



PRESS RELEASE

Two years after the 2014 Gaza hostilities, 16 heads of UN agencies in Palestine call for greater flow of material and funding to reverse Gaza's de-development spiral

Jerusalem, 26 August 2016

On the day marking two years since the 26 August 2014 ceasefire which ended the most devastating round of hostilities in Gaza since the beginning of the occupation in 1967, 16 heads of United Nations agencies in Palestine call for the uninterrupted and predictable flow of material and increased funding to address humanitarian needs and boost economic prospects for Gaza's 1.9 million residents.

In a [report](#) released today, UN agencies document collective progress made in the last two years, as well as some of the remaining challenges in the recovery and reconstruction effort following the 2014 hostilities, which left at least 1,400 Palestinian and six Israelis civilians dead, 11,200 Palestinians injured and an estimated 100,000 people homeless. Children and women accounted for over 60 percent of all fatalities and injuries in Gaza.

The UN estimates that to date, half of the homes which suffered partial damages and a third of destroyed homes have been rebuilt; thanks to ongoing efforts by the Palestinian government, UN agencies, Non-Government Organizations, the international donor community, the private sector and above all, the households themselves. All of the 78 hospitals, clinics and the 252 schools damaged have been repaired, while the reconstruction of health and education infrastructure that were fully destroyed is ongoing.

“While progress is unequivocally underway, repairing the damages from the 51-day hostilities cannot be our only measure of success, given that humanitarian and socio-economic indicators were already so dire before 2014” warned Robert Piper, the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities. “We must reverse Gaza's de-development trajectory and address the needs of a population that has gone through three rounds of conflict, nine years of an Israeli blockade and the consequences of the Palestinian internal divide which, combined, have affected every aspect of their daily lives. Accountability for violations of international law by duty bearers on both sides during the war also remains elusive, denying victims and survivors the justice and redress they deserve.”

The vast majority of people living in Gaza were affected by the large-scale damage to infrastructure superimposed on an already frail economic situation. Progress remains particularly slow in the productive sectors including agriculture, owing to funding gaps and restrictions of movement on persons and goods. “Addressing economic recovery requires much greater financial investments and serious policy changes, including a lifting of restrictions on both imports and exports”, Robert Piper noted. “Improved cooperation between Ramallah and Gaza City is also a pre-requisite to get greater momentum while the operating space for aid actors working inside Gaza must be protected and respected at all costs” he added.

On October 2014, donors pledged US\$ 3.5 billion to support Gaza. According to the World Bank, only an estimated 40 percent had been disbursed by April this year. Funding for the remaining reconstruction work and serious investments in the productive sector is crucially lacking, further hindering people's ability to lift themselves out of crisis. There are particular concerns for the 65,000 people who remain displaced and in temporary shelter awaiting their homes to be rebuilt.

“The stakes are high if we are to prevent hopelessness and a re-escalation of violence”, Piper warned on behalf of the UN Country Team in Palestine. “All parties must come together to chart a clear course towards a just and final peace - including achieving a full lifting of the blockade, while ensuring Israel's legitimate security concerns, and establishing two States living side by side in peace and security”, Piper noted, recalling the words of the UN Secretary-General at the October 2014 Cairo international conference on Gaza's reconstruction.

Note to the editors:

The UN Country Team (UNCT) includes all UN operational agencies working in Palestine. The UNCT operates under the leadership of the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities in the occupied Palestinian Territory, Robert Piper.

The **report** referenced in this statement is accessible at: <http://bit.ly/GazaUNReport>. A **summary infographic** of reconstruction progress and remaining needs is available at: <http://bit.ly/GazaGraphics>.

