

# Humanitarian Bulletin

## occupied Palestinian territory

DECEMBER 2019



# OCHA

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 3,602 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces and over 100,000 injured during the decade
- 203 Israelis killed and nearly 3,500 injured by Palestinians during the decade
- More than 100,000 displaced in Gaza hostilities and over 9,000 in West Bank demolitions.



Children affected by violence taking part in a group counselling session in Gaza.

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## OVERVIEW

### 2010-2019: A decade in numbers

Sami is a 17-year-old boy who loves singing and is musically gifted. In May 2018, he was shot in the chest by Israeli forces during a demonstration near Israel's perimeter fence with Gaza. In addition to his physical injury, he became depressed, stopped attending school and isolated himself from his community. With the help of a local NGO he managed to recover ([read more](#)). Thousands of Palestinian boys, girls, men and women injured in similar circumstances are still struggling.

As we enter 2020, this Humanitarian Bulletin presents the key figures and trends that OCHA has been monitoring in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) during 2019 and over the decade since 2010. These relate namely to casualties, destruction of property, access restrictions and displacement. While these figures and trends are indicative, they do not represent a comprehensive overview of all factors that shaped the humanitarian situation during the decade ([For a more comprehensive analysis of the current situation, see: 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview](#)).

Each of the sections below includes an excerpt from a story featured in recent years by OCHA, or its partners, that illustrates the human faces behind the numbers: people struggling to live in dignity.<sup>1</sup> The full stories, along with further statistics and background to each of the issues raised, are available in the links embedded throughout the text.

In 2019, a total of 137 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces (135) or settlers (two), bringing the death toll among Palestinians over the past decade to 3,624. Of these, 87 per cent were killed in Gaza, mostly during the 2012 and 2014 escalations,



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**76,505**  
(on average)  
Trucks/year entered  
Gaza via Israel



**1,301**  
(on average)  
Trucks/year exited Gaza  
via Israel



**\$316** millions  
(on average)  
per year in  
humanitarian aid



**2.5 million**  
need aid (2020)

as well as in the 'Great March of Return' (GMR) demonstrations that started in 2018. Three out of four Palestinians killed during the decade were civilians, including 805 children. During these ten years, Palestinians killed 203 Israelis, including ten in 2019. Nearly half of the Israeli fatalities were civilians.

The large proportion of Palestinian and Israeli civilian casualties highlights long-term concerns about possible violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, compounded by concerns about serious gaps in accountability.

More than 110,000 Palestinians were internally displaced across the oPt during the decade, the vast majority during the 2014 conflict in Gaza, of whom some 7,400 remain displaced. In the West Bank, 900 Palestinians were displaced during the course of 2019 following the demolition or seizure of their homes, mostly in Area C and East Jerusalem, for lack of Israeli-issued permits that are virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain: this brings the cumulative figure during the decade to over 9,000.

Although some restrictions have been relaxed in 2019, the blockade on Gaza continues. The exit of persons has remained limited primarily to businesspeople and patients, alongside restrictions on the movement of goods. Despite growth in recent years, the volume of imports and exports remains below the equivalent figures for the first half of 2007, before the imposition of the blockade; at the same time, Gaza's population has since grown from 1.4 million to two million.

Food insecurity, poverty and unemployment have also risen in Gaza over recent years and are far higher than in the West Bank, at a time when humanitarian funding is declining. In 2019, contributions to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) were the lowest of the decade.

Overall, every second Palestinian (or 2.5 million people) in the oPt is estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2020. In this context, the 2020 HRP was launched in December 2019 to target 1.5 million of the most vulnerable Palestinians throughout the oPt, mostly in Gaza. The plan encompasses 199 projects to be implemented by 85 organizations.



Home demolished in Al Jiftlik community (Jericho), February 2016.

## CASUALTIES

### Thousands killed in conflict-related incidents

#### 3,601 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces and over 100,000 injured during the decade

In 2019, Israeli forces [killed](#) 135 Palestinians, mostly by air-launched explosive weapons or live ammunition: 108 were killed in the Gaza Strip and 27 in the West Bank. Another 15,369 Palestinians were [injured](#) during the year by Israeli forces: 42 per cent required medical treatment after inhaling tear gas, 16 per cent were hit by rubber bullets and 13 per cent were shot with live ammunition.

Some 20 per cent of the Palestinian fatalities across the oPt in 2019 and at least 36 per cent of the injuries were of children (under 18 years of age); 26 of the children killed were boys and two girls.

Of the Palestinian fatalities in the Gaza Strip, 33 were civilians killed in the context of the [‘Great March of Return’](#) (GMR) protests by the perimeter fence with Israel, and the rest during hostilities and other incidents, including 31 civilians and 44 members of armed groups. In the West Bank, 13 of the Palestinians killed were in clashes that erupted, for the most part, during protests and search-and-arrest operations, and nine were perpetrators or alleged perpetrators of attacks against Israelis.

These figures bring the Palestinian death toll by Israeli forces during the decade to 3,601 throughout the oPt.<sup>2</sup> Nearly two-thirds of these fatalities occurred in 2014, which witnessed [the deadliest escalation in hostilities](#) since the beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1967.

