

# FAST FACTS

United Nations  
Development Programme



## The Gaza Strip - Facts, Figures and UNDP's Response to the Ongoing Crisis

The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated places on earth, with a total area of **365 km<sup>2</sup>** and a population of over **1.4 million**. Against the backdrop of occupation, the elections in 2006, the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip, and the resulting escalation in tensions, the situation for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip has worsened, with marked increases in unemployment, poverty and deaths. This situation has been compounded by the recent military incursion. Not only have people's livelihoods been severely affected, but entire families are rendered homeless. In addition, the crippling effects of the closures have been widely felt, with hundreds of thousands of jobs being lost, people prevented from reaching their places of work, children unable to attend their schools, fuel and import shortages kept at a bare minimum, and the majority of the population dependant on humanitarian assistance.



*A child waiting to collect water in Rafah near the Gaza Strip's border with Egypt*

### Economy

The Gazan economy has come to a near standstill during the last 18 months due to a combination of unemployment, closures, and restrictions placed on workers, industries, goods and services. With unemployment in Gaza reaching alarmingly high levels, the recent incursion has further paralyzed economic development, destroying much of the remaining productive resources, capital stock, and employment opportunities.

### Agriculture

The Gazan economy is largely dependant on agriculture, however due to closures and land razing, this sector has been greatly affected. During the last incursion, there has been an increase in food insecurity and loss of livelihoods in the Strip. More specifically, the recent military operation has resulted in the demolition of greenhouses and agricultural infrastructure, the uprooting of trees, contamination of agricultural land, losses in livestock, and widespread damage to crops, with total losses reaching over **US\$102 million**.

### Infrastructure

Essential infrastructure in the Gaza Strip have been devastated by the lack of construction materials, equipment and spare parts resulting from the blockade, and the destruction incurred during

### MATTERS OF FACT

- **Population:** 1,416,543
- **Total area:** 365 km<sup>2</sup> (45km long, 2-5km wide)
- **Population growth:** 3.3%
- **Number of registered Palestine refugees:** 961,645
- **Gazan refugee population as a percentage of total:** 68.4%
- **Number of refugee camps:** 8  
The largest and most densely populated Palestinian refugee camp is **Jabaliya**, just north of Gaza City, where **90,000** people live in an area of 3km<sup>2</sup>.
- **Unemployment:** 45.5%
- **Percentage of population living below the poverty line (US\$2 per day):** 79.4%
- **Approximately 100,000 Palestinians have been displaced during the last incursion**

the recent military operation. The result is that many are left without water electricity and communications. In addition, during the last incursion, municipal buildings and schools were damaged or destroyed and roads rendered inoperative, resulting in approximately 600,000 tons of concrete rubble that need to be removed.

### UNDP/PAPP's Response

In response to the complex set of problems facing the Gaza Strip, UNDP, during the last military operation, distributed food packages to over 30,000 Palestinians not served by UNRWA, in Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun, Jabalia, Rafah and Gaza City. Funded by the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahayan Foundation, in partnership with the Palestinian Association for Development and Reconstruction – PADR/Gaza, the food aid programme delivered US\$500,000 in emergency relief.

In its capacity as co-lead of the UN early recovery team, UNDP is working with the Palestinian Authority, and national and international partners to assess damages and needs, and devise plans for rebuilding. UNDP has mobilized its team in the occupied Palestinian territory and deployed early recovery experts to assist in rapid assessments in Gaza. These assessments set the basis for recovery and reconstruction and will feed into the Palestinian Authority's Gaza Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan.

In addition, UNDP has commissioned a household survey in order to understand the recovery priorities of the Palestinian people living in Gaza. Initial findings indicate that Gaza's economy will require significant aid and will take years to fully recover. The survey, with a random sample size of 1,815 households from the five governorates of the Gaza Strip, revealed that two thirds of Gazans are currently living below the poverty line and the latest round of violence has exacerbated this situation.

UNDP has also signed an agreement with the Palestinian Authority and is providing a total contribution of US\$50 million to fund cash assistance packages to the Gazans population. The initial phase of the package has already been implemented at the cost of US\$ 20.3 million.

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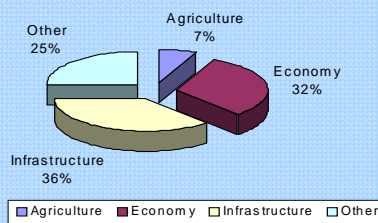


While UNDP/PAPP estimates that over US\$75 million of development investment is already lost, an immediate multi-dimensional recovery strategy is needed. Such a strategy must focus on the restoration of access and movement, the restitution and reconstruction of basic services and infrastructure, the reduction of additional risks and vulnerabilities, and additional investments in livelihoods, shelter, governance systems, security, and rule of law, and environmental sustainability.

## UNDP/PAPP in Gaza

The volatile political and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), especially in the Gaza Strip, confronts UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) with a number of challenges that hinder its initiatives in providing essential humanitarian and development assistance. The lack of access of persons and materials, and increased insecurity, resulted in substantive operational limitations. The Gaza Strip has been in the UN security phase 4 since the Disengagement by the Government of Israel in August 2005. This has placed serious restrictions on the movement of staff and their capacity to oversee projects.

### UNDP/PAPP Support to Gaza by Sector (1985-Feb.2009)



UNDP/PAPP has an US\$80 million operation in the Gaza Strip, mainly concentrating on labour intensive infrastructure activities, aimed at creating jobs, sustaining livelihoods and improving housing, water, sanitation, education and health services. UNDP/PAPP's ability to implement programmes has been impeded, leading to the freeze of a number of infrastructure projects, which represent over 90% of programmatic activities in Gaza.

UNDP/PAPP is also active in the humanitarian sector, especially in terms of providing emergency job creation opportunities such as emergency re-housing projects. It has also been playing a role in supporting NGOs and civil society organizations that are providing crucial services in the areas of health, education and mental health. Some of the main initiatives that UNDP/PAPP is implementing in Gaza include :

### Emergency Support to Civil Society Organizations Project

This project aims to enhance the role of civil society organizations in delivering better services to communities. This is done by supporting a number of civil society organizations in various social development projects that have an impact on the local community.

### Emergency Response Programme

This programme which is implemented throughout the Gaza Strip, aims to enhance the resilience of the population through the provision of emergency livelihood support, utilizing emergency job creation schemes in areas like solid waste management, agriculture and fishery. It lays the foundation for advanced early recovery planning and programming, along with key development partners. UNDP/PAPP has secured US\$ 14.8 million out of Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (\$2.8 million), and UAE (\$3 million) resources.

### Deprived families Economic Empowerment Programme (DEEP)

This US\$30 million project targeting the West Bank and Gaza aims, to empower families living in chronic poverty to achieve economic dependence and self-reliance. Families receive a package of financial and non-financial (Promotional Social Safety Net) services that address their needs. Five NGOs are targeting over 1000 families in the northern, middle, and southern parts of the Gaza Strip, with an allocated budget of approximately US\$3.5 million.

Since 1985, UNDP/PAPP has been implementing projects in Gaza worth over US\$321 million. Despite the challenges and uncertainties that lie ahead, UNDP/PAPP is determined to continue its broad support and assistance to the people of the Gaza Strip.

