



Home Office

# **Country Policy and Information Note** Occupied Palestinian Territories: the humanitarian situation in Gaza

**Version 3.0**

**July 2022**

# Preface

## Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

## Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- The general humanitarian situation is so severe as to breach Article 15(b) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC (the Qualification Directive) / Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules
- The security situation presents a real risk to a civilian's life or person such that it would breach Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- A claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

## Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

## Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

## Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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# Assessment

Updated: July 2022

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 That the general humanitarian situation in Gaza is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment as set out in paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules / Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

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## 2. Consideration of issues

### 2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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### 2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 2.2.3 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and [Restricted Leave](#).

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#### **Official – sensitive: Start of section**

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

#### **Official – sensitive: End of section**

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## 2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.3.1 A dire humanitarian situation does not of itself give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution for a Refugee Convention reason.
- 2.3.2 In the absence of a link to one of the 5 Refugee Convention grounds necessary to be recognised as a refugee, the question to address is whether the person will face a real risk of serious harm in order to qualify for Humanitarian Protection (HP).
- 2.3.3 However, before considering whether a person requires protection because of the general humanitarian situation decision makers must consider if the person faces persecution for a Refugee Convention reason. Where the person qualifies for protection under the Refugee Convention, decision makers need not consider if there are substantial grounds for believing the person faces a real risk of serious harm meriting a grant of HP.
- 2.3.4 For further guidance on Convention reasons and humanitarian protection see the instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and [Granting humanitarian protection](#).

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## 2.4 Risk

- 2.4.1 In general, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is **not** so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk that conditions amount to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment as set out in paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules/Article 3 ECHR. Each case, however, must be considered on its individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they face a real risk of serious harm.
- 2.4.2 In the country guidance case of [HS \(Palestinian – return to Gaza\) Palestinian Territories CG \[2011\] UKUT 124 \(IAC\)](#), heard on the 15 and 16 December 2009, 22 and 23 February 2010, and 10 June 2010, and promulgated 11 April 2011, the Upper Tribunal (UT) considered, amongst other matters, whether the general situation in Gaza amounted to a breach of Article 3 of the ECHR. The UT looked at a wide range of evidence primarily covering events in 2008 and 2009 after the Israeli blockade had begun and large-scale conflict occurred during ‘Operation Cast Lead’. The hostilities led to thousands of casualties as well as substantial damage to infrastructure, economic activity and public services (see paragraphs 186 to 214).
- 2.4.3 On the basis of the evidence before it, the UT held in [HS](#) that:  
‘Our assessment of the background evidence is that it clearly shows a harsh state of affairs in Gaza which reflects a deterioration beyond the situation prior to the Operation Cast Lead hostilities. The infrastructure of Gaza is significantly depleted, and there are problems of access to electricity and clean water and there are limits on the amount of products that are brought into the territory. We do not seek to undervalue the level of difficulty that the appellants in this case, and indeed other residents of Gaza, face in the territory. But we consider that the tests set out in the Refugee Convention as applied in the case law and under Article 3 are set at a level of risk which is

higher than that which would be experienced by the appellant and her family in this case on return...

'As regards the general socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Gaza, there is on the whole common ground in the evidence provided by both sides, although some of the evidence on the part of the Secretary of State indicates some small level of improvement in various respects. There has to be shown to be a severe deprivation with denial of shelter, food and the most basic necessities of life for the appeal to succeed. It is relevant to note... that to succeed in a claim for protection based on poor socio-economic or dire humanitarian living conditions under... Article 15 of the Qualification Directive or Article 3, the circumstances would have to be extremely unusual... The appellant and her family have relatives in Gaza, and, even if they are unable to accommodate them, they have friends also, and there is a good deal of humanitarian aid... It is necessary to bear in mind the reduced levels of violence, and the fact that basic goods are, to a limited extent, being imported into Gaza whether with Israeli assistance or as a consequence of being brought in through the tunnels, and though the situation is a serious one, we do not consider that it crosses the Article 3 or Refugee Convention threshold...