Three out of four Palestinians killed during the decade (2,690 people) were civilians, including 798 children, and 23 per cent were members of armed groups (819 people); the status of three per cent of those killed (115 people) could not be confirmed. More than 101,000 Palestinians were injured, with the peak recorded in 2018 in the context of the GMR.<sup>3</sup>

*Three out of four  
Palestinians killed during  
the decade (2,690 people)  
were civilians, including  
798 children.*



Black smoke rising from burnt tires during demonstrations at the fence, Gaza.

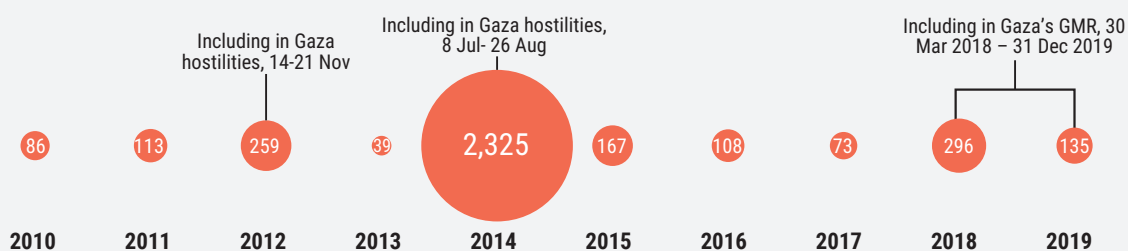
**Fadi's story:** Fadi Shaqoura, 25, from Jabaliya camp in Gaza, is one of over 101,000 people injured during the decade. On February 2018, he was shot with live ammunition during a protest against the relocation of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. His right leg had to be amputated. Since then, he has applied unsuccessfully multiple times for an exit permit to attend a rehabilitation centre in Bethlehem, from the Israeli authorities ([read more](#)). He recently received a temporary artificial limb in Gaza, which does not fit and causes him severe pain. He is still waiting for an exit permit.



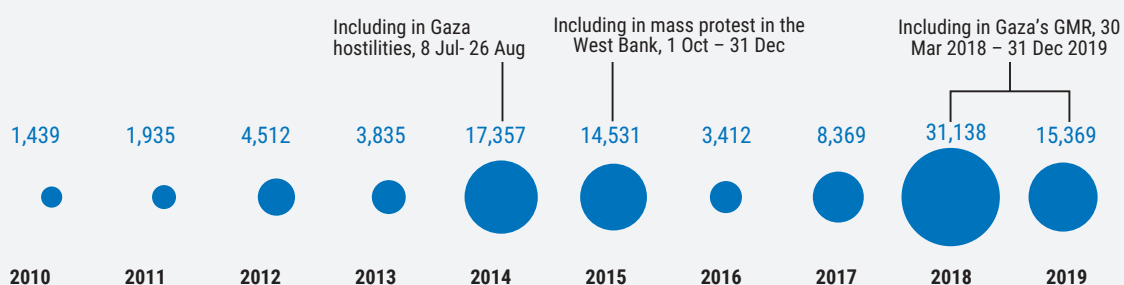
Fadi Shaqoura, from Jabaliya camp (Gaza), injured during a protest in February 2018.

