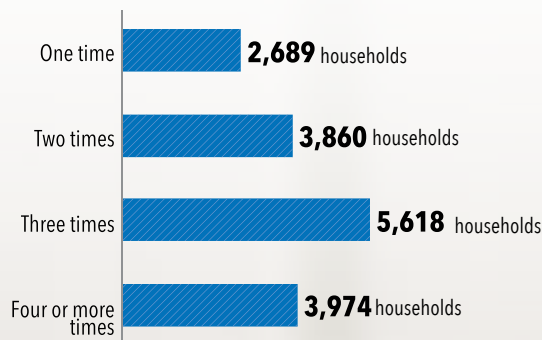
## IDP HOUSEHOLD CURRENT LOCATION BY GOVERNORATE



## FREQUENCY OF MOVING

2.4

times an IDP has moved on average.



## CASE STUDY: THE SAUDI FAMILY

Fatma Mardi Saudi, 56, a widow and mother of eight, is from Ash Shuja'iyeh, one of the areas worst affected by the 2014 hostilities. Their family home was severely damaged, but Fatma still has to pay back the money the bank loaned to construct the house. Fatma, her three unmarried sons, and a married son and his family are all living in two pre-fabricated housing units provided by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH).

Two of Fatma's brothers have returned to live in the severely-damaged family home. "During the damage assessment, they told us to evacuate the home as it is uninhabitable and potentially dangerous, but we have nowhere else to go," her brother Abdallah explained. Abdallah and his family had rented an apartment but left after three months when they could no longer pay the rent.

The two brothers have made some small repairs to their family home using materials they found in the rubble. Fatma has also gone into debt to make some basic repairs to the house. The Saudi family has not received any assistance for repairs, but they have been informed that they will be eligible for a Kuwaiti grant for reconstruction.



# IDP VULNERABILITY



In Gaza, the eight-year long blockade and three major escalations of hostilities in six years have devastated basic infrastructure, service delivery, livelihoods and coping mechanisms. Based on data gathered through the IDP survey, almost 90,000 Palestinians in Gaza were displaced at the time of the survey and faced a range of protection concerns, including overcrowding, limited access to basic services, risks due to unexploded ordnance (UXOs) and exposure to weather extremes. This has exacerbated the vulnerability of certain groups, particularly female-headed households, children and persons with disabilities.

**“The blockade on Gaza remains a form of collective punishment and undermines civil, political economic, social and cultural rights.”**

*Report of the Secretary-General; Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem 20 January 2016, para. 40.*

**71%**

of IDP households report that food diversity has worsened.

**45%**

of IDP households report that more than three people are sharing a bedroom.

**43%**

of IDP households report that food consumption decreased.

**31%**

of IDP households report that their family is exposed to extremes of rain, heat or cold.

## THE GAZA BLOCKADE

**1.8** million Palestinians in Gaza are 'locked in', denied free access to the remainder of the occupied Palestinian territory and the outside world. Movement restrictions imposed by Israel since the early 1990's and intensified in June 2007, have undermined the living conditions in Gaza and fragmented the oPt and its economic and social fabric: Israel views these access restrictions as essential security measures addressing a range of serious threats to Israel's population. In 2015, the Israeli authorities have significantly increased the number of exit permits issued to Palestinians; however, those eligible for such permits still constitute a small minority, primarily patients, business people and staff of international organizations. The isolation of Gaza has been exacerbated by restrictions imposed by the Egyptian authorities on its single passenger crossing, Rafah, which has remained largely closed, citing security concerns, since 24 October 2014, including for humanitarian assistance.



## CASE STUDY: DISPLACED AND DISABLED

Abu Mohammad, a 53-year-old father of nine, became an IDP when his home in Beit Hanoun, which housed an extended family of 38 members, was destroyed during the 2014 hostilities. Having initially resided in a makeshift shelter on the site of their destroyed home, Abu Mohammed's family managed to move to a caravan in a Temporary Displacement Site (TDS) in Beit Hanoun in May 2015. The family still lives there; they have received part of a Saudi reconstruction grant and recently began the reconstruction process.

