Humanitarian Bulletin occupied Palestinian territory



OCTOBER 2016

HIGHLIGHTS

- 180 Palestinian households in East Jerusalem have eviction cases filed against them, putting 818 Palestinians at risk of displacement.
- 986 Palestinian structures in the West Bank demolished or confiscated by Israel in 2016, the highest since OCHA began recording in 2009.
- Two years since the 2014 hostilities, about 2,080 IDPs in Gaza still live in dilapidated caravans and are exposed to weather extremes.
- Thousands of households across the Gaza Strip are not connected to the sewage network, raising serious sanitation concerns.

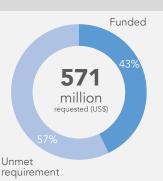
OCTOBER FIGURES

| Palestinian killed (direct conflict) | 6 |
|---|-----|
| Palestinian injured (direct conflict) | 169 |
| Israelis killed (direct conflict) | 2 |
| Israelis injured (direct conflict) | 17 |
| Structures demolished in the West Bank | 96 |
| People displaced in the West Bank | 156 |

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN 2016

571 million requested (US\$)

43% funded





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Overview

On 19 October, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process, Nicolay Mladenov, briefed the Security Council on the serious challenges facing reconstruction efforts in Gaza following the 2014 hostilities: "Last week, I travelled to Gaza where I witnessed warehouses empty of construction materials... due to limitations of imports. No new residential reconstruction projects have been approved since March. In recent days the approval for some 80 projects – some of which had already been started - has been revoked by Israel. I saw residential buildings half-built. I met with families whose projects have been cleared for reconstruction, yet have not received any cement for months. I heard from those that have tried to navigate the web of rules governing the import of materials considered 'dual-use' with no luck or response."

More than two years after the ceasefire, some 53,300 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are still waiting for a durable housing solution. A minority continues to live in vulnerable and unsuitable conditions. This Humanitarian Bulletin highlights the situation of approximately 2,080 IDPs living in temporary displacement sites in metal caravans, most of which have become dilapidated. They are exposed to weather extremes, of particular concern in the approach of winter, and also to safety risks and poor access to basic services. A coordinated response plan to address the needs of the most vulnerable caravan dwellers is under preparation.

Special Coordinator Mladenov also warned the Security Council of "the widening chasm that has emerged between both parts of the occupied Palestinian territory, [which] undermines the national state-building enterprise and threatens the very viability of establishing a unified Palestinian state as part of a two-state solution."

This Humanitarian Bulletin focuses on the pervasive impact of this internal divide on the provision of municipal services across the Gaza Strip, including public hygiene,

infrastructure and the environment. The combination of the divide with the blockade and restrictions on international funding to the Gaza authorities, has led to a steady decline in municipal revenues and a rise in debt. Municipal staff and Ministry of Local Government employees have not been paid a full salary on a regular basis for over two years. To illustrate just one outcome



of the crisis, thousands of households are not connected to the sewage network and are forced to rely on unsafe in-house cesspits.

Displacement and the risk of forcible transfer remains a serious concern in the West Bank. In September and October the Israeli authorities demolished or confiscated 155 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and East Jerusalem on the grounds that they lacked an Israeli-issued building permit; these are almost impossible to obtain. Some 240 people, half of them children, were displaced and more than 350 people were otherwise affected. The number of demolitions since the beginning of 2016 is the highest since OCHA began formal records of demolitions in 2009. The case of Tell el Himma, a herding community in the northern Jordan Valley, illustrates the hardship of families confronting the loss of their homes and livelihoods.

According to an Israeli media report, the Israeli Security Cabinet has approved a plan to allow the construction of facilities in Area C to serve the Palestinian population in the northern West Bank, the first such permission in years. If confirmed and implemented, this would constitute a positive step forward. Pending this or similar steps, the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien declared in this latest briefing to the Security Council that Area C demolitions "must cease immediately" and Israel must "revoke policies and halt practices that may lead to the forcible transfer of Bedouin and herding communities."

