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Food Security Profiling of Rafah Governorate

Working Paper
Series No. 3 - 2009

Socio-Economic and Food Security (SEFSec) Monitoring System in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Based on data produced by the
Palestinian Central Bureau of
Statistics

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Methodology

The survey, conducted in Gaza Strip was originally planned to be conducted simultaneously with one in the West Bank in January and February 2009. However, as a result of the Israeli military Operation Cast Lead during 27th December 2008 to 18 January 2009, the data collection period was delayed. In order to reflect the post-conflict situation, the survey questionnaire was slightly altered. It should be recognised that due to this alteration, the current measurement of food security using income and expenditures does not account for the volume and value of food assistance received. While this data was collected in the West Bank and intended for the Gaza Strip, the appropriateness of this methodology was reconsidered in light of the war. In the same way as the West Bank, the methodology also does not incorporate other food security dimensions such as availability of food and utilization (consumption, nutritional status) of food. There is no single indicator able to capture all these dimensions in a simple way. In this regard, the survey, conducted in the Gaza Strip during April to June 2009 was designed to meet following objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the socio-economic characteristics of households residing in Gaza Strip after the Israeli military operation in Gaza;
2. Differentiate among the socio-economic conditions of Palestinian households according to the criteria of geographic location, locality type, sex, refugee status, and livelihood group;
3. Assess the overall trends in income and expenditure of households in the Gaza Strip after the war;
4. Identify household coping mechanisms, dietary diversity, priority needs
5. Provide an overview of assistance received by households and household's evaluation of this assistance; and
6. Provide evidence-based recommendations for food security policy and programming purposes.

The methodology used for this survey is largely consistent with the methodology used in the May 2008 Joint Rapid Food Security Survey in the Occupied Palestinian Territory conducted by WFP, FAO and UNRWA. Considering that the dataset is cross-sectional, the analysis is thus static using only income and expenditure. A third variable reflecting the changing socio-economic impact of Israeli measures was added to make the model more dynamic. These variables were used to cluster the data into three clusters of households that are homogeneous with respect to how they were impacted during the past 6 months by the Israeli measures. The households within the clusters were then classified according to their expenditure and income levels (3 way crosstabs) based on which the food insecurity levels were determined. The result generated by this survey was analyzed at four levels: governorate level; refugee status; and type of localities (urban, rural, and refugee camps). For this purpose, all 5 governorates of Gaza Strip were visited, including urban areas, rural areas and refugee camps (for detailed methodology please refer to Annex 1 and for detailed procedures refer to the SEFSec West Bank Report published in August 2009). It is hoped that the current methodology will be fully institutionalized by PCBS in the framework of the SEFSec monitoring system. FAO and WFP have been supporting PCBS in this endeavour during the past three years.

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Governorate Food Security Profiling WBSG
XV. Rafah Governorate

A. Population and Demography

Table 1: Percentage of Registered Refugees out of Total Population

	Registered Refugees	Other	Total
Population	136,936	27,453	164,388
Percent	83.3%	16.7%	100%

Source: PCBS Population Census 2007

Rafah governorate is situated in the southern most part of the Gaza Strip below Khan Yunis governorate to the north. Approximately 12 percent of the Gaza Strip population live in Rafah governorate or a total population of 164,388 people. The average household size in Rafah is 6.5 members with an estimated 25,290 households residing in Rafah governorate.

Approximately 83.3 percent of the Rafah governorate population are registered refugees. The distribution of the total population by locality is as follows: 74.9 percent of the Rafah households reside in urban areas, 3.8 percent reside in rural areas and 21.3 percent reside in refugee camps. In the Gaza Strip, the lines drawn between urban and rural are blurry and the population is concentrated in the urban areas.

Table 2: Distribution of Population by Locality

	Urban	Rural	Refugee Camps	Total
Population	123,127	6,247	35,015	164,388
Percent	74.9%	3.8%	21.3%	100%

Source: PCBS Population Census 2007

B. Labour Force

Labour participation and has been on the decline between the second quarter and the fourth quarter of 2008. The labour force participation stood at 40.8 percent in the second quarter of 2008 and decreased to 39.6 percent by the fourth quarter of 2008. In between the fourth quarter of 2008 and the first quarter of 2009, the labour force participation rate rose to 41.2 percent and decreased again in the second quarter of 2009 to 38.5 percent. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate between the second quarter and third quarter of 2008 decreased from 35.6 percent to 34.1 percent. By the fourth quarter of 2008, unemployment rose to 43.1 percent. Unemployment declined again to 38.2 percent in the first quarter of 2009 and continued to decrease so that by the second quarter of 2009, unemployment stood at 36.1 percent.

