

Multi- Sectoral Needs Assessment

Gender and Inclusion

Brief

Occupied Palestinian Territory: July 2022

Background

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza has resulted in a protracted crisis for Palestinians, impeding access to essential services and livelihoods, and threatening their resilience and well-being. These challenges, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the escalation of the crisis in Gaza in 2021, particularly affect communities already vulnerable to pre-existing inequalities, such as women and girls¹. The purpose of this brief is to offer a **comprehensive overview of gender and social inclusion issues**, considering various intersecting factors such as: livelihoods, health, education, and accountability to affected people (AAP).

Sample

Assessed households*

West Bank total	4,179
- Areas A and B	1,855
- Area C	1,910
- East Jerusalem	244
- H2 (Hebron)	170
Gaza Strip total	4,152
- Deir al Balah	1,372
- Gaza	618
- Khan Yunis	1,014
- North Gaza	638
- Rafah	510

**Of which 962 were female-headed households (545 in the West Bank, 417 in Gaza).*

Methodology

Data for the MSNA was collected by the data collection partner, the Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics (PCBS), between May 29th to July 6th of 2022 by means of an in-person household level survey. The MSNA relied on a quantitative methodology, and the survey tool was designed in close collaboration with OCHA and representatives of the humanitarian clusters active in the oPt (Food Security, Health, Shelter, WASH, Education, and Protection), as well as other key stakeholders and thematic focal points. 8,331 households were randomly surveyed in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem, and H2 based on a two-stage stratified cluster sampling approach. The findings are representative with a 95% confidence level and a +/- 9% margin of error for all strata.

Key findings

- Reported rates of school attendance were slightly higher for school-aged girls than boys. This difference was particularly noticed at the secondary school level. Among the reasons for not regularly attending school or dropping out of school, boys were more commonly reported to lack interest in school or to have to work or support the household than girls.
- 19% of households in Gaza and 13% in West Bank reported having at least one member that was pregnant or lactating at the time of the data collection. Access to specialized reproductive health service for women of reproductive age (15-49 years) was perceived to be very limited in both regions, with respectively 86% of households in Gaza and 88% in the West Bank reporting no access to such services.
- Among households reporting risk of eviction from their shelter, female-headed households in West Bank (49%) were more likely to report fear of eviction due to Israeli orders compared to male-headed households (22%).
- 12% of households in the West Bank and 11% in Gaza reported that women and girls avoid certain areas because they feel unsafe there. An increase of safety concerns and signs of psychosocial distress for both boys and girls was observed compared to last year's MSNA.

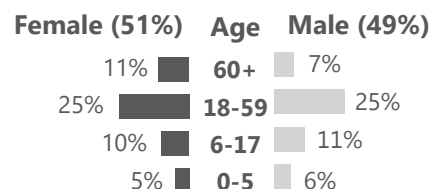
Key limitations

Findings disaggregated by the gender of the head of household are indicative only in nature. Individual level indicators were asked to respondents by proxy and therefore may reflect the perceptions of the respondent rather than the lived experience of specific individual household members. For other limitations, please refer to the full [MSNA 2022 report](#).

Key demographics

West Bank household demographics

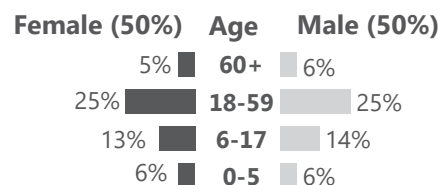
Composition of assessed households



27% of households are refugees

Gaza household demographics

Composition of assessed households



67% of households are refugees

Of all assessed households:

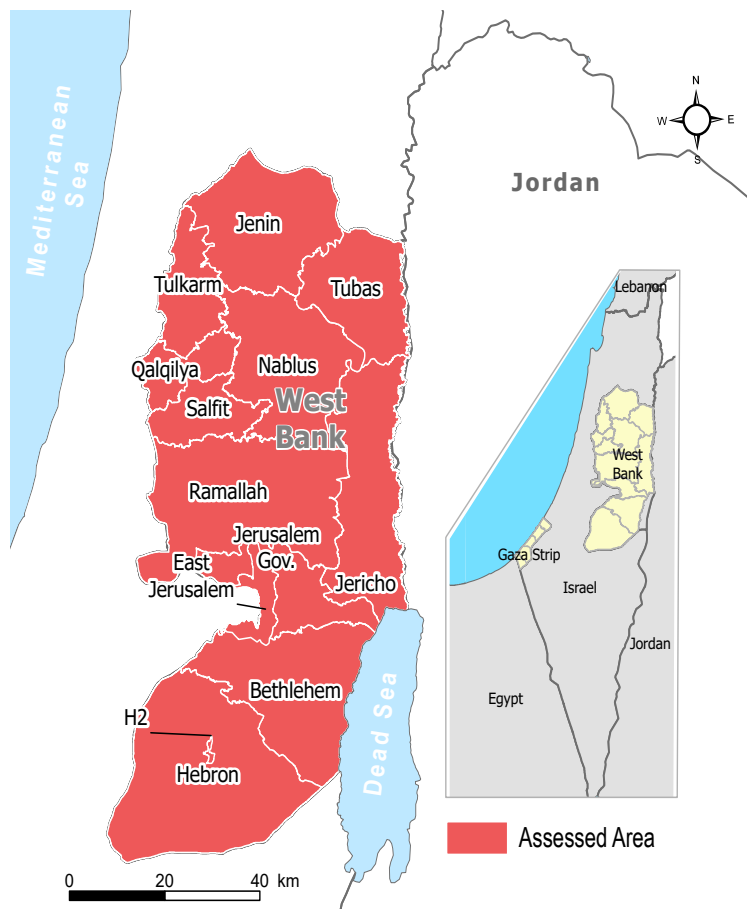
- 14%** have at least **one member with a disability**
- 6%** have at least **one child with a disability**

Among children aged 5 and above:

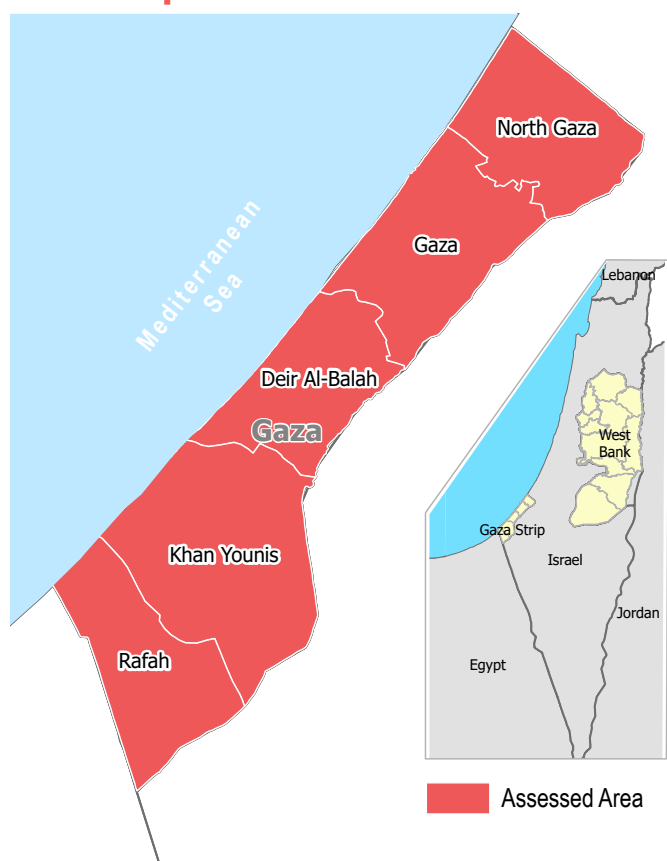
- 2%** of boys have a disability
- 1%** of girls have disability

Coverage maps

West Bank:



Gaza Strip:



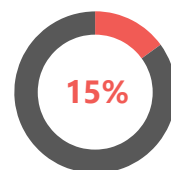
Livelihoods and gender

Many Palestinians are denied access to livelihoods which impact the capacity of households to meet their basic needs, resulting in a high reliance on aid and the usage of negative coping strategies.² This has led to high levels of food insecurity and limited access to essential services for the most vulnerable households³.