## 3,601 PALESTINIANS KILLED AND 101,897 INJURED BY ISRAELI FORCES

### Palestinian fatalities



### Palestinian injuries

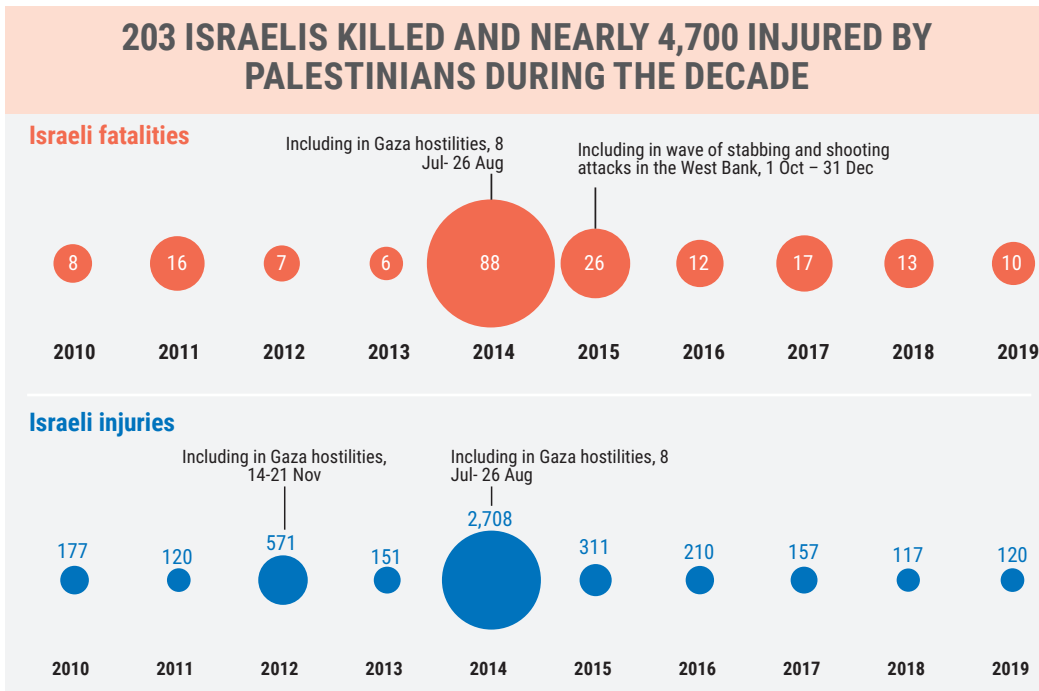




## 203 Israelis killed and nearly 4,700 injured by Palestinians during the decade

In 2019, Palestinians [killed](#) ten Israelis and [injured](#) at least 120 others. Half of these fatalities (all civilians) were caused by rockets launched from Gaza by armed groups and the others (three civilians and two soldiers) by attacks carried out by Palestinians from the West Bank.

This brings the number of Israelis killed by Palestinians during the decade to 203, and those injured to 4,642. Half of these fatalities (101) were civilians who did not belong to any of the security forces (including the police), and 102 were members of Israeli security forces, including 67 soldiers killed during the 2014 escalation in Gaza.

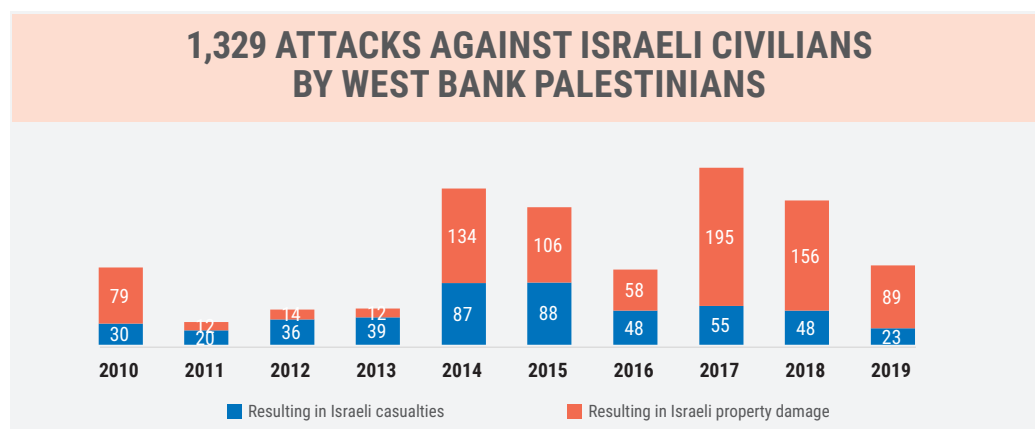


*Half of the Israeli fatalities during the decade (101) were civilians who did not belong to any of the security forces.*



Kindergarten in the Israeli city of Beer Sheva struck by rocket fired from Gaza.

During 2019, there were at least 112 attacks by West Bank Palestinians against Israeli settlers and other Israeli civilians, resulting in three fatalities, 26 injuries and damage to Israeli property (mostly vehicles hit by stones). These incidents bring the number of such Palestinian attacks during the past decade to 1,329.<sup>4</sup>



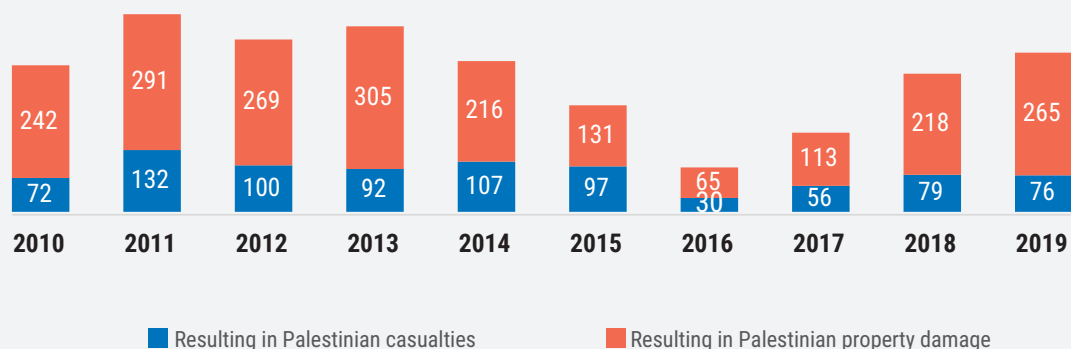
*During the decade, there were 2,955 settler attacks that resulted in Palestinian casualties or property damage.*

### Nearly 3,000 Israeli settler attacks led to Palestinian casualties or property damage during the decade

In 2019, Israeli settlers carried out 341 attacks against Palestinians across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in which they killed two Palestinians, injured 115, and vandalized Palestinian property, including almost 8,000 trees. During the decade, OCHA recorded a total of 2,955 settler attacks that resulted in Palestinian casualties (22 deaths and 1,258 injuries) or property damage.<sup>5</sup>

During the decade, the Nablus governorate was the most affected by settler violence, the majority around the settlement of Yitzhar, followed by Hebron and Ramallah governorates.