Table 3: Labour Force Participation and Unemployment Rate

	Q2 08	Q3 08	Q4 08	Q1 09	Q2 09
Labour Force Participation	40.8%	38.0%	39.6%	41.2%	38.5%
Unemployment %	35.6%	34.1%	43.1%	38.2%	36.1%

Source: PCBS Labour Force Surveys

Table 4 below provides a closer examination of changes in the population, labour force participation and employment in absolute numbers. By the second half of 2008, the population above the age of 15 (the working age population) grew by 1,457 persons. At the same time, the number of jobs available dropped by 3,294 with the creation of 2,709 unemployed persons which dropped the number of labour force participants by 585 persons. The drop in the number of labour force participants is a result of those joining the discouraged workers. In the first half of 2009, the number of people above the age of 15 grew by 1,479. Labour force participation dropped by 511 people while the unemployed dropped by 2,908 persons. At the same time, the number of jobs available grew by 2,396 partially absorbing the unemployed. Again, the drop in labour force participation is a result of those unemployed joining the discouraged workers.

Table 4: Changes in Population, Labour Force Participation, Employment and Unemployment

	Q2 08	Q3 08	Q4 08	Q1 09	Q2 09	Change 2 nd Half 2008	Change 1 st Half 2009
Population	166,854	168,106	169,366	170,637	171,916	2,512	2,550
Above 15 years of age	96,775	97,501	98,233	98,969	99,712	1,457	1,479
Labour Force participation #	39,484	37,050	38,900	40,775	38,389	-585	-511
Unemployed	14,056	12,634	16,766	15,576	13,858	2,709	-2,908
Employed	25,428	24,416	22,134	25,199	24,531	-3,294	2,396

Source: PCBS Population Census 2007 and Labour Force Survey Rounds

C. Wages and Prices

Nominal wages refers to money paid as opposed to real wages representing actual purchasing power and has been readjusted to the Consumer Price Index. In the second quarter of 2008, the average nominal daily wage stood at 63.20 New Israeli Shekels (NIS) while the average real daily wage stood at 54.50 NIS; a gap of 14 percent between nominal and real daily wages during this period. While the nominal daily wage appeared to decrease in the third quarter of 2008, at the same time real daily wages also decreased with the gap actually widening to 16 percent. In the fourth quarter of 2008 to the first quarter of 2009, nominal daily wages and real wages fluctuated appearing to decrease between the two periods, however, the gap remained the same at 16 percent. By the second quarter of 2009, average nominal daily wage increase at the same time as average real daily wage increased however, the gap between the two widened slightly to 17 percent signalling a further reduction in household's purchasing power.

Table 5: Average Nominal Daily Wage vs. Average Real Daily Wage

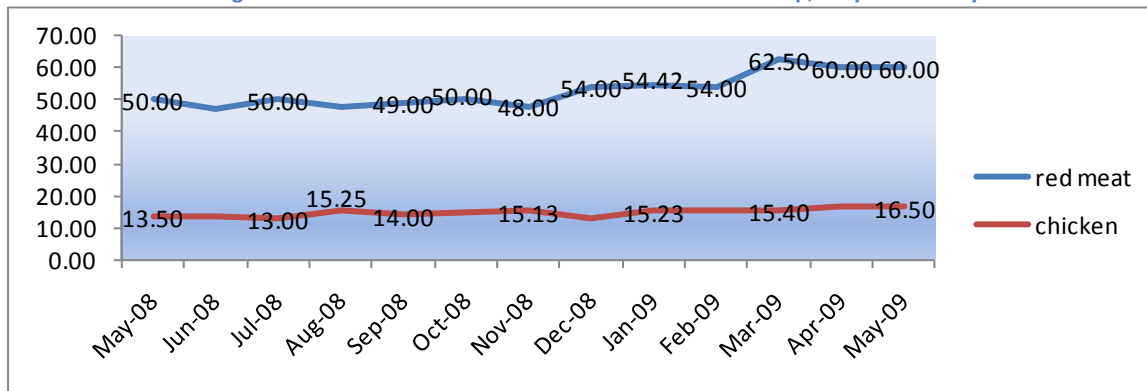
	Q2 08	Q3 08	Q4 08	Q1 09	Q2 09
Average nominal daily wage NIS	63.2	53.9	65.2	61.1	64
Average real daily wage NIS	54.5	45.5	55.0	51.2	53.3

Source: PCBS Data

Due to the protracted blockade, the entire population living in the Gaza Strip are generally hit by the same price shocks. If data was collected on the consumer price index at governorate level, it would most likely show insignificant differences when comparing from one governorate to another. However, the prices of selected food items have been collected and disaggregated by the north, middle and south areas of the Gaza Strip. Since Rafah governorate is located in the south of the Gaza Strip, basic indicators for food items collected in the south area best reflects the socio-economic conditions for this area. The prices of red meat and chicken are shown in Figure 1 below, and the price of a variety of selected food items are shown in Figure 2.