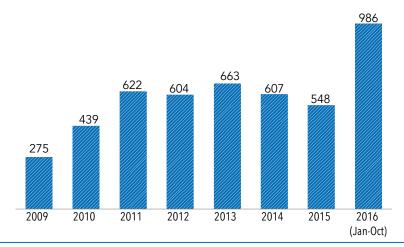
In October and
September, 155
structures were
demolished or
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Bank, displacing 240
people, half of them
children.

Palestinian Bedouin and herding communities targeted in wave of demolitions

Demolition rate in 2016 the highest since OCHA began records

In September and October 2016 the Israeli authorities confiscated, demolished, or forced Palestinians to demolish, 155 structures across the West Bank, displacing some 240 people, half them children, and otherwise affecting more than 350 people. All but two of these incidents took place on the grounds that no Israeli-issued building permits had been issued, which are almost impossible to obtain. Although the average number of structures targeted during the past two months is 25 per cent lower than the monthly average for the previous eight months (January-August), the cumulative figure since the

Structures demolished in the West Bank



beginning of 2016 is over 80 per cent higher than during all of 2015 and the highest since OCHA began its records of demolitions in 2009.

About 84 per cent of the affected structures (130) were in 21 communities partially or entirely located in Area C. Among the most severely affected were three Palestinian Bedouin or herding communities in the northern Jordan Valley: Khirbet ar Ras al Ahmar, Al 'Agaba and Khirbet Tell el Himma (see case study below), which accounted for 66 of the structures targeted during this period.

Al 'Aqaba was also exposed to sustained live fire inside its residential area for two days while an Israeli military training exercise was conducted in the vicinity without prior notice; there were no casualties or property damage. Residents of the nearby community, Humsa al Bqai'a, were also temporarily displaced from their homes for three days during the month, for several hours each day, due to training by the Israeli military. Along with demolitions and access restrictions, these exercises contribute to the coercive environment present in the West Bank which puts pressure on communities to leave their current sites of residence.

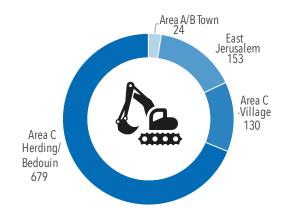
Thirty structures were demolished or confiscated in another four Bedouin communities targeted during the past two months in the Jerusalem periphery, within or next to an area planned for the E1 settlement expansion project. These are among the 46 Bedouin communities in the central West Bank at risk of forcible transfer as a result of a "relocation plan" advanced by the Israeli authorities.

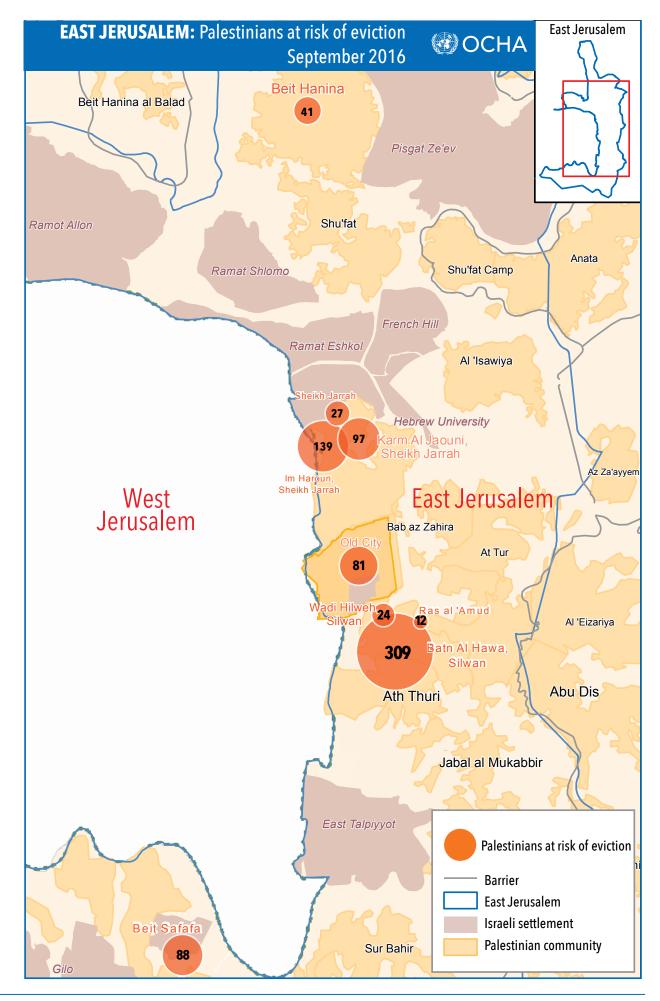
Over a third of all the structures demolished or confiscated during this period (55) had been supplied as humanitarian assistance, funded by international donors or by the State of Palestine. The number of items of assistance targeted so far in 2016 now totals 278, more than 150 per cent higher than for all of 2015.