## 2,956 INCIDENTS OF SETTLER VIOLENCE AGAINST PALESTINIANS\*



\* Incidents resulting in both casualties and damage are classified as resulting in casualties

**The story of Jum'a:** Jum'a Ar Raba'ai, 48 and father of eight, lives in At Tuwani village in southern Hebron, next to the unauthorized settlement outpost of Havat Ma'on. The safety and livelihood of his family have been systematically undermined in recent years due to settler violence. On March 2018, while working their land, Jum'a and his son Rafat were physically assaulted and injured by settlers ([read more](#)). Almost two years after that incident, he is yet to recover for the leg injury and relies on a cane for walking. He is still subject to settler harassment and intimidation while working on his land.



Jum'a Ar Raba'ai at his home following his injury, March 2018.



## DISPLACEMENT

### More than 100,000 displaced in Gaza hostilities and over 9,000 in West Bank demolitions

In 2019, over 700 Palestinians in Gaza were displaced following damage sustained to their homes during three limited escalations in hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups.

The past decade witnessed two rounds of large-scale hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza (in November 2012 and in July-August 2014), which resulted in mass destruction of homes and displacement. While the 2012 escalation ended with the displacement of approximately 2,000 people, during the 2014 hostilities about [100,000 people were displaced](#) as their homes were destroyed or severely damaged, of whom 7,400 were [still displaced](#) at the end of 2019.<sup>6</sup>

*Over 700 Palestinians in Gaza were displaced in 2019 during three limited escalations in hostilities*

**Abu Mohammad's story:** Abu Mohammad, his wife and nine children were among those displaced during the 2014 conflict, when his home in Beit Hanoun (northern Gaza) was destroyed by an Israeli airstrike. His difficulties as a displaced person were compounded by being disabled: Abu Mohammad's electric wheelchair was destroyed during the hostilities and his children had to carry him everywhere ([Read more](#)). The family spent two years in a temporary makeshift shelter, and then a caravan, before reconstruction was complete and they were able to return their home.



© Photo by OCHA

Abu Mohammad and his family next to their temporary makeshift in Beit Hanoun, May 2015.



© Photo by Suhaib Salem

Palestinian boy sleeping inside his destroyed home in the Shuja'iyyeh neighbourhood of Gaza City, September 2015.



In the West Bank, during 2019 Israel [demolished or seized](#) 622 Palestinian structures, mostly in Area C and East Jerusalem, overwhelmingly on the grounds of a lack of an Israeli-issued building permit, which are almost impossible to obtain. Of the structures destroyed or seized in 2019, 127 had been provided as humanitarian assistance.

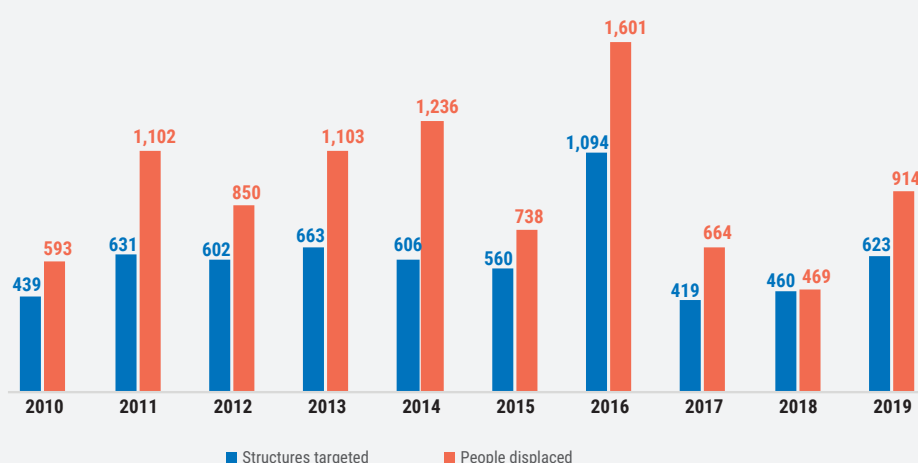
Overall, 914 Palestinians, or almost three people every day, were displaced during 2019, including 449 children: this is almost twice as many as in 2018. Many more were affected by the destruction or seizure of structures supporting their livelihoods or access to services.

These incidents bring the number of Palestinian structures demolished or seized during the 2010-2019 decade in the West Bank to 6,120, and the number of people displaced as a result to 9,262, more than half of them children.<sup>7</sup> Many more people are still at risk of being displaced or otherwise affected: in Area C alone, there are over 13,000 pending [demolition orders](#), including 40 issued against schools. In East Jerusalem, the largest number of structures targeted during the decade was recorded in 2019.<sup>8</sup>

**Aziz's story:** Aziz is a 25 year-old Palestinian from Khirbet ar Ras al Ahmar, a small Bedouin community in Area C in the northern Jordan Valley. In February 2019, the Israeli authorities demolished his family's residential tents and animal shelters, forcing the family to seek refuge in a nearby town and leave the livestock behind. Following the delivery of emergency assistance by a humanitarian organization, Aziz and his family were able to return and restore their livelihoods. However, the threat of new displacement remains ([read more](#)).

*In Area C, there are over 13,000 pending demolition orders, including 40 issued against schools.*

## 9,262 PALESTINIANS DISPLACED IN DEMOLITIONS; 6,120 STRUCTURES TARGETED



Young boy in front of his demolished home in Maghayir al Abeed (Hebron), 5 December 2019.