The price per kilo of red meat remained relatively stable from the beginning of May 2008 to November 2008 where it stood at 48 NIS per kilo. Prices rose from December to 54 NIS and slightly rose in January 2009 to decrease again to 54 NIS per kilo by February. In March 2009, the price of red meat peaked at 62.50 NIS but appeared to stabilise at 60 NIS by May 2009. In contrast, the price of chicken incrementally increased only peaking in August 2008 at 15.25 NIS. The price of chicken per kilo which stood at 13.50 NIS in May 2008, by May 2009 increased to 16.50 NIS per kilo.

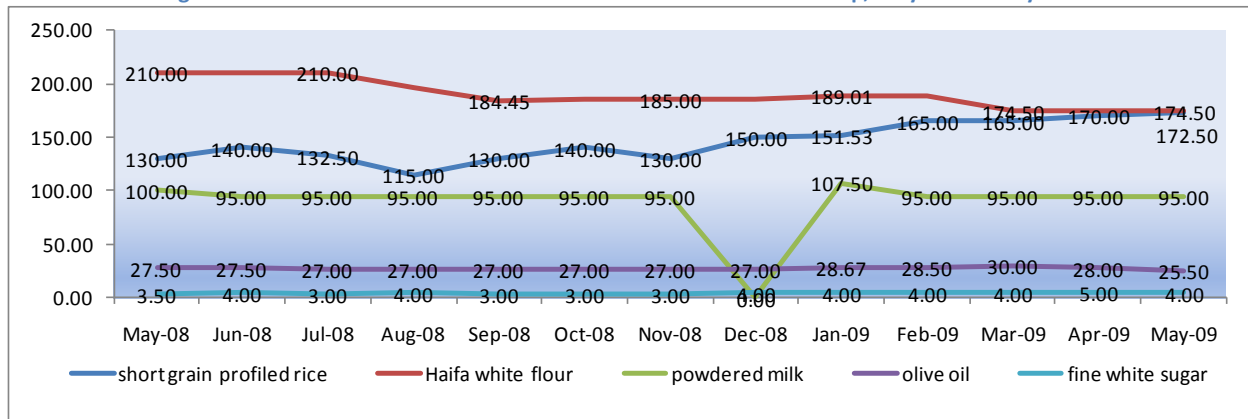
Figure 1: Prices of Red Meat and Chicken – South Gaza Strip, May 2008 - May 2009



Source: PCBS Data

Between May and July 2008, the price of Haifa white flour remained stable at 210 NIS. Prices continued to decrease onwards and by May 2009, the price of Haifa white flour stood at 174.50 NIS. The price of short grain rice increased in June 2008 to 140 NIS, decreased to 115 NIS by August of the same year, to increase again by October 2008 to 140 NIS. From December 2008 to May 2009, the price of rice rose to reach 172.50 NIS; 9 percent higher than the long term average. In comparison, the price of powdered milk, olive oil and fine white sugar remained stable. In December 2008, no price indicator for powdered milk was collected which accounts for the anomaly in Figure 2.

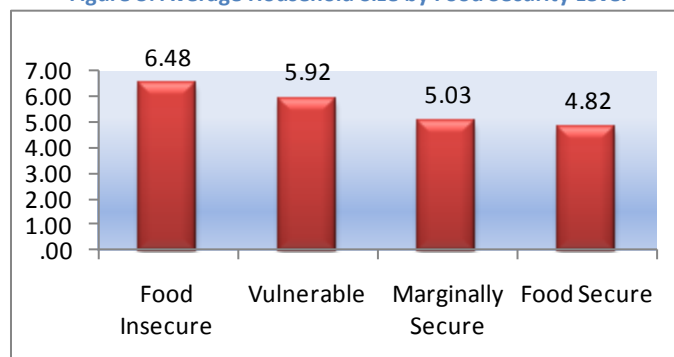
Figure 2: Basic Price Indicator of Selected Food Items- South Gaza Strip, May 2008 - May 2009