Another 23 Palestinian structures demolished in September and October were located within the Israeli-defined boundaries of Jerusalem municipality. All but one of the demolished structures were residential and 111 people were displaced. Six of these homes were demolished by their owners following the receipt of final demolition orders from the Israeli authorities.

The majority of demolished or confiscated structures were in Area C, mostly amongst Bedouin and herding communities. Over one third of structures were donorfunded assistance.

Structures demolished in the West Bank by type of community - January-October 2016





Also in East Jerusalem, the Israeli police forcibly evicted a Palestinian family of eight from their home in the Old City, which they had been renting since the 1930s, and handed it to an Israeli settler organization that had reportedly purchased it. This followed protracted legal proceedings in the Israeli courts, where the family unsuccessfully challenged the eviction order on the grounds that it was a protected tenancy. This home is part of a larger residential complex comprising nine apartments, eight of which were taken over by Israeli settlers in July 2010, causing the displacement of seven Palestinian households.



About 180 Palestinian households in East Jerusalem have eviction cases filed against them, putting 818 Palestinians at risk of displacement. Most cases were initiated by Israeli settler organizations.

A mapping exercise carried out by

OCHA indicates that at least 180 Palestinian households in East Jerusalem have eviction cases filed against them. Most of these cases were initiated by Israeli settler organizations on the basis of ownership claims, as well as claims that the residents are no longer 'protected tenants'. As a result, 818 Palestinians, including 372 children, are at risk of displacement.

Weeks after demolition, families from Khirbet Tell el Himma continue to face regular settler and army harassment

At the end of October, one month after demolitions took place in the Palestinian herding community of Khirbet Tell el Himma in the northern Jordan Valley, displaced families were still living in uncertain conditions, reporting regular harassment by the Israeli army and settlers, and with limited space for the provision of needed humanitarian relief.

At around 8:00 on the morning of 27 September, without any prior warning, members of the Israeli Civil Administration and Israeli army descended upon five Palestinian refugee households of the same family in Tell el Himma and began to demolish all their structures. These included five residential structures, one guest room, four animal structures, one fodder storage, three toilets, one traditional oven, two kitchens and one solar panel unit. During the demolition, food items, personal belongings, and children's toys and bicycles were also damaged. At the time, most of the family members were out. The head of the family and his wife were driving their 35-year-old disabled son to be operated on in a Jenin hospital, but had to abruptly cancel the operation and rush back home when they learned of the demolition.



This was not the first time the family had experienced the demolition of structures by the Israeli army. However, the scale of the damage on this occasion was the most devastating economically, socially and psychologically. It reduced their existence to a bare minimum, leaving them feeling "imprisoned and broken," as a family member put it.

Since the demolition, the army regularly enters the family's site, sometimes five times a day, to ensure no reconstruction has taken place. "We are constantly harassed by soldiers who tell us, "Why are you still around? You have to leave", a member of the family said. They have been unable to milk their sheep or produce cheese, their main source of livelihood. Since 22 September, one week before the demolition took place, the family has been unable to graze their 350-400 head of livestock freely for fear of settler harassment from what appears to be a new outpost just a few hundred metres away from their homes. The family reported that settlers from this outpost have threatened them at gunpoint if they dare to graze their livestock close to the outpost.²

"We cannot go about our daily routine. We feel shackled We're just like one big pile, with no privacy, nothing," women from Tell el Himma.

The women of the community bear the brunt of the demolition. Almost every aspect of their lives has changed for the worse. "We cannot go about our daily routine. We feel shackled," said one of the women. "Before, by early afternoon we would be done with milking the sheep, making cheese, cooking, cleaning, washing and drying the laundry. We had a washing machine and a tumble dryer. We used to enjoy our afternoons watching TV and cooling down in front of the fan. Now all this has gone."