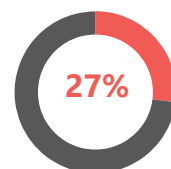
According to MSNA findings, 60% of households in Gaza and 21% in West Bank reported having at least one member (aged 15 years or over) unemployed and seeking work at the time of data collection. While investigating the gender dimension of this indicator, 15% of HHs reported having a female member unemployed and seeking work at the time of the interview, while this proportion was higher for men, with 27% of households reporting a male member unemployed and seeking work.

% of HHs in the oPt who reported ...

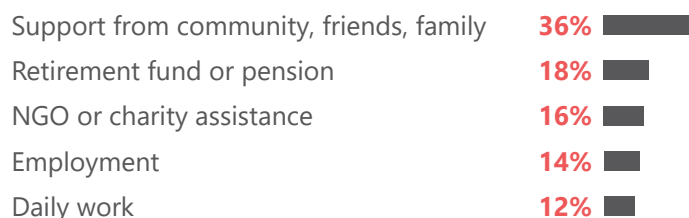
... a female member unemployed and seeking work at the time of data collection:



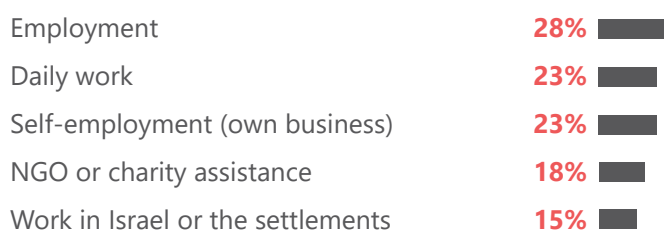
... a male member unemployed and seeking work at the time of data collection:



% of female-headed households (962 HHs) by most reported primary income sources



% of male-headed households (7,369 HHs) by most reported primary income sources



Occupied Palestinian Territory: July 2022

A large proportion of households in the oPt reported a decrease in their typical monthly income in the year prior to the data collection. **Specifically, 38% of female-headed households and 44% of male-headed households reported a decrease in income.**

Among **West Bank** female-headed households, **35%** of households reported “support from community, family, and friends” as their primary income source, compared to **7%** of male-headed households. Of all population groups assessed in the West Bank, female-headed households aged 60 and above were the most likely to report community support as their primary source of income (**47%**). **In Gaza, 60%** of female-headed households reported “NGO or charity assistance” as their primary income source (compared to **50%** of male-headed households) and **39%** reported community support as a primary income source (compared to **17%** of male-headed households).

Specific employment barriers were reported for certain vulnerable population groups in the West Bank and Gaza (including women, older persons, and persons with disabilities). When assessed households were questioned about the **main barriers to employment for women in the oPt**, the following were the most commonly identified barriers:

(42%) reported high competition for jobs and not enough jobs are available

(26%) reported a lack of employment opportunities for women

(22%) reported a lack of consent from a husband or male guardian

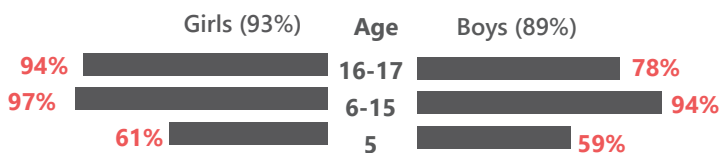
(17%) reported that childcare was either unavailable or unaffordable

Education and gender

Reported rates of school attendance for basic and secondary education were slightly higher for school-aged girls than for school-aged boys. The difference between girls and boys was more pronounced at the secondary school level, with 94% of school aged girls (16-17 years old) attending school compared to 78% of school-aged boys (16-17 years old).