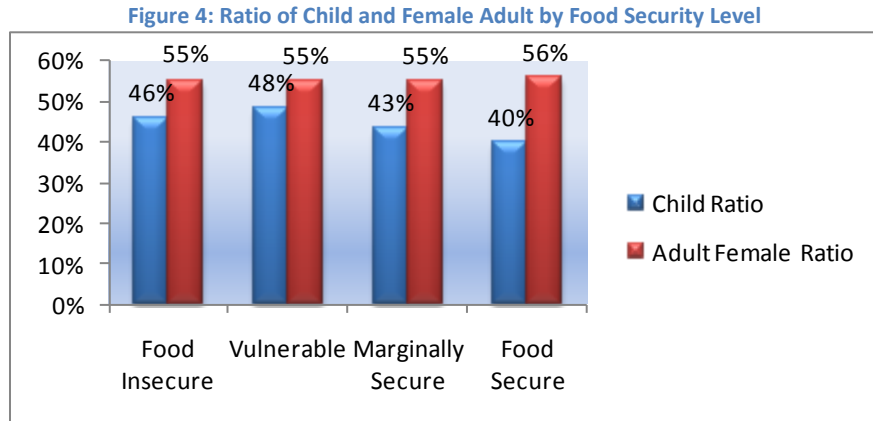
D. Household Composition among Food Insecure Households

Findings of the Gaza household food security profiling show that the larger the size of the household, the greater the odds are for households to become food insecure. In Rafah governorate, the average household size for food insecure households is 6.48 members. This figure lowers in proportion to the food security thresholds. Food secure households have the lowest average household size at 4.82 members.

Figure 3: Average Household Size by Food Security Level

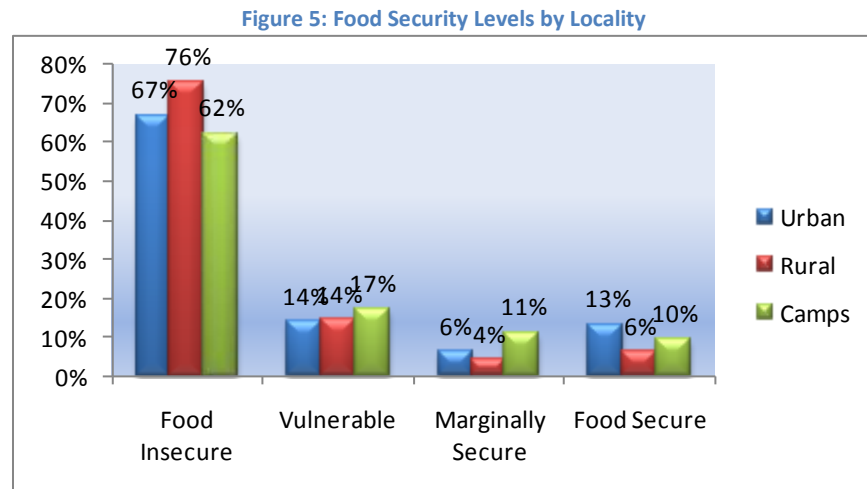


Contrary to the overall Gaza Strip household profiling, the adult female ratio does not seem correlate with the household food security levels. The composition of households shows that the ratio of female adults within the household is 55 percent for the food insecure, vulnerable and marginally secure. Food secure households register a 1 percent higher difference in the composition of female adults within the households compared to the other food security thresholds. In contrast, the child ratio within the household correlates with the food security levels of households. Generally, the higher the ratio of children the greater the odds are for households to be food insecure (with the exception of the vulnerable households which do not really follow the trend). The child ratio of food insecure households is 46 percent where as for food secure households, the ratio is 40 percent.



E. Food Insecurity Levels

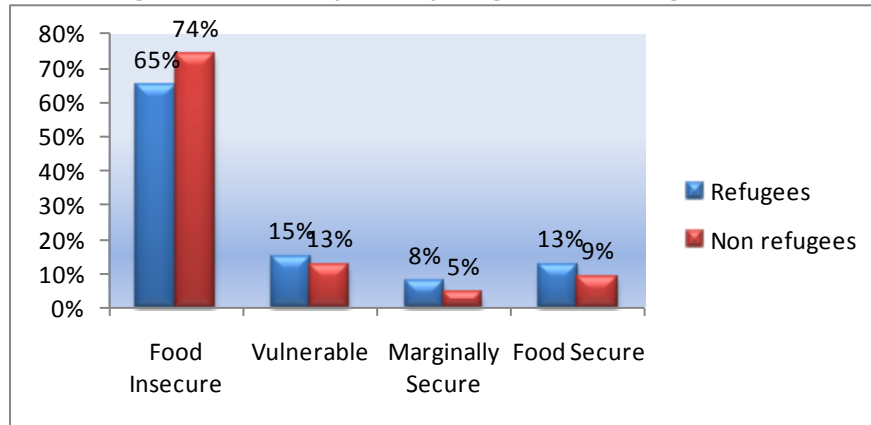
The breakdown of food security groups by locality shows that rural areas have a higher proportion of food insecure households compared to urban households and refugee camps. Seventy-six percent of rural households are food insecure compared to 67 percent of urban households. Food insecurity is lowest among refugee camp households at 62 percent. Keeping in mind that the concentration of the population is within urban areas, in absolute numbers food insecurity is actually higher within urban areas compared to rural areas.