Children, women and men are cramped in one tent, the only structure they were allowed to rebuild a few hours following the demolition, with no electricity or water, and no concrete floor. "We're just like one big pile, with no privacy, nothing," said another woman. "Sitting in this tent is like sitting in a hot oven. We have no cool water to drink, and the rice is no longer good for cooking, as it got infested with insects because of the heat," they complained. An elderly woman who was upset that clothes and shoes had been buried under the rubble, sighed: "I'm stuck with only one pair of slippers and cannot find my shoes." Women were especially distressed by the fact that the toilets were demolished. There is no place for them to wash or perform their ablutions. To enable the children to be clean for school, 34-year-old R. sent her four children, aged 8-12, to live on their own close to relatives in a village near Jenin. She only sees them at weekends now.

Despite the dire conditions, harassment and the uncertainties, the families maintain that they will persevere. "For as long as we are alive, we will not leave," said the head of the family who was born in the area 65 years ago.



At risk of settler takeover - 'Ein Fera'a water spring in Hebron

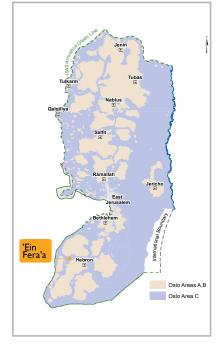
The natural water spring of 'Ein Fera'a, one the largest in western Hebron governorate, is the sole source of water for a herding community carrying the same name that moved close to the spring some 30 years ago. The residents comprise about 11 households with about 80 people in total, all registered refugees. They rely on the spring for domestic water consumption and for watering their livestock, which is their prime source of livelihood. The landowner of the spring, a resident of the nearby town of Dura, also uses the water for irrigating the adjacent land, where he grows seasonal vegetables and crops. On hot summer days and when there are water shortages, he also pumps water from the underground pool to sell to families in Dura.3

In recent months, there has been a significant increase in the number of Israeli settlers, accompanied by security forces, visiting the spring to picnic or perform ritual baths. During this year's Jewish festival of Sukkot (16-24 October), and following active promotion by the tourist association of the two nearby settlements (Telem and Adora), there were more than 1,000 visitors to the site.4

The constant presence of armed settlers on the site, and 'stop and search' practices by Israeli soldiers, have disrupted Palestinian access to the spring and limited it mainly to the hours before dawn or late in the evening. The regular bathing and swimming of settlers has also raised concerns about the quality of the water for drinking purposes.

According to the landowner, the army and settlers have sometimes (such as during the Passover earlier in the year) parked their vehicles on the cultivated area next to the spring, damaging the crops. This factor, combined with the wave of violence and rising tensions since October 2015, has forced the landowner to reduce the size of his farmed land from seven dunums to one dunum. His production and economic yield have fallen, while sales of water are also reduced.

The intimidation and access restrictions endanger the very existence of the 'Ein Fera'a community. "If it was not for the water spring, we would have gone long ago," a member of the community explained. "It is intimidation for transfer and control, but we are



During Sukkot and following active promotion by Telem and Adora settlements, over 1,000 Israelis visited 'Ein Fera'a water spring, the sole source of water for the neighbouring Palestinian community.



The takeover of springs as policy

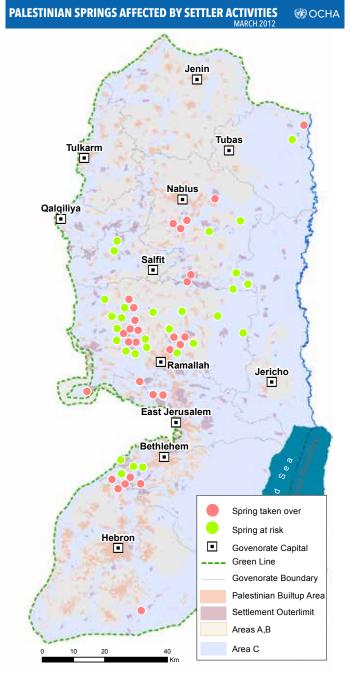
The case of 'Ein Fera'a is not unique. In recent years, a growing number of water springs in Area C have become the target of settler activities that deny, or put at risk, Palestinian access.5 A survey carried out by OCHA in 2011 found that thirty springs were under full settler control and inaccessible to Palestinians. ⁶ The main methods used to prevent Palestinian access are settler violence, including intimidation and threats, the de facto annexation of springs by settlements through erecting physical boundaries, and the isolation of areas of the West Bank by the Barrier and their subsequent classification as a closed military zone.