It was more commonly reported for boys than girls to lack interest in school or to have to work or support the household, which might explain these differences in attendance.

% of school- aged children (5-17 years) attending school regularly (4 days a week), across the oPt:



The most commonly reported reasons for non-attendance, among those households with school-aged children not attending school:

Lack of interest (of children) in education	31%
Cannot afford school-related expenses	15%
Children working to support household	10%
Illness	9%

16% of households who reported not planning to enroll eligible school-aged children in school in the next school year.

Among households not planning to enroll eligible school-aged children, the most frequently reported reasons were:

	Gaza	WB
Cannot afford school fees	15%	5%
School cannot accommodate child's disability	10%	2%
Child is needed to support family through home-based tasks activities	8%	2%
My son/daughter is not interested in studying	14%	12%

School dropouts



Across the oPt, **14%** of school-aged children dropped out of school during the year previous to data collection.

% of households in the oPt reporting types of psychosocial support (PSS) available at school for children:

Trained counsellors	66%
Not sure	16%
No such support available	11%
Teachers trained on PSS	8%

Health and gender

Maternal care and access to services

The Health Cluster estimates that there are 210,000 pregnant and lactating women in the oPt. A 2021 study estimated that, in Gaza, 15% of pregnant women were expected to experience complications⁴, while another study assessed that one-in-four pregnant women is at risk of death during childbirth⁵. These figures, combined with the general difficulties in accessing healthcare observed in the MSNA, suggest that women are a particularly vulnerable group in terms of health, given the risks and challenges that they face during pregnancy and childbirth.

Overall, among the 72% of households in oPt who reported needing to access healthcare in the three months prior to data collection, **almost all (98%) reported encountering at least one barrier when trying to access healthcare services**, with no reported difference between male and female-headed households.

In Gaza, 90% of households reported a member of their household having a healthcare need in the three months prior to data collection. Among those, every household reported encountering barriers to accessing healthcare services, highlighting the difficulties faced by all groups of population in the region. Regarding maternal care needs, **19% of households reported having at least one member that was pregnant or lactating** at time of MSNA data collection. Additionally, among households who reported a healthcare need, 3% needed to access safe delivery services and 11% of households needed to access antenatal or postnatal services.

In the West Bank, 63% of households reported a member of their household having a healthcare need in the 3 months prior to data collection, among whom 7% of households reported needing to access antenatal or postnatal services. **13% of households reported having a member of their household that was pregnant or lactating.**

Access to specialized reproductive health service for women of reproductive age (15 - 49 years) was perceived to be very limited in both regions, with respectively 86% of households in Gaza and 88% in the West Bank reporting no access to such services⁶. The Women Center for Legal Aid Counseling has raised concerns about equipment shortages and restricted mobility negatively

impacting maternal healthcare, with essential natal care services being “inaccessible particularly to women in remote or restricted areas” (such as Gaza, Area C, H2 and areas cut off by the wall or settlements)⁷. Among households who reported a healthcare need in the three months prior to data collection in the West Bank, 4% of the households reported obstacles in the form of movement restrictions, such as checkpoints and permit requirements as hindering their access to health services. This percentage was especially high in Area C (21%), highlighting the detrimental impact of the occupation on Palestinians’ healthcare access in this area.

Among female-headed households, 71% of whom needed to access medical care, the most common barriers were:

Cost of services/ medicines was too high	52%
Distance too far, transportation constraints	27%
No treatment available	15%
No medicine available	15%

In Area C, 55% of female-headed households reported needing healthcare, with 29% of them citing movement restrictions and checkpoints as a barrier to accessing it.