Abu Mohammad's difficulties as an IDP are compounded by being disabled: he has been paralyzed from the hip down since he was eight and cannot walk. His wife also suffers from paralysis in her left arm and part of her leg. One of their sons was injured in the head when the shelter in Beit Hanoun was struck by Israeli fire during the hostilities, killing multiple members of the extended family.

Abu Mohammad's electric wheelchair was destroyed during the hostilities and his children now have to carry him everywhere. As head of the household, it is nearly impossible to rebuild or improve his family's shelter conditions when he cannot move. "All I need is my electric wheelchair so I can move around again as I used to before the war."

### IDP SURVEY: CASUALTIES FROM 2014 HOSTILITIES

318

Family  
members lost  
(Male 225/  
Female 93).

631

Suffered disability  
(Male 402/  
Female 229).

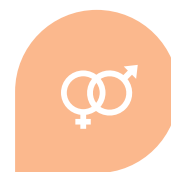
1,021

Require continued  
health care  
(Male 619/  
Female 402).



Abu Mohammad, Beit Hanoun, May 2015.

# GENDER-BASED VULNERABILITY



The IDP profiling exercise has provided, through a number of indicators, evidence on how gender roles and dynamics determine vulnerability among IDPs in terms of the range of humanitarian needs, the differentiated access to services and humanitarian assistance, and the ability to cope with displacement.



## IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT ON WOMEN'S CARE ROLE

**74%**

of IDP households depend on trucked water sources.

**60%**

of IDP households indicated that domestic water quantity is not enough.

Given the gender division of roles in Palestinian society, women are normally responsible for the care work related to their often large and extended families.<sup>4</sup> The absence of electricity and water, particularly in households with high numbers of children, along with the responsibility of caring for the elderly and people with disability increases women's care burden. This leaves women with less time to engage in gainful economic activity (whether formal, informal or subsistence farming), thus maintaining the high economic dependency rates that increase vulnerability of the population.

## IDP FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS (FHHS)

As a percentage of IDP households	<b>10.2%</b>
With no family members working	<b>70%</b>
Moved 1-2 times	<b>59%</b>
Moved 3 or more times	<b>41%</b>
In vulnerable shelter conditions/ fear having to move	<b>47%</b>
Rely on humanitarian assistance	<b>74%</b>
Borrow money	<b>75%</b>
Buy food on credit	<b>81%</b>



## SAFETY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

**OVER  
70%**

of households with female members believe that the war led to increased gender-based violence (GBV).

**OVER  
30%**

of female IDPs are living in shelter conditions that are lacking in safety, dignity and privacy including living in tents, makeshift shelters, destroyed houses, or the open air.



# INTERNALLY DISPLACED CHILDREN



In Gaza, the cumulative impact of the blockade and recurrent escalations on the well-being and physical security of children was exacerbated by the 2014 hostilities, which resulted in the death of 551 children and the injury of another 3,436, many who have been left with life-long disabilities. More than 1,500 children were orphaned and an estimated 27,000 children had their homes completely destroyed and 44,000 children were displaced at the time of the survey.

**“Around 225,000 children in Gaza require psychosocial support and child protection services, and over 33,000 of the most vulnerable children are in need of individual child protection case management.”**

Humanitarian Needs Overview 2016, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

As underlined by the findings, there are indications of changes in children's behaviour as a result of psychological distress.<sup>5</sup> Most children in Gaza are exposed to the dangers of unexploded ordnance

(UXOs) and are especially vulnerable when they play in conflict-affected areas,<sup>6</sup> underlining the ongoing need for awareness-raising, especially among children.



## CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

**44,000**

children were displaced.  
(at the time of the survey)

**364**

cases of school drop-out were reported, of whom 307 were boys, mostly as a consequence of households resorting to child labour as a coping mechanism.

**58%**

of IDP households report an increase in psychosocial distress in their children, but only 6 per cent reported receiving psychosocial support.

**55%**

of IDP households report that they have no safe places for their children to play.