Consistent with findings of the Gaza Strip household food insecurity profiling¹, food insecurity is higher amongst non refugee households compared to refugee households. Seventy-four percent of non refugee households compared to 65 percent of refugee households are food insecure. Alternatively, 13 percent of refugee households are food secure compared to 9 percent of non-refugee households.

¹ WFP/FAO, Working Paper Series 2, Household Food Insecurity Profiling, Gaza Strip, forthcoming.

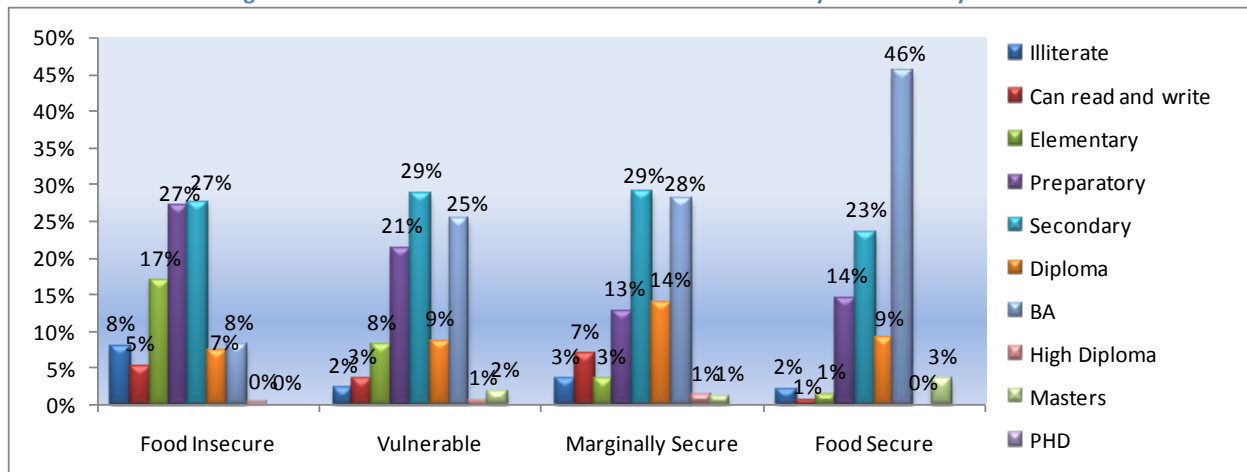
Figure 6: Food Security Levels by Refugee and Non Refugee Status



F. Education of Head of Household and Food Security Level

The following figure shows a correlation between education and food security. Typically households have a greater opportunity to be food secure if the head of household has completed higher level education. For example, 46 percent of those that have completed a B.A. degree are food secure compared to 8 percent who are food insecure. The percentage of those who have completed their B.A. degree lowers in proportion to their lower food security threshold. Illiteracy rates amongst household heads are also lower in proportion to higher food security levels. Eight percent of those who are illiterate are food insecure compared to 2 percent who are food secure. Secondary level education show fewer disparities amongst the food security groups. Twenty-seven percent of those who have completed up to secondary level are food insecure, 29 percent are vulnerable and marginally secure and 23 percent are food secure. This suggests that secondary level education is the minimum level of educational attainment needed for households to be food secure or marginally secure although it does not guarantee it.

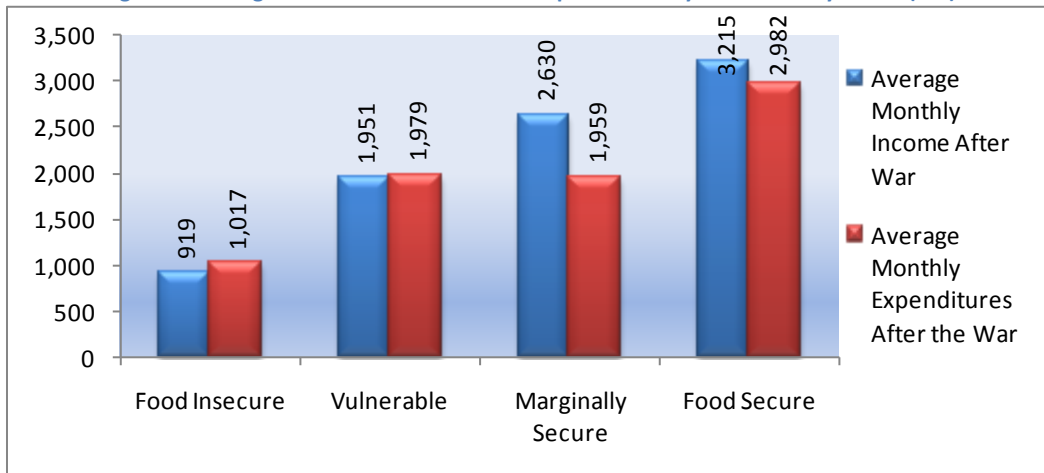
Figure 7: Educational Attainment of Heads of Households by Food Security Level