Cost of services/ medicines was too high	55%
Distance too far, transportation constraints	31%
Movement restrictions (permit/checkpoint)	29%

Gender-based violence (GBV) and Mental Health and Psychosocial Services (MHPSS)

Across the oPt, vulnerable groups (women, girls, and children with disabilities) are highly exposed to the risk of GBV and are more likely to report showing signs of distress or trauma. A study conducted by PCBS in 2019 found that 29% of currently married or ever married women (18-64 years) in the oPt experienced at least once a form of domestic violence in the 12 months prior the interview, of which 57% experienced psychological violence, 41% economic violence*, 33% social violence**, 18% physical violence, and 9% experienced sexual violence⁸.

*economic violence is the use of economic resources (i.e., money) as sanctions and threats towards women

**social violence refers to abuse by individuals or community that has a social impact (e.g. isolation of the person)

According to UN Women, incidents of gender-based violence, particularly against women and girls, have been increasing since the recurrent lockdowns in the Gaza Strip, and negative coping mechanisms, such as school dropouts and early marriage, have also increased⁹. UNICEF attributes limited access to services related to gender-based violence to cultural norms and a general stigma around mental health issues¹⁰, which may explain why households did not report a need for accessing GBV services in the MSNA.

		Female-headed HHs	Male-headed HHs
At least one member reported to have shown signs of psychosocial distress (of total population)	oPt	24%	22%
	Gaza Strip	44%	40%
	West Bank	17%	11%
At least one child reported to have shown signs of psychosocial distress (of HHs reporting signs of psychosocial distress)	oPt	11%	33%
	Gaza Strip	20%	33%
	West Bank	7%	32%
At least one adult reported to have shown signs of psychosocial distress (of HHs reporting signs of psychosocial distress)	oPt	98%	85%
	Gaza Strip	95%	83%
	West Bank	99%	86%

Research from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) has shown that women and girls in areas affected by conflict and displacement, such as Gaza, Area C, and East Jerusalem, are more likely to experience GBV, including domestic abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, and forced marriage¹¹.

These communities also tend to have limited access to multi-disciplinary protection services. The areas with the lowest percentage of households reporting availability of PSS services in case of GBV were East Jerusalem (9%), Gaza (32%) and Area C (39%)¹².

Access to services for women and girls

% of households that reported the availability of services that women and girls in their community can access, by type of service, location and by the gender of the household's head.**

		Female-headed HHs	Male-headed HHs
Medical services	oPt	67%	68%
	Gaza Strip	63%	67%
	West Bank	68%	68%
Legal services	oPt	22%	26%
	Gaza Strip	16%	22%
	West Bank	24%	28%
Mental health and psychosocial services	oPt	22%	28%
	Gaza Strip	31%	34%
	West Bank	19%	25%
Not aware of any	oPt	11%	13%
	Gaza Strip	22%	16%
	West Bank	7%	10%

* Multiple choice question

Shelter and gender

Female-headed households (7%) surveyed in the MSNA were slightly more likely to report a risk of eviction from their shelter compared to male-headed households (5%). This difference was more pronounced in Gaza (17% of female-headed households at risk of eviction compared to 8% of male-headed households).

Among households reporting risk of eviction from their shelter, a noticeable percentage of female-headed households in the West Bank (49%), specifically in Area C (74%) and H2 (100%), reported fear of eviction due to Israeli orders. This is in contrast to the lower percentage of male-headed households who reported the same (22% in West Bank). The occupation's impact on housing and infrastructure is particularly evident in Area C and H2, where the highest rates of eviction and households with standing demolition orders were observed. Loss of home and eviction have effects reflecting in humanitarian needs including facing livelihood crisis. In both Gaza (34%) and the West Bank (33%), lack of funds to pay rental costs was one of the most reported reasons for fearing eviction.