# IDP COPING MECHANISMS



Protracted conflict, repeated shocks, continued restrictions on freedom of movement, and constrained productive capacities have resulted in high unemployment and low household incomes in Gaza, and left 47 per cent of households in Gaza food insecure.<sup>7</sup> The survey revealed that purchasing food on credit is the most utilized coping mechanism among IDPs, often involving incurring debts to retailers. Although most IDP households indicate that they still consume three meals daily, the majority also report a decrease in food consumption and diversity, indicating significant levels of food insecurity.

## WHAT STRATEGIES DID YOUR HOUSEHOLD USE TO GET BY IN THE PAST YEAR?

**87%** purchased most of their food on credit.

**81%** borrowed money.

**70%** depend on humanitarian assistance.

**31%** sold household assets.

**20%** lived with a host family at some point.

**14%** shared cost with a host family.



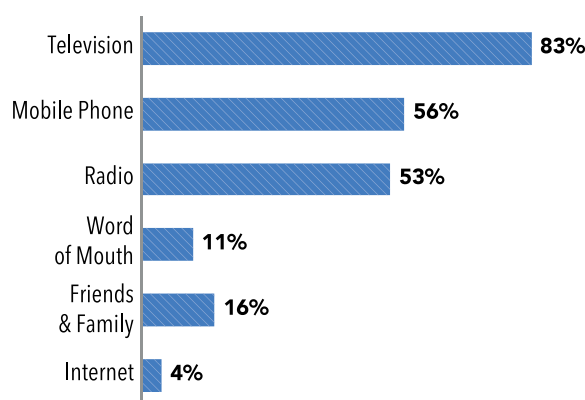
# IDP ACCESS TO INFORMATION



The findings of the survey indicate that IDP households rely most heavily on television, mobile phones and radios for information. 'Friends and family' and social media were also cited as common sources of information.

In terms of the type of information that IDP households want more of, information on the general situation ranked highest, with information on reconstruction efforts, general news, on the status of crossings and on the security situation next. These were followed closely by more practical information, including how to access financial support and how to register for assistance.

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AVAILABLE TO YOU NOW?

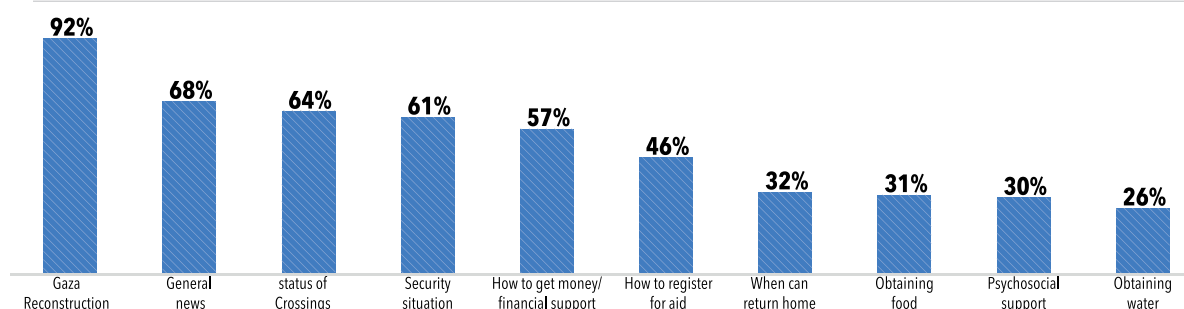


## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND THE IDP SURVEY

Affected people should be at the centre of any humanitarian response and the humanitarian community has committed itself to enhancing its accountability to affected persons.<sup>8</sup> Critical to this is ensuring that affected persons are able to access the information they need and provide their feedback and that aid agencies engage with communities at all stages of the response. Information and communications are recognized globally as critical forms of aid, as important as water, food and shelter. Without access to information, affected persons cannot access services or make the best decisions for themselves and their communities.