## GAZA BLOCKADE

### Restrictions eased but most people still 'locked in'

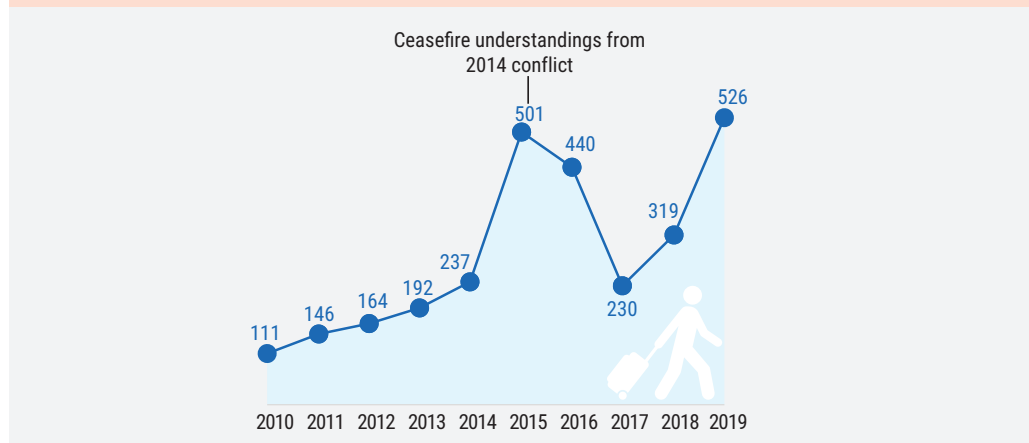
The Israeli [blockade on the Gaza Strip](#) imposed in 2007, citing security concerns, as well as the access restrictions imposed by Egypt, were eased in some ways during 2019. However, the movement of people and goods to, from, and within Gaza remained severely constrained.

#### Movement of people

The movement of Palestinians in and out Gaza via the Israeli-controlled [Erez](#) crossing has remained largely prohibited. In 2019, a daily average of 526 permit holders exited

#### A DAILY AVERAGE OF 287 PEOPLE EXITED GAZA VIA EREZ CROSSING

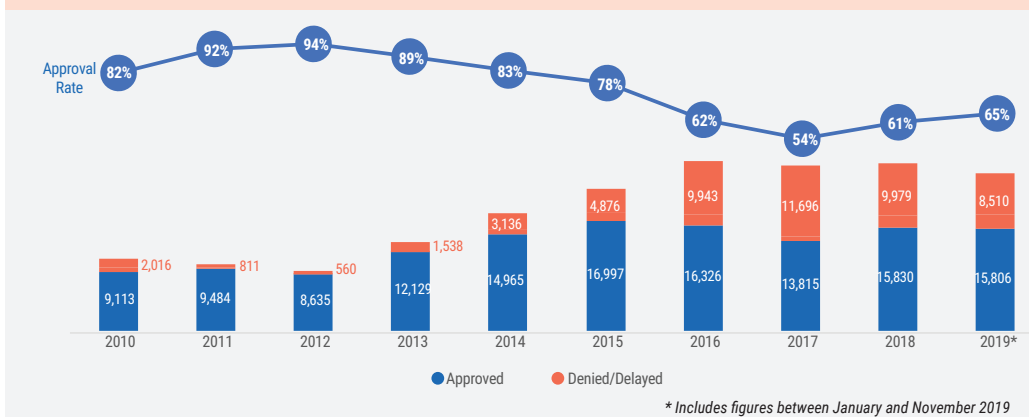
A daily average of 526 people exited Gaza via Erez crossing, the largest figure over the past decade.



Gaza via this crossing, the largest figure over the past decade.<sup>9</sup> This increase has been largely attributed to the granting of “trader permits” to labourers employed in Israel, who have been officially banned since 2006. On average, the number of exits via the Erez crossing during the 2010-2019 decade stood at 287 people a day, compared with over 20,000 exits a day in 2000, prior to the second Intifada.

The approval rate for [permit applications to leave Gaza](#) via the Erez crossing for patients referred to medical treatment or check-ups outside Gaza (in the West Bank, including

#### 76% AVERAGE APPROVAL RATE FOR PATIENTS' APPLICATIONS TO LEAVE GAZA VIA EREZ



East Jerusalem, or in Israel) was 64 per cent in 2019. The remaining applications were either denied outright, or remained unanswered by the time of the appointment. While this represents an increase compared with the 2018 rate of approval (61 per cent), it is well below the average approval rate of 76 per cent during the decade.