DAMAGE TO SHELTERS IN GAZA

% of households in Gaza who reported that their shelter was damaged by bombardment in 2021:

Governorate	Female-headed households	Male-headed households
North Gaza	66%	58%
Gaza	49%	34%
Khan Yunis	37%	31%
Rafah	34%	27%
Deir al-Balah	26%	30%

Among those, 91% of female-headed households and 94% of male-headed households indicated that the damage to the shelters were minor.

Protection, safety and gender

12% of households in the West Bank reported that women and girls avoid certain areas because they feel unsafe there. Such concerns were especially pronounced in H2 (25%) and Area C (20%). These concerns are likely to be directly linked to conflict-related threats, as the most commonly reported areas in West bank that women and girls avoid because they feel unsafe, among households who reported such a problem, were near settlements or crossing checkpoints (38%), specifically, among households in Area C (74%). This was followed by "public transportation" (28%), "markets" (26%) and "on the way to school" (27%).

In Gaza, among the 11% of households who reported women and girls avoiding certain areas, 15% identified the Access Restricted Areas (ARA) as one of those areas. The most commonly reported area, however, were on the way to school (39%). In the West Bank, the most commonly reported reason why women and girls avoid certain areas was fear of verbal harassment (34%), followed by fear of exposure to tear gas (28%) and fear of being kidnapped / abducted (26%).

% of households among the 12% (694 HHs) of households in West Bank reporting areas in their location that women and girls avoid because they feel unsafe, by most frequently reported location:

Near settlements and checkpoints	38%
On public transportation	28%
Markets	26%

% of households among the 11% (742 HHs) of households in Gaza reporting areas in their location that women and girls avoid because they feel unsafe, by most frequently reported location:

On their way to school	39%
Markets	23%
Social/community areas	22%

Occupied Palestinian Territory: July 2022

More generally, there has been an increase in the number of households in oPt reporting safety or security concerns for both girls and boys. In 2021, 26% of households reported concerns for girls and 27% for boys, while in 2022 the figures have risen to 33% for both groups.

Among those who reported security concerns for children in West Bank, % of households by most frequently reported main safety and security concerns for children were:

Girls (1819 HHs):

Being kidnapped	31%
Verbal harassment	29%
Wildlife	14%
Being threatened with violence	14%
Sexual harassment or violence	13%

Boys (1857 HHs):

Being kidnapped	33%
Being threatened with violence	15%
Being robbed	14%
Bullying	14%
Being detained	11%

Among those who reported security concerns for children in Gaza, % of households by most frequently reported main safety and security concerns for children were:

Girls (1391 HHs):

Verbal harassment	49%
Wildlife	32%
Sexual harassment or violence	20%
Bullying	18%
Being threatened with violence	13%

Boys (1218 HHs):

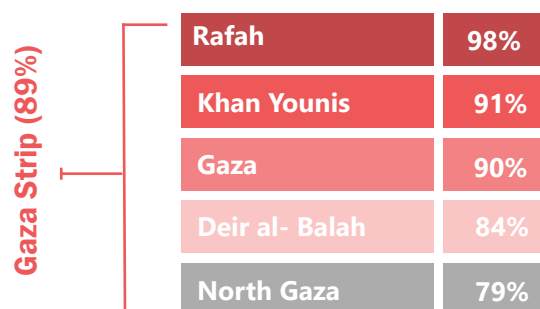
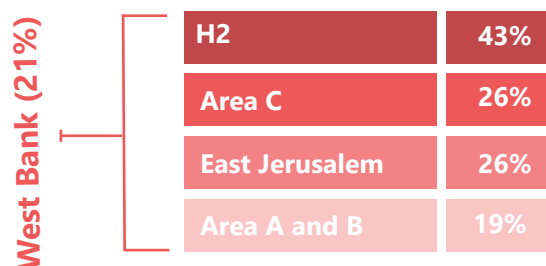
Verbal harassment	31%
Wildlife	29%
Unsafe transportation infrastructure	15%
Being threatened with violence	13%
Sexual harassment	12%

Assistance and gender



In the oPt, **38%** of **female-headed households** reported receiving some form of aid

Percentage of female-headed households who reported receiving some form of aid, by location:



According to findings, female-headed households in both the Gaza Strip and West Bank reported a higher likelihood of receiving aid in the six months preceding the survey, compared to male-headed households. Although households overall in the West Bank were less likely to report receiving aid, 21% of female-headed households reported receiving any form of humanitarian aid, compared to male-headed households (6%). In Gaza, 88% of female-headed households reported receiving any form of humanitarian aid, and 72% of male-headed households reported receiving aid.