The survey also found that 26 springs were at risk of settler takeover, including springs

that have become the target of regular "tours" by settlers and/or patrolling by settlement security coordinators. While at the time of the survey Palestinians could still access and use these springs, farmers and residents reported that constant presence groups of armed settlers is intimidating and discourages use. The takeover of springs undermines Palestinian control over space and water resources in Area C of the West Bank and entrenches the settlement

activity entails trespass of Israeli settlers into private Palestinian property, or the erection of structures and opening of roads around the targeted sites without building permits. The Israeli authorities have largely failed to enforce the rule of law on those involved, and in some cases have even facilitated these practices.

enterprise even more.



water spring, we would have gone long ago," a member of 'Ein Fera'a community explained. "It is intimidation for transfer and control, but we are remaining steadfast," said the landowner.

"If it was not for the

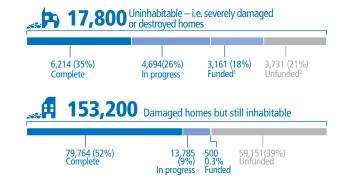
Winter weather threatens living conditions of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) residing in caravan sites in Gaza

In Gaza, some 60,000 people remain internally displaced after losing their homes in the 2014 escalation of hostilities. A minority of them continue to live in vulnerable housing conditions. The Shelter Cluster has identified some 400 families (approximately 2,080 people) living in metal caravans who are particularly exposed to the extreme weather conditions, a concern ahead of the approaching winter.

There are also safety concerns about the increasingly dilapidated state of the caravans, the floors and roofs of which are collapsing, the limited hygiene facilities, and erratic and unsafe water and electricity supplies.⁷ This has resulted in the death of at least two people in 2016, including a 25-year-old mother of five who died from an electric shock in Beit Hanoun in September, just days after she met with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to explain the challenges of living in the caravan site. Several people, many of them children, have been injured in accidents caused by candles during electricity cuts or the general unsafe conditions of the caravans.

A "lessons learned" report, commissioned by the Shelter Cluster on the 2014 shelter response, notes that Transitional Cash Assistance (TSCA) was perceived by beneficiaries as a more appropriate response to temporary shelter needs as it provided flexibility and dignity. In-kind caravans were not perceived as appropriate in the Gaza context.8 This is due to the high cost of the caravans; a lack of agreed-upon standards and the varying quality of caravans, with many not providing sufficient thermal comfort in winter or summer; and the protection and privacy concerns associated with temporary displacement sites.9 A Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH) survey conducted one year after the conflict indicated that 90 per cent of caravan dwellers preferred to receive TSCA rather than remaining in the caravans.¹⁰

Despite some important achievements coordination and delivery temporary responses to IDPs from the 2014 conflict, significant challenges continue delay the implementation durable solutions. of These include restrictions imports of building materials considered by Israel as "dual use items", lack of funding, and a range **RECONSTRUCTING THE 2014 DAMAGES**



of housing, land and property documentation issues.

About 900 families still live in dilapidated caravans with limited hygene facilities, safe water and electricity supplies and hardly any privacy.

Beit Hanoun caravan site case study

In early October, OCHA, together with Shelter Cluster coordinators, the MoPWH and representatives from the Beit Hanoun municipality, organized a visit to one of two caravan displacement sites in Beit Hanoun, to assess living conditions and explore possible mitigating measures ahead of winter. Health Cluster representatives joined the visit to examine public health issues and to support the medical referral of one urgent health case.