G. Income and Expenditure Levels

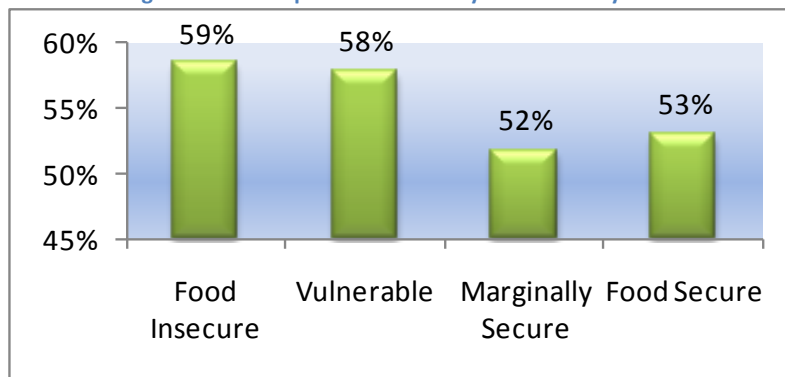
Similar to previous findings, food secure households report greater levels of income compared to expenditures whereas food insecure households report the opposite. It is likely that food secure households are able to save money whereas food insecure households are using credit to cope with shortfalls in their income. The average monthly expenditures of food secure households in Rafah governorate is 2,982 NIS whereas food insecure household's average monthly expenditure levels are 1,017 NIS. This means that food insecure households have an unmet 66 percent gap to achieve food security.

Figure 8: Average Post Conflict Income and Expenditures by Food Security Levels (NIS)



Food Insecure households show typically higher food expenditures out of the total compared to food secure households. This means that food insecure households have less disposable income on non food items. Food insecure households spend 59 cents of every dollar on food whereas food secure households spend 53 cents of every dollar on food. The PCBS thresholds for households who are worst off are those who spend over 44 cents of every dollar on food. Therefore all households in Rafah governorate are accordingly worse off.

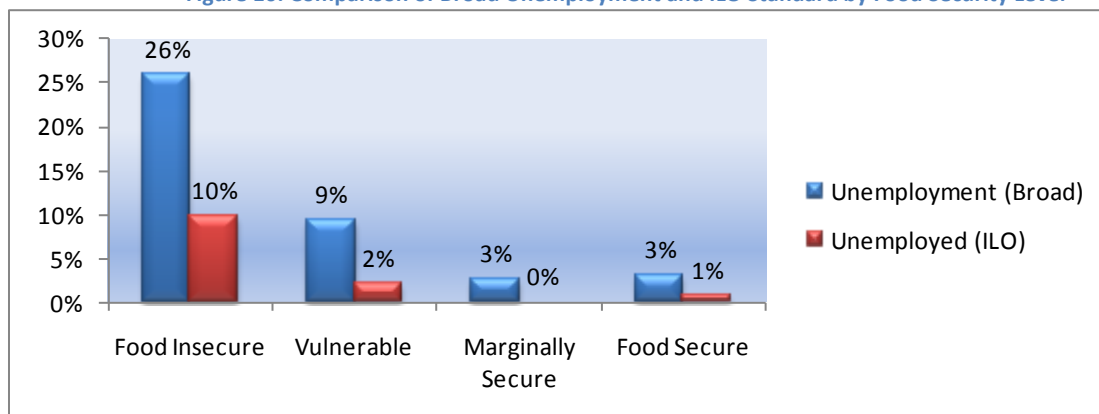
Figure 9: Food Expenditure Ratio by Food Security Level



H. Employment, Occupation and Sector of Employment of Heads of Households

The following figure illustrates that food insecurity is a consequence of unemployment leading to income poverty. Broad unemployment, representing the actual socio-economic situation in the Gaza Strip shows that 26 percent of food insecure heads of households are unemployed compared to only 3 percent of food secure households.

Figure 10: Comparison of Broad Unemployment and ILO Standard by Food Security Level



Typical of trends of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, food insecure households tend to be employed in elementary occupations; in low skilled casual labour. In Rafah governorate, 39 percent of food insecure heads of households are employed in elementary occupation, 24 percent in services and sales, 11 percent in crafts and related trade work and 9 percent as plant and machine operators. Only a minimal percentage of food insecure heads of households occupy areas of employment such as specialists (4%), professionals (4%), skilled agricultural workers (4%), legislative/senior managers (3%) and clerks (2%).