'The conditions in Gaza are not such as to amount to persecution or breach of the human rights of returnees or place them in need of international protection' (paragraphs 222, 224 and 225(6)).

- 2.4.4 However, a subsequent determination by the Court of Appeal (EWCA) in the case of [MI \(Palestine\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2018\] EWCA Civ 1782](#), heard on 19 July 2018, promulgated on 31 July 2018, considering arguments about the Article 3 threshold following the European Court of Human Rights case of [Sufi and Elmi v. The United Kingdom - 8319/07 \[2011\] ECHR 1045 \(28 June 2011\)](#) held that it is:

'... sufficiently arguable that the conditions in Gaza are and were attributable to the direct and indirect actions of the parties to the conflict within the meaning of [282] of *Sufi & Elmi* and that there was an element of intentionality if that is a necessary ingredient before the approach in that case will be adopted... Accordingly, I would allow the appeal and remit the case for reconsideration of the evidence and the law by a differently constituted Upper Tribunal. Whether the case is one to which the *Sufi & Elmi* approach should apply will be a matter for that Upper Tribunal to decide.

'Finally, our attention was drawn to the fact that the Country Guidance in *HS* not only pre-dates the decision in *Sufi & Elmi* but is also dealing with the position as it was up to 2010, some years before the 2014 military operation with its serious impact on the population and the infrastructure. Counsel suggested that perhaps a new Country Guidance case on Gaza should be considered. Ultimately that is a matter for the Upper Tribunal, not this Court, although I can see the sense of the suggestion given that, on any view the Country Guidance in *HS* is somewhat out of date.' (paras 32 to 34)

- 2.4.5 At the time of writing, there has not been a CG case on Gaza since [HS](#). Therefore the UT's findings in *HS* remain extant caselaw and should

continue to be followed by decision makers unless there are very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence not to do so.

- 2.4.6 The political, humanitarian and security in Gaza since [HS](#) was promulgated has been one of political continuity and stalemate, gradual socio-economic decline and episodes of intense Israel-Gaza violence punctuating longer spells of tense peace (see [Political context](#), [Security situation](#) and [Economic situation](#)).
- 2.4.7 The Palestinian Authority (PA), based in the West Bank, is the legitimate government. However, the Islamist group, Hamas, has been in de facto control of the Strip since illegally taking over in 2007. Despite this, some public services, including payment of civil servants' wages, continues to be provided by the PA. The continuing division between Hamas and the PA have, however, diminished the capacity of local institutions to deliver public services (see [Political context](#)).
- 2.4.8 Israel (and Egypt along its border with Gaza) continues to control Gaza's land and maritime borders, and airspace. It has imposed restrictions on the movements of people and goods into and out of the territory to deny Hamas materials to build-up its military capability. The restrictions have limited commerce, stunted the economy, delayed humanitarian assistance going into Gaza, and prevented people leaving to obtain medical assistance in the West Bank and elsewhere (see [Political context](#) and [Economic situation](#)).
- 2.4.9 Since 2007, there have been 4 large-scale conflicts between Israel and Gaza-based militants (primarily Hamas) in 2008/9, 2012, 2014 and 2021. In each of these, militants fired rockets into Israel while Israel retaliated with airstrikes and, in 2008/9 and 2014, ground operations. At the of time writing, the ceasefire agreed at the end of the most recent conflict in May 2021 holds and there is no open conflict between the Israeli armed forces and militants in Gaza. In addition to the episodes of open armed conflict in 2018 and 2019 large numbers of Palestinians took part in the 'Great March of Return' protests near the border with Israel, which the Israelis responded to, at times, forcefully to deter and disperse (see [Security situation](#)).
- 2.4.10 The escalations in large-scale conflict since 2007 and the Great March of Return protests have left over 5,000 Palestinians dead and 60,000 injured (as well resulting in small numbers of Israeli casualties). The armed conflicts also caused the displacement of thousands of people, usually temporarily, as well as substantial damage to residential and commercial buildings, and infrastructure including hospitals, schools, water and sanitation facilities, and the electricity and transport networks (see [Security situation](#)).
- 2.4.11 The Israeli blockade, the periods of large-scale conflict and the political impasse between the PA and Hamas, exacerbated by measures taken to control COVID-19, have prevented the economy from reaching its potential. As a result, Gazans are largely dependent on international aid, monies from the PA and remittances. This has negatively affected people's living standards, with real average incomes almost halving since 1994. Poverty (people earning less than US\$5.50 or £4.68 a day) and unemployment rates have increased to almost 50% and over 60% respectively (see [Economic situation](#) and [Humanitarian support](#)).