Community engagement has been a core component of the IDP re-registration process. The IDP Working Group established a feedback mechanism for IDPs, an SMS alert system that updated IDPs on the states of the profiling exercise, and a referral hotline that provided IDPs with information on where to access services and assistance. Questions to assess communities' information needs and preferred channels of communication were incorporated into the profiling exercise, based on global guidance, so that aid providers better understand how to respond to needs.<sup>9</sup> Materials in Arabic were also drafted to explain the exercise, its purpose and partners to communities. Finally, the training for volunteers, some of whom were IDPs themselves, included a module on engagement with communities in the field.

## WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE MORE OF?





# DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR IDPS



Obstacles on the entry into Gaza of the enormous amounts of construction materials needed for the repair and reconstruction of homes has been a major challenge. From 2007 to 2010 almost no material entered; from 2010 to 2014 the import of such materials into Gaza was limited to international organizations (following a lengthy approval procedure), but not for the private sector or for shelter self-help programmes.

Since October 2014, construction materials for repair have been entering under the “shelter repair stream” of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM). The introduction of the “residential stream” of the GRM in July 2015 has resulted in a significant increase in the number of trucks entering Gaza, enabling beneficiaries to access materials both for the reconstruction of homes that were completely destroyed and for new housing;<sup>10</sup> the latter is crucial to meeting the housing deficit resulting from natural growth and from previous conflicts, estimated cumulatively at around 70,000 housing units.

The Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism is a temporary agreement between the Government of Palestine and the Government of Israel, brokered by the United Nations in September 2014, to allow the entry of “dual use” items, including building materials for repairs and reconstruction of private housing and infrastructure damaged or destroyed during the hostilities, as well as new projects not related to damage during hostilities.

However, due to ongoing Israeli restrictions,<sup>11</sup> the slow pace of disbursement of pledges made by member states for reconstruction, and the inability of the Palestinian Government of National Consensus to assume effective government functions in Gaza, including approving requests submitted to the GRM, one year and a half after the end of the hostilities, and following a second winter, progress on reconstruction has been slow for IDPs. Reconstruction efforts may be further hampered by the decision of the Israeli authorities on 3 April 2016 to suspend the import of cement to the private sector in Gaza “following allegations that a substantial amount had been diverted from its intended legitimate beneficiaries,” and an acknowledgement that “those who seek to gain through the deviation of materials are stealing from their own people and adding to the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza.”<sup>12</sup>

As of end-February 2016, about 16 per cent (3,000) of the approximately 18,000 destroyed homes have been reconstructed or repaired, following cash assistance from UN agencies or other international support.<sup>13</sup> The repair and reconstruction of an additional 3,600 homes, or 20 per cent of the caseload, is currently ongoing. Funding has been confirmed for some 4,500 homes (25 per cent of the caseload) to be repaired or reconstructed in 2016, leaving a funding gap for 6,600 homes, or about 37 per cent of the caseload.

## AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY:

63%

of IDP households have not yet started house repair.

61%

of IDP households who started repairs have used humanitarian assistance to repair their homes.

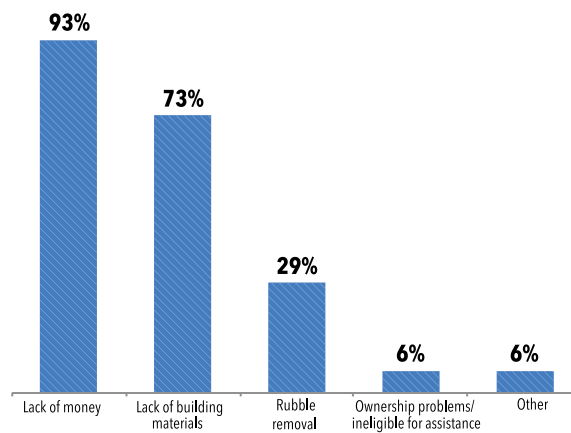
55%

of IDP households who started repairs have gone into debt to repair their homes.

# OBSTACLES TO REPAIRING HOMES



IDPs cited the shortage of money and construction materials as the main obstacles to repairing their homes. Almost 1,000 IDP households cited obstacles regarding ownership and land tenure, meaning that their destroyed home had been built without the requisite permission on government or Waqf land, and signifying that they are ineligible for reconstruction assistance on the original site.