Households in Gaza were much more likely to receive aid due to the context of the blockade in Gaza, the lack of livelihood opportunities and highly reported rates of unemployment. Half of Gaza households (51%) have reported aid from NGOs or charities as a primary source of income.

Among households that reported receiving any form of assistance in the oPt, female-headed households (85%) were more likely to report satisfaction with the aid received compared to male-headed households (71%). Among female-headed households in Gaza, dissatisfaction was highest in Deir al Balah (51%), while in the West Bank, the highest rates were observed in Area C (32 %). In both areas, the most commonly reported reason for dissatisfaction, among households who received aid and reported dissatisfaction, was the insufficient quantity of aid. Notably, 75% of female-headed households in Area C mentioned as well delays in receiving aid as a reason for dissatisfaction. Importantly, female-headed households (31%) were much more reluctant to report a willingness to use complaint and reporting mechanisms (CRM) as compared to male (61%).

The high dependency on aid in the oPt is a serious concern. According to a report by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, nearly 2.1 million Palestinians, out of a population of 5.3 million, require humanitarian assistance. This is particularly true in Gaza, where 80% of the population is dependent on aid¹³. This dependency undermines the opportunities for sustainable development, creates fragile stability and makes the population more vulnerable. Additionally, a notable number of households in the MSNA are relying on negative coping mechanisms such as relying on NGO or charity assistance as their primary source of income and taking on debt to meet their basic needs.



99% of male-headed households in the oPt reported wanting to receive humanitarian assistance in the future.



93% of female-headed households in the oPt reported wanting to receive humanitarian assistance in the future.

Preferences regarding the type of aid showed limited variation, with both female-headed (60%) and male-headed households (54%) expressing the greatest preference for cash. The preference for cash was higher in Gaza than in West Bank.

Endnotes:

- ¹ UN women, [Gender Alert 2021: A Multisectoral Gender Analysis to Inform the 2022 Humanitarian Programme Cycle in the oPt](#), 2021.
- ² UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023](#).
- ³ UN women, [Gender Alert 2021: A Multisectoral Gender Analysis to Inform the 2022 Humanitarian Programme Cycle in the oPt](#), 2021.
- ⁴ UN Women, [Impact of COVID-19 on Pregnant and Lactating Women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#), 2021.
- ⁵ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), [Health and Nutrition Programme: State of Palestine](#), 2020.
- ⁶ However, findings might need to be mitigated as, according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees’ (UNRWA), 94% of registered pregnant refugee women in Gaza attended four or more antenatal visits in 2021. See UNRWA, [Health Department Annual Report](#), 2021.
- ⁷ Women Center for Legal Aid Counseling, [Annual Report 2020](#).
- ⁸ PCBS, [Preliminary results of the violence survey in Palestinian society](#), 2019.
- ⁹ UN Women, [The Imperative of Mainstreaming Gender in Humanitarian Action in Palestine: Six Case Studies from Gaza](#), 2020.
- ¹⁰ United Nations Children’s Fund “ [A review of the humanitarian mental health and psychosocial needs and gaps in West Bank and Gaza](#), 2019.
- ¹¹ UN ESCWA, [Social and economic situation of Palestinian women and girls](#), 2023.
- ¹² United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA), [Survey of Economic and Social Developments 2019-2020](#), 2019.
- ¹³ Please refer to the factsheet prepared by [European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Palestine](#), 2022.

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