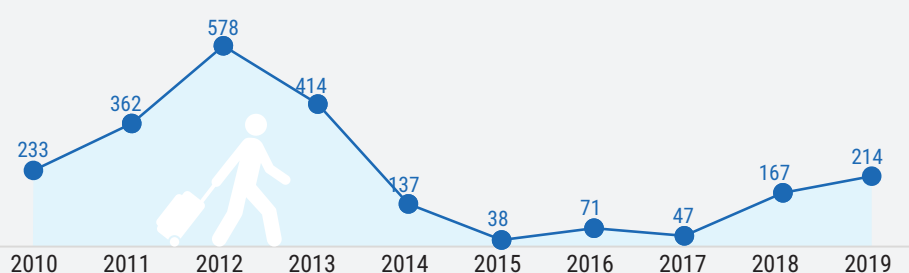
**Siham's story:** Siham, a 55 year-old mother of 10 children, lives in Gaza city. In 2013 she was diagnosed with leukemia, which later spread to her bone marrow. Since then, she has been struggling to reach the East Jerusalem hospital where she receives chemotherapy, as her applications for an exit permit have been occasionally delayed. "To be a cancer patient from Gaza is to be sentenced to a slow death by the permit regime, the harsh living conditions, the poverty and the blockade. I want just want to receive treatment and be treated with dignity", Siham told OCHA in 2017 ([read more](#)). At present, she has a permit allowing her to leave to East Jerusalem twice a month on a regular basis.



*Nearly 60,000 people who left Gaza via Egypt during the decade did not return.*

The Egyptian-controlled [Rafah](#) crossing has opened on a regular basis since May 2018, recording a daily average of 213 exits in 2019, up from 52 in 2015-2017, when it was mostly closed.<sup>10</sup> The peak in the volume of crossings from Gaza via Rafah (578 people a day) was recorded in 2012, during the Egyptian government of President Morsi. On average, during the decade between 2010 and 2019, 226 people a day exited via this crossing. Of note, the number of entries to Gaza via Rafah during this period stood at 210 people a day, which means that, cumulatively, nearly 60,000 more people left Gaza than returned during the decade.

### A DAILY AVERAGE OF 226 PEOPLE LEFT GAZA VIA RAFAH CROSSING





**Rana's story:** Despite the reopening of the Rafah crossing, movement of people remains impaired by a range of factors, including the multiple security checks on the road to Egypt and back. Rana, 44, exited Gaza in July 2018 via Rafah to visit her family in Jordan, whom she had not seen for five years. The journey back to Gaza took her four days. "It was extremely exhausting and involved sleep deprivation and hunger. We were stopped at dozens of checkpoints on the way and at every one, our luggage was unpacked and searched; then we spent 21 hours at the crossing", she told OCHA ([read more](#)).

## Movement of goods

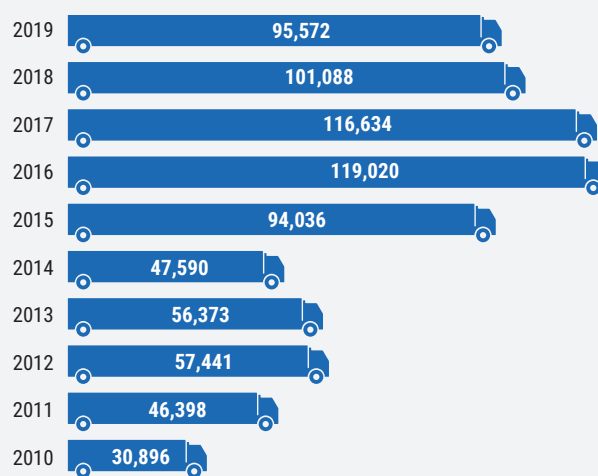
In 2019, approximately 95,600 truckloads of goods (excluding fuel) entered Gaza via the Israeli-controlled [Kerem Shalom](#) crossing.<sup>11</sup> Of these, 73 per cent carried either construction materials or food. The volume of imports into Gaza reached its highest point in 2016 and since then has been gradually declining. Entry of a wide range of goods defined by Israel as "dual-use items" that could be used for military purposes

(including basic construction materials, equipment and electronics), has remained either prohibited, or subject to complex approval procedures.

On a *monthly* average, the volume of imports during the decade (6,375 truckloads) was more than 40 per cent below the equivalent figure in the first half of 2007 (11,200 truckloads), before the imposition of the blockade.<sup>12</sup> Since 2007, Gaza's population has grown from 1.4 million to 2 million.

Additionally, in 2019 some 7,600 truckloads of goods entered Gaza from Egypt via the Rafah crossing and the 'Salah Ad Din gate' operating next to it, representing seven per cent of all imports into Gaza during the year. Compared with 2018, imports from Egypt increased by almost 50 per cent. This gate has been used on a regular basis for the entry of goods only since February 2018, following an understanding reached between Egypt and the Hamas authorities.

### A YEARLY AVERAGE OF 76,505 TRUCKLOADS ENTERED GAZA VIA ISRAEL



*The volume of imports during the decade was more than 40 per cent below the equivalent figure in the first half of 2007, before the imposition of the blockade.*

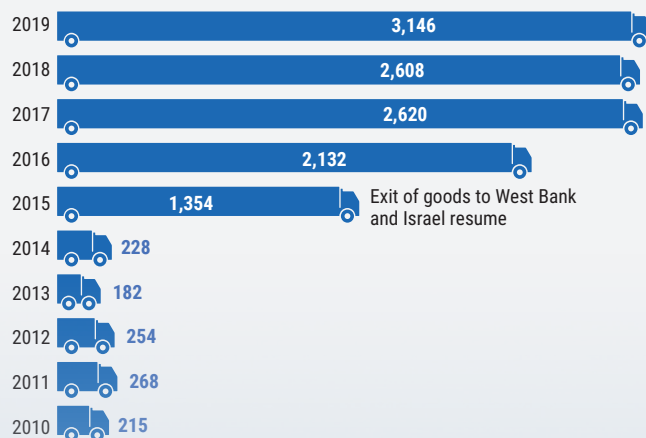
**Ghazi's story:** Ghazi Musht'ha owns an ice-cream factory in Gaza that used to export most of its production to Israel. The revocation of his permit to enter Israel in 2016, compounded by the difficulties in importing critical inputs and the shortages in electricity, led to a major decline in production levels. "I now employ only 50-60 people, down from 120 in the past", he told OCHA in December 2017 ([read more](#)). In July 2019, Ghazi was given his permit back, but he still struggles with the import restrictions and his business has not recovered.