Masa'ad Attallah Abu Gaddaieen, Beit Lahia.

© Photo by OCHA

## CASE STUDY: "I HAVE LOST MY HOME, I HAVE LOST EVERYTHING".

The family home of Masa'ad Attallah Abu Gaddaieen, from Beit Lahia, was totally destroyed during the 2014 hostilities. "We managed to visit our home during the temporary ceasefire 25 days into the hostilities. We found our home and around 95 other homes in the area completely destroyed. We were shocked and helpless; it was all gone, everything we had struggled to build. I have worked all my life to have a house of my own, and then the Israeli bulldozers came and destroyed it in seconds."

After a number of moves between temporary shelters, Masa'ad and his family erected a makeshift shelter from plastic and fabric near their destroyed home where they are still residing. They have received regular rental assistance from UNRWA, the last grant being in December 2015. However, as their family home was built without permission on government land, they do not qualify for a reconstruction grant unless they can find a replacement site elsewhere.

# THE WAY FORWARD

At the present rate, it will take years to address the massive reconstruction and repair needs, adding to the general frustration of the population following years of movement restrictions, rising unemployment and poverty. Large-scale reconstruction within a reasonable time period, allowing for a durable solution to the plight of IDPs, including those from previous conflicts, is essential to reduce vulnerability and to enable the realization of their human rights, and to avoiding an environment conducive to a new round of violence. Such a solution requires a range of measures, including:

**1** The removal of restrictions on the import of building materials, towards a full lifting of the blockade.

**2** A solution to the internal Palestinian divide to allow the relevant Palestinian authorities to discharge their government functions effectively.

**3** Expedited disbursement of funds pledged by donors for the reconstruction of Gaza.

*"I have just returned from Gaza where I visited the Ash Shuja'iyyeh neighbourhood that had been devastated during the conflict in 2014. It was encouraging in fact to see the visible positive changes and new construction, as life is reborn out of the rubble. But I am too well aware that work is yet to start on the homes of some 74 per cent of families displaced in 2014. Rebuilding their houses however will not be enough. We must secure peace and focus on building Gaza for the future. This means providing clean water and sufficient energy, creating jobs and a sustainable economy, restoring free movement for people and goods and, above all, ensuring integration between the West Bank and Gaza under a single democratic and legitimate Palestinian Authority."*

Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process  
Briefing to the Security Council on the Situation in the Middle East, 18 February 2016.





# IDP RE-REGISTRATION AND VULNERABILITY PROFILING EXERCISE

Since the 2014 hostilities in Gaza, major responses have been provided to IDPs in terms of protection, food assistance and temporary shelter assistance. However, the capacity of humanitarian actors to respond to their needs has been hampered by major gaps in registration and profiling, critical to establishing the current location of IDPs, their living conditions and vulnerabilities.

During the hostilities, UNRWA and the Ministry of Social Affairs conducted an initial registration of IDPs but, following the ceasefire in August 2014, the majority of IDPs left their emergency shelters or host families without an organized deregistration being conducted. Between August and December 2015, the IDP Re-registration and Vulnerability Profiling Exercise, an inter-agency, inter-cluster humanitarian initiative coordinated by OCHA,<sup>14</sup> conducted field visits to the approximately 16,000 families still displaced, in order to identify needs, improve responses and advocate for their rights. The exercise also served to improve the level of preparedness for future emergencies, as it led to the establishment of local coordination structures and a unified registration form. Some 240 field workers were deployed to collect data at the household level, constituting a network of local information collectors and trained staff that can be deployed in future emergencies. The findings



of the survey have been used for operational purposes throughout the exercise, with critical cases referred to appropriate actors for immediate response. As a result of the exercise, a unified database now exists on all those who lost their homes as a result of the 2014 conflict, except for negligible portion of IDPs, estimated at less than one per cent, who could not be traced or refused to participate. The database was made accessible online for humanitarian and development actors, and decision makers to increase understanding of IDPs, their needs, vulnerabilities and risks.