In comparison to food insecure households, the vast majority of food secure households are employed in services and sales at 48 percent. This is followed by employment as specialists, composed of 31 percent of food secure heads of households. A greater percentage of food secure households are employed as legislative or senior managers at 7 percent. Professionals, elementary occupation, crafts and related trade work, plant machine operators and clerks take up less than 5 percent each of food secure heads of households.

Figure 12: Occupation of Food Insecure Heads of Households

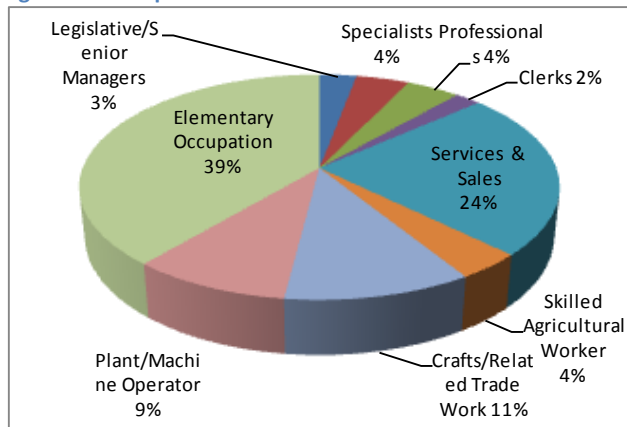
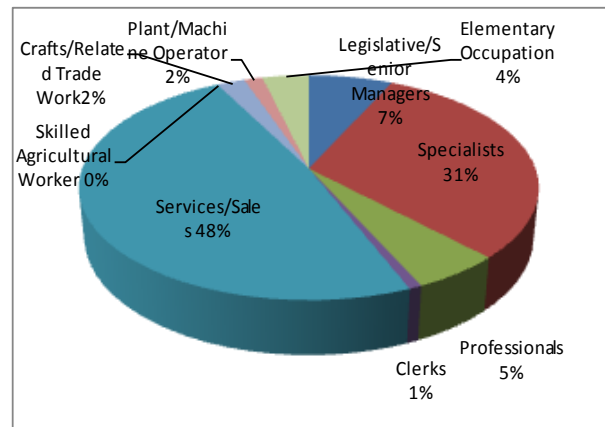


Figure 11: Occupation of Food Secure Heads of Households



Further limitations on the livelihoods of the Rafah population are illustrated in Table 6. The areas of employment in which food insecure heads of households are distributed are in agriculture and fishing, mining and manufacturing, construction and whole sale and retail trade. These areas of employment are to a large extent high risk forms of employment as they are reliant on free access in the movement of people and goods.

Agricultural and fisher folk's livelihoods are at risk of further erosion; these livelihoods are subjected to restrictions in the import of agricultural and fishing inputs, restrictions in the import and export of goods and limitations on farming land in proximity to the buffer zone and limitations on the number of nautical miles of fishing waters. Eighteen percent of food insecure heads of households compared to 1 percent of food secure heads of households are employed in agriculture and fishing.

Manufacturing in furniture, clothing, metal works is virtually at a halt in the Gaza Strip since the blockade began in June 2007. The inability of the Gaza Strip to now import raw materials means that employment within the manufacturing industry puts heads of households at high risk of food insecurity. For example, 6 percent of food insecure heads of households are employed in mining and manufacturing compared to only 2 percent of food secure heads of households.

The same restrictions in export and import applies to the whole sale retail trade resulting in a greater risk of households to be food insecure with 15 percent of the food insecure heads of households employed within this area.

Prior to the blockade, cement was imported into the Gaza Strip as no factory was established. The construction sector appears to be nonexistent with households reported to be employed in construction.

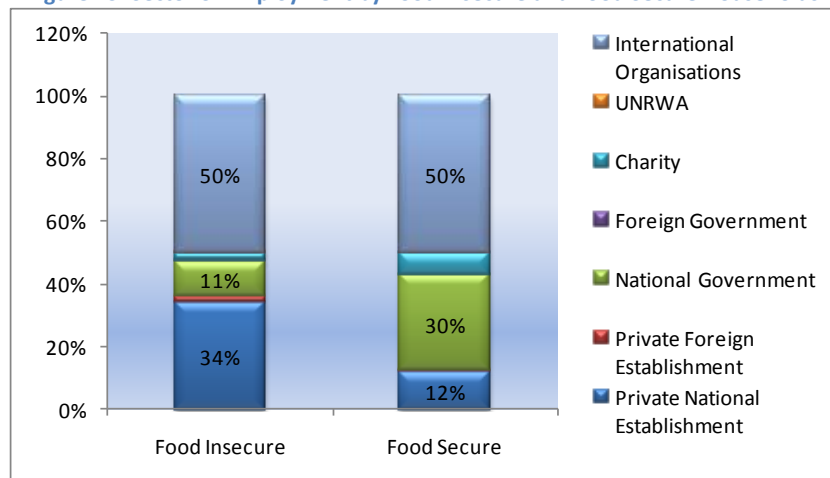
The vast majority of food secure households are employed in education at 56 percent, followed by health and social work at 20 percent and other social and personal care at 11 percent. These forms of employment are likely civil service positions providing households with a reliable government income at a sufficient pay scale.