During 2019, a total of 3,146 truckloads were permitted to exit Gaza through [Kerem Shalom](#), the largest such figure in a decade. Of these trucks, 84 per cent carried agricultural produce, the vast majority to the West Bank.

The exits of goods from Gaza has been increasing since 2015 when [Israel resumed access by Gaza merchants to their traditional markets](#) in the West Bank and Israel. Nevertheless, the 2019 volume of goods exiting Gaza is only one quarter of the figure recorded in the first half of 2007, before the imposition of the blockade. The ability of businesses to renew or increase their sales outside Gaza is [impeded by multiple factors](#), including difficulties in accessing critical inputs, shortages of electricity, and crossing-related restrictions and uncertainties.

### A YEARLY AVERAGE OF 1,301 TRUCKLOADS EXITED GAZA THROUGH ISRAEL



*The number of truckloads permitted to exit Gaza in 2019 was the largest in a decade.*





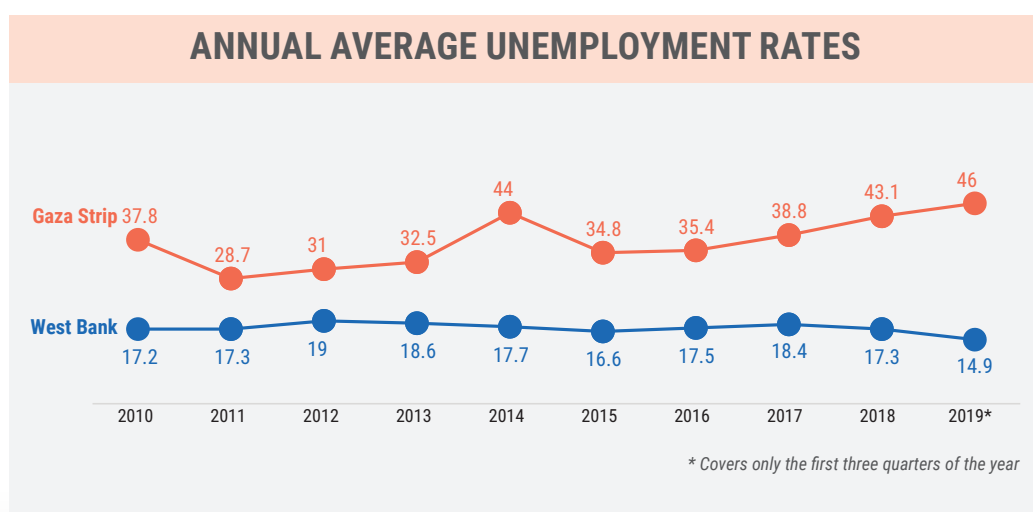
## FOOD INSECURITY

### Fewer Palestinians in Gaza can meet their food needs

Based on a 2018 survey, over 1.2 million people in Gaza, or 62.2 per cent of households, were identified as moderately or severely food insecure, compared with 53.3 per cent in 2014, when the previous survey was conducted. In contrast, food insecurity in the West Bank decreased to 9.2 per cent, down from 11.8 per cent in 2014.

Food insecurity is primarily the result of [poverty](#) and unemployment. The unemployment rate in Gaza reached an average of 46 per cent in the first three quarters of 2019, a decade-long high, with youth unemployment at almost 62 per cent in the third quarter of the year. In contrast, in the first nine months of 2019, the West Bank recorded the lowest unemployment rate in a decade-less than 15 per cent.<sup>13</sup>

*The unemployment rate in Gaza reached an average of 46 per cent in the first three quarters of 2019, a decade-long high.*



A Palestinian refugee receiving a food basket in the Al Shatti distribution center, Gaza city 2017 UNRWA.



**The case of Sanuora.** Sanuora, 35, is a divorced mother, who lives with her six children at her parents' house in Beit Lahiya, North Gaza. Finding a job is virtually impossible, due to her lack of education and formal work experience. The electricity cuts have forced Sanuora to purchase certain types of dry food instead of more nutritious dairy products, as she can no longer store food in her refrigerator, nor use her makeshift oven ([read more](#)). In 2019, Sanuora underwent an open-heart surgery that exacerbated her vulnerability. She has continued to receive assistance from the World Food Programme, as well as to accumulate debts.



Sanuora with one of her children, May 2018.

