

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 km²** and population of over **1.4 million**. Since the elections in 2006 and 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 levels and deaths. Not only have people's livelihoods been severely affected during this period, but entire families have been rendered homeless. The crippling effect of closures have been widely felt with hundreds of thousands of jobs being lost, the remaining some prevented from reaching their places of work, children unable to attend their schools, fuel and import shortages are kept at the bare minimum, and the majority of the population dependant on humanitarian assistance.



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

Economy

The Gazan economy has been greatly affected during the last 18 months due to a combination of unemployment, closures, and restrictions placed on workers and industries. With unemployment in Gaza reaching alarmingly high levels, even the ever-decreasing number of Palestinian labourers permitted to enter Israel to work have been regularly prevented from doing so.

Agriculture

The Gazan economy is largely dependant on agriculture, however due to closures and land razing, this sector has been greatly affected, particularly during the last incursion, resulting in an increase of food insecurity in the area. Military operations have resulted in the demolition of greenhouses and agricultural infrastructure, razing of agricultural land and widespread damage to crops, with total losses reaching over **US\$93,000,000**.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure in the Gaza Strip has been severely affected by lack of construction materials, in addition to the destruction incurred during military operations. From electricity and sewerage networks, to access to roads and clean, running water, basic daily requirements have not been maintained. Particularly during the last incursion, municipal buildings and schools have been damaged or destroyed and roads rendered inoperative.

MATTERS OF FACT

- **Population:** 1,416,539
- **Total area:** 365 km² (45km long, 2-5km wide)
- **Population growth:** 3.66%
- **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 3km².
- **Unemployment:** 45.5%
- **Percentage of population living below the poverty line (US\$2 per day):** 79.4%
- **Approximately 90,000 Palestinians have been displaced during the last incursion**
- **Total losses in Agricultural sector during the last incursion reached approximately US\$93,000,000**

UNDP/PAPP's Response

In response to the complex-set of problems facing the Gaza Strip, UNDP/PAPP has 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.

UNDP/PAPP is also facilitating an early recovery cluster from which to comprehensively fulfill the Security Council's call on member states to support international efforts to alleviate the social and economic crisis in Gaza. Immediate responses will include the removal of unexploded ordinance and rubble clearance to ensure restoration of free movement and economic reconstruction.

While UNDP/PAPP estimates that over US\$75 million of development investment is already lost, the true scope of the harm done can only be determined after a ceasefire takes hold. At that stage, the UN family – in partnership with national and local actors – is prepared to conduct a full damage and needs assessment. An immediate multi-dimensional recovery strategy is needed with 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.

Despite the challenges and uncertainty that lies ahead, UNDP/PAPP is determined to continue its broad support and assistance to the people of the Gaza Strip.