The caravan site is home to some 37 internally displaced families, approximately 180 individuals living in 40 caravans. Most of the caravans were moderately or severely degraded and in need of substantial repairs to roofs, floors, walls, windows, doors, and electrical and water connections. Families expressed serious concerns about their health and that of their children due to the condition of the caravans and exposure to insects and other pests. Some of the families include individuals with medical conditions or disabilities in need of ongoing care. The families noted that they were forced to live in these harsh conditions due to the absence of long-term housing solutions, lack of financial means to rent suitable accommodation or to reconstruct their homes, shortages of construction materials to complete their homes, especially cement, and a lack of legal documents.

To address the situation in advance of the winter, detailed lists of the families and their status will be compiled for re-verification with MoPWH and/or UNRWA, and a response plan with a specific time frame will be developed. In urgent situations, vulnerable families will be relocated to rented and safer accommodation. The Health Cluster will follow up urgent medical cases.



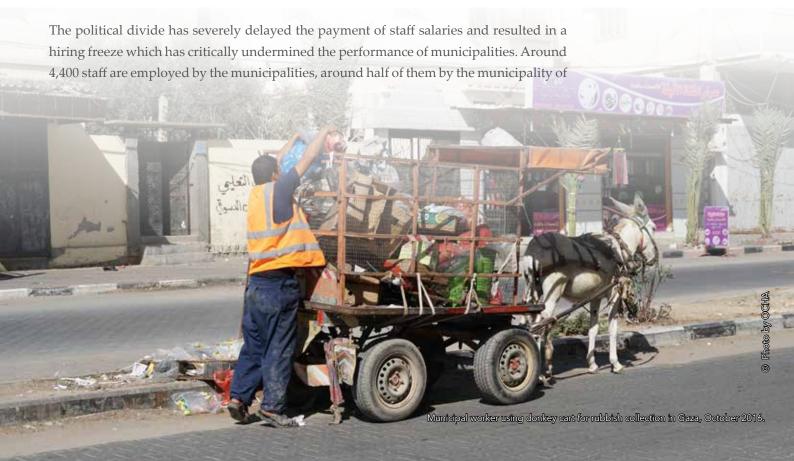
The impact of the internal divide on municipal services in the Gaza Strip

The ten-year-long political dispute between Hamas in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, along with the Israeli-imposed blockade and repeated outbreaks of hostilities, continue to severely disrupt the provision of basic services in Gaza, including those provided by Gaza's 25 municipalities. These municipalities face profound challenges in meeting their responsibilities to a population approaching two million, crammed into one of the most densely populated and confined areas in the world.

Municipalities are mandated to provide 27 direct, regulatory and supervisory functions, including the provision and management of basic services in the fields of public hygiene, infrastructure maintenance and environment, and at times of natural or man-made disasters. 11 Prior to 2007, municipalities were largely able to finance these services from local revenues, including building permits, household waste, water and sanitation charges, parking fees, and market and slaughterhouse licences.

Over the past ten years, municipal revenues have steadily declined and debts have risen dramatically due to the impact of the Israeli blockade, non-payment for services and the lack of effective cooperation between the authorities in Gaza and the West Bank. Municipal performance has been undermined further by limited international funding due to political considerations, including counter-terrorism legislation. The limited services provided by municipalities, especially water, sanitation and road maintenance, are funded by the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF).12 Last year, for example, the MDLF allocated 20 million euros; a further US\$22 million were also provided to alleviate municipal losses of an estimated \$58.6 million resulting from the 2014 hostilities.

Gaza's 25 municipalities face profound challenges in meeting their responsibilities to a population approaching two million, crammed into one of the most densely populated and confined areas in the world.



Gaza City, which alone provides services to over one third of the Gaza population. Staff in most municipalities have not been paid their salaries for seven to eight months, nor have their pension and health insurance payments been made. Staff salaries account for approximately 60-80 per cent of municipal budgets. In recent years, municipalities have used the limited revenues to partially pay staff salaries and to subsidize some services. Municipalities have been unable to hire around 120 new staff who are mostly needed for urban planning, GIS and information management.

In the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) which regulates the functioning of the municipalities, 62 of the 119 staff members have not received regular salaries since April 2014. Of these, 50 were recruited by the Gaza de facto authorities between July 2007 and August 2014 and another 12 were appointed by the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, but their salaries were cut. Another 14 staff continue to receive regular salaries from Ramallah but have not worked since 2007.