Table 6: Area of Employment of Food Insecure and Food Secure Households

	Food Insecure	Food Secure
Agriculture and fishing	18%	1%
Mining & manufacturing	6%	2%
Construction	0%	0%
Wholesale retail trade	15%	2%
Restaurants and hotels	18%	5%
Transport storage communication	1%	0%
Finance insurance and mediation	12%	2%
Properties, rents and commercial businesses	0%	0%
Public administration and defense	0%	1%
Education	17%	56%
Health and social work	7%	20%
Other social and personal care	4%	11%
International organisations	3%	1%
Total	100%	100%

Findings of the survey show that in Rafah governorate, employment within international organisations provides equal opportunities for households to become food insecure or food secure. Typically, employment within the national government² provides the greatest odds for households to become food secure. For example, 30 percent of the food secure households compared to 11 percent of food insecure heads of households are employed in the national government. The vast majority of food insecure households are employed in private national establishments with thirty-four percent of food insecure heads of households are food insecure compared to 12 percent of the food secure.

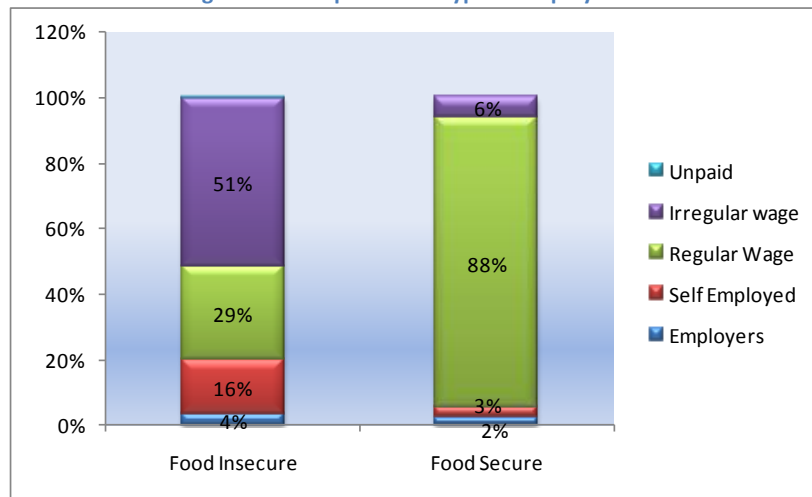
Figure 13: Sector of Employment by Food Insecure and Food Secure Households



² Employment in the national government refers to employment within the de facto government in the Gaza Strip although PNA employees are also captured within these figures.

Typically, the vast majority of food secure heads of households are employed in regular wage work; a total of 88 percent of food secure heads of households. Only 3 percent of the food secure heads of households are self-employed while 6 percent are employed in irregular wage work. In comparison, food insecure heads of households occupy a greater proportion of “wage risk” forms of employment such as irregular wage work and self-employment. Fifty-one percent of food insecure heads of households are employed in irregular wage work while 16 percent are self-employed. An additional determinant of the food security of households is the pay scale, evident in the 29 percent of food insecure households who are employed in regular wage work.

Figure 14: Comparison of Type of Employment



I. Targeting and Assistance

The following Figure 16 shows that out of the households who reported receiving assistance, 76 percent are food insecure households. In Rafah governorate, the distribution of assistance appears fairly well targeted. However, those households who reported receiving assistance continued to remain food insecure and 39 percent of households who reported that they do not receive food assistance are food insecure while 8 percent of those who reported receiving assistance are food secure³.

³ Although the volume and value of assistance was not included within the current methodology to measure food security, findings from the WFP/FAO Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey Report 2 published in November 2009 show that 76 percent of the entire population reported receiving assistance. Food assistance have managed to protect the kilo calorie food intake of households in the Gaza Strip, however, the volume of assistance is not sufficient to lift people out of their income poverty levels given the limited scope in delivering humanitarian assistance in the Gaza Strip.

Figure 15: Reported Assistance Received by Food Security Levels