# ENDNOTES

1. Fatality figures, *Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict*; injury data from the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Handicap International has identified 2,090 people with injuries that require rehabilitation and 4,385 persons with disabilities as particularly vulnerable. *Healing the Wound, Handicap International and partners' Gaza Emergency Response Action Report*, March 2015.
2. "At least 262 schools were damaged in Israeli air strikes. Three public schools were completely destroyed and at least 23 were severely damaged. In addition, 274 kindergartens were damaged." *Children and Armed Conflict, Report of the Secretary-General*, 5 June 2015, para. 98. Thirteen health structures belonging to public and private health providers were destroyed and 104 were damaged during the conflict, Health sub-sector, *Detailed Needs Assessment and Recovery Strategy*. Health and Nutrition Cluster partners have identified 80,000 people with limited access to health services as a result of the destruction of health facilities serving their immediate communities (Ash Shuja'iyyeh, Juhor ad Dik and Khuza'a).
3. Shelter Cluster Palestine: *Shelter Cluster Monthly Report*, January 2016. During "Cast Lead", 6,268 homes were destroyed or severely damaged; United Nations Development Programme. 2010. *One Year After: Gaza – Early Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment*, p. 9.
4. The average size of families in Gaza is 6.3 with a total fertility rate being 4.3 per woman UNRWA, *Health Department 2014 Annual Report*, <http://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/health-department-annual-report-2014>
5. Gaza Child Protection Working Group, *Child Protection Rapid Assessment Report*, October 2014. [http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/03/Child-Protection-Rapid-Assessment--Gaza\\_2014.pdf](http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/03/Child-Protection-Rapid-Assessment--Gaza_2014.pdf) from August 2014 to end-2015, 15 people were killed and 91 injured by UXOs. 39 of the verified casualties were children.
6. From August 2014 to end-2015, 15 people were killed and 91 injured by UXOs. 39 of the verified casualties were children.
7. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Summary of Preliminary Results of SEFSec 2013-2014*, [http://fsccluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/sefsec\\_2014\\_summary\\_report.pdf](http://fsccluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/sefsec_2014_summary_report.pdf)
8. See the commitments made by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2011, which was further developed into an operational framework when the Task Force on Accountability towards Affected Populations was established in July 2012 under the IASC.
9. Questions were selected from those recommended by the CDAC Network, *Assessing Information and Communication Needs*, May 2014.
10. According to the Government of Israel, over 4.5 million tonnes of construction materials have entered Gaza since October 2014, including 1.2 million tonnes under the GRM. Under the GRM, some 80,000 beneficiaries have purchased all the material allocated to them for repair of their shelters. Regarding reconstruction, as of 7 April, almost 12,000 beneficiaries are participating in the "residential stream", of whom 2,182 have purchased all construction materials needed for reconstruction and 4,331 have purchased some of the materials needed. See <http://grm.report/#/>
11. Although the removal of aggregates from the list of goods identified by the Israeli authorities as having a "dual use" (civilian and military) in 2015 was positive, a reduction in the thickness of permissible wood in August 2015, has had a very negative impact on projects, including temporary housing solutions for IDPs.
12. Statement by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, on the suspension of the private import of cement into Gaza, <http://www.unsco.org/Documents/Statements/SC/2016/Statement%20by%20UN%20Special%20Coordinator%20Mladenov%20-%204%20April%202016.pdf>
13. Grants reach up to USD 50,000 per unit for reconstruction, and an average of USD 12,000 in the case of repairs.
14. Partners comprised the relevant line ministries, Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH), municipalities, UNRWA, the Palestine Red Crescent Society PRCS, the cluster system, and national and international NGOs, as well community-based organizations and IDPs themselves.



**OCHA**

United Nations Office  
for the Coordination of  
Humanitarian Affairs  
occupied Palestinian territory

P. O. Box 38712  
East Jerusalem 9138602  
[www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org)

Tel. +972 (0)2 582 9962  
Fax +972 (0)2 582 5841  
[ochaopt@un.org](mailto:ochaopt@un.org)