Lack of new vehicles, spare parts and fuel forced municipalities to employ donkey carts to support the collection of approximately 1,750 tons of solid waste produced in Gaza daily. The work of the winter weather emergency committee, chaired by the MoLG, has been undermined by limited resources and a lack of executive powers caused by the political divide. This is particularly challenging in times of crisis such as potential winter weather-related emergencies.

As a result of this scenario, municipal water and sanitation networks have not been adequately upgraded or maintained. Thousands of households in Wadi Gaza, Wadi El Salqa, Al Mughraqa, Abassan, Al Musader, Al Zanna, Bani Suaila, Al Qarara, Al Shouka, East El Maghazi and Al Buraij are not connected to public sewage networks and families are forced to create in-house cesspits which can be unsafe. The municipalities in these areas face extreme difficulty in helping families to empty the cesspits due to the lack of sewage utility vehicles. This situation poses significant public health risks.

The lack of new vehicles, spare parts and fuel has forced many municipalities to resort to employing donkey carts to support the collection of approximately 1,750 tons of solid waste produced in Gaza daily. Some municipalities carry out emergency repairs but not systematic maintenance, and scores of essential infrastructural development projects have not been implemented. Any function that requires an investment budget is dependent on external funding, which is difficult for municipalities to secure due to counter-terrorism restrictions. Since 2013, municipalities have been receiving between 100,000 - 150,000 litre of emergency fuel per month from the UN (coordinated by OCHA) to ensure timely removal of solid waste.

Gaza municipalities need a multi-dimensional programme of support if they are to continue to provide first-line services, including during emergencies, and to maintain, restore and improve services that have borne the brunt of the long years of disinvestment and conflict. For this to happen, political disagreements must be resolved and access secured to essential resources, including those restricted under Israeli policies.

Endnotes

- Since 2009, four demolition incidents have taken place in Tell el Himma. These involved the demolition of 32 structures and the displacement of 50 people, including 21 children, and otherwise affected 29 people, including 12 children.
- On the new outpost, see Amira Hass, 'Settlers Build New Illegal Outpost on Private Palestinian Land - With Israeli Authorities' Knowledge, Haaretz, 23 October 2016, http://www.haaretz. com/israel-news/.premium-1.748747.
- The spring feeds water into two adjacent pools, one of which is underground and is about two metres deep, and the other is above ground and is 1.5 metres deep.
- Telem-Adora tourist association posted on its Facebook page that the water spring would be open throughout the Sukkot holiday and that the association would coordinate with the Israeli army to provide security escorts for visitors (https://www.facebook.com/TelemAdora/ about/?ref=page_internal [Hebrew], accessed on 17 October 2016).
- For a list of water springs promoted as tourist destinations by settler groups see: www. hamaayanot.co.il [Hebrew].
- For more details on the methods used by settlers to take over Palestinian water springs and the impact on Palestinians, see OCHA, How dispossession happens: The Humanitarian Impact of the Takeover of Palestinian Water Springs by Israeli Settlers, March 2012.
- The dilapidated state of caravans is due to their poor quality, overcrowding, lack of maintenance and the limited resources of IDPs.
- The report, produced with financial support from the European Union and REACH organization, and reviewed by the Shelter Cluster Strategic Advisory Group including UNRWA, UNDP and MoPWH with OCHA as an observer, will be published shortly and will be covered in more detail in a forthcoming Humanitarian Bulletin.
- Temporary wooden housing provided on the site of damaged and destroyed homes was well received by the affected population.
- 10. Shelter Cluster, Lessons Learned from Gaza Shelter Response, unpublished draft, p. 31.
- 11. As set out in the Local Councils Law of 1997, these functions include water supplies, sanitation, solid waste collection, road maintenance and street lighting, in addition to public health monitoring to prevent epidemics, and emergency responses to natural or man-made
- 12. MDLF set up in 2005 by the Council of Ministers Decree No. 32/36/09 "as an autonomous juridical entity to accelerate Palestine's drive toward self-sustained, decentralized, prosperous, and creditworthy local government," http://www.mdlf.org.ps/Details. aspx?LangID=en&PageID=115. MDLF receives funding from the PA and international donors.