© Photo by WFP

## HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

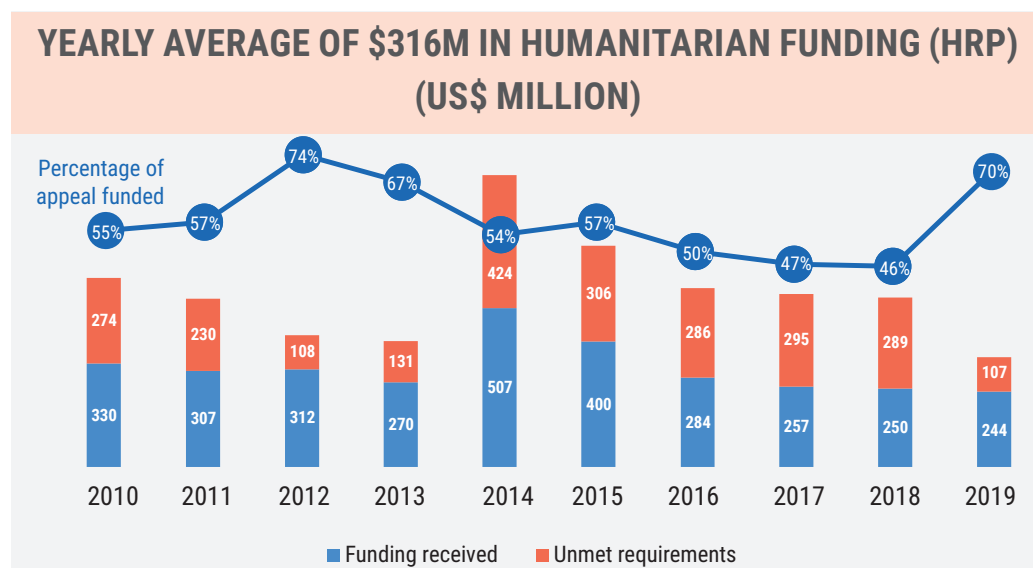
### Donations at record low

A total of \$244 million was raised during 2019 for the humanitarian interventions, included in the [oPt Humanitarian Response Plan](#) (HRP). While this represents almost 70 per cent of the \$351 million requested (the second highest rate in a decade), in absolute terms it marks the lowest amount raised during the 2010-2019 period for the oPt.

The sharp decrease in the funding requested between 2018 (\$550 million) and 2020 (\$348 million) does not reflect a reduction in humanitarian need, but rather an effort to prioritise in the face of decreasing funding trends (including the halt of US funding to UNRWA) and other constraints faced by humanitarian agencies.

Every second Palestinian in the oPt (some 2.5 million) has been identified as in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in 2020. Of these, 1.5 million will be targeted, a slight increase from the 1.4 million in 2019, but significantly less than the 1.9 million targeted in 2018. This means that even if all financial requirements are met, one million people in need will not be assisted.

*Every second Palestinian in the oPt (some 2.5 million) has been identified as in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in 2020.*



**Abdallah's story:** across the Gaza Strip, child labour has become a commonly-used means to alleviate poverty, with serious negative consequences on the development of affected children. A project implemented since 2018 by a group of NGOs, with the support of the oPt Humanitarian Fund, has sought to reintegrate drop-out children back into school. Abdallah, 13, is one of the many success stories of this project. "I'm now back as a student in the seventh grade. I feel like I survived a nightmare... I want to get an education and to have a future. I want to be a normal child", he told OCHA ([read more](#)).



A group of children benefiting from nonstructured psychosocial activities at the Tdh child protection centre.



## ENDNOTES

1. OCHA and its humanitarian partners are mandated to address the humanitarian situation of Palestinian civilians in the oPt; stories featured in this section are drawn from this work.
2. Included in this figure are 17 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in Israel and four Palestinian citizens of Israel killed in the West Bank during attacks against Israelis.
3. People injured multiple times are counted each time they are injured. For further clarification see: [this webpage](#)
4. Information about Palestinian attacks against Israeli settlers is based primarily on Israeli media reports.
5. The 20 fatalities include one Palestinian killed by Israeli civilians in West Jerusalem on February 2011. The figures exclude three Palestinians killed by Israeli settlers in the context of Palestinian attacks or alleged attacks.
6. At the height of the 2014 conflict, an estimated 485,000 people – 28 per cent of Gaza’s population – temporarily fled their homes to safer areas and shelters within Gaza.
7. Some of the people included in this figure were displaced more than once.
8. Over one quarter of the demolitions in East Jerusalem were “self-demolitions” carried out by the Palestinian owners, mainly to avoid paying the municipality for the cost of the demolition.
9. Daily averages are calculated by dividing the total number of exits each year by 365, regardless of the number of days the crossing operated.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Goods enter Gaza by means of a back-to back system: the goods are offloaded from Israeli trucks on the Israeli side of the Kerem Shalom crossing and transported into Gaza by Palestinian trucks. The figures presented here reflect the number of trucks that left the crossing into Gaza, which is sometimes different than the number of trucks that entered the crossing from Israel.
12. In the years following the imposition of the blockade, the entry of goods to Gaza via the Karni, Nahal Oz, Sufa and Erez crossings were gradually halted, leaving Kerem Shalom the sole commercial crossing with Israel.
13. Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). Figures have been [recently revised](#) by PCBS in order to fully match guidance provided by the International Labor Organization.