- 2.4.12 People also face chronic shortages of electricity and safe drinking water, with Gazans relying on bottled or tanker-supplied water. Most have, though, access to sustainable levels of drinking water, while electricity rates fluctuate and do not meet demand, the supply of electricity has increased over the last 5 years. There is also a shortage of adequate housing although reconstruction efforts for properties destroyed/damaged during conflict are ongoing. Almost two-thirds of the population are moderately or severely food insecure and there are shortages of essential medicines and a lack of adequate healthcare infrastructure to meet all the population's needs. Despite these deprivations a survey of needs undertaken in July 2021, shortly after the May conflict indicated that the large majority of people were able to meet their basic food needs, had access to water for drinking and sanitation, and basic healthcare, and accommodation (see [Food security](#), [Water and sanitation](#), [Electricity](#), and [Healthcare](#)).
- 2.4.13 Gaza is highly dependent on external support from UN and other international organisations, Western donors and Arab countries. Although this has declined in recent years it still amounts to hundreds of millions of pounds each year, with 80% of the population receiving some form of aid. UNRWA plays an important role in aid delivery, assisting 1.4 million refugees within and outside of the 8 refugee camps by providing healthcare, education, supporting camp infrastructure and improvement, relief and social services, microfinance and emergency assistance. Other UN agencies, including the World Food Programme and the World Health Organisation, as well domestic and international organisations, such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, also provide assistance in kind, including food aid and healthcare provision, and direct cash transfers. Aid organisations target the most needy: female-headed households, the elderly and children. As a result, the UN's Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs acknowledged in its assessment of Gaza's humanitarian situation of December 2021 that 'a relatively large number of households are meeting their very basic needs' (see [Humanitarian support](#), [Food security](#) and [Healthcare](#)).
- 2.4.14 Gazans are committed to education. Almost all children are in school up to secondary level, while just under 20% go on to university or community college. General literacy rates are very high and at nearly 100% amongst people under 44 (see [Education](#)).
- 2.4.15 Humanitarian conditions in Gaza have deteriorated since [HS](#) was promulgated and are generally poor. However, the available evidence does not indicate that there has been a significant and durable deterioration in conditions. Therefore there are not very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to depart from the finding in [HS](#) that there is not a general risk of a breach of Article 3.
- 2.4.16 Even taking into account the ECWA's comments in [MI](#) with regard to the Article 3 threshold set out in paragraph 283 of [Sufi and Elmi](#) and which post-dates [HS](#), given the continued provision of basic services by the state and aid agencies, the (albeit limited) possibility of commerce and employment, a person will be generally able 'to cater for [their] most basic needs, such as

food, hygiene and shelter'. As such a person will not generally face a real risk of a breach of Article 3.

- 2.4.17 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and [Granting humanitarian protection](#).

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## 2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 The state (either the de facto authorities or the PA) is not able to provide protection against a breach of Article 3 because of the general humanitarian conditions should this occur in individual cases.

- 2.5.2 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and [Granting humanitarian protection](#).

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## 2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 Gaza is small, approximately the size of the Isle of Wight, and conditions are generally similar across the Strip, although there are some geographical variations. People are generally able to move around within Gaza, although pressure to conform to Hamas' interpretation of Islamic norms may restrict the movement of women. However given the similarity of conditions across the Strip internal relocation is unlikely to be reasonable, although each case will need to be considered on its facts (see [Geography and demography](#), and [Freedom of movement](#)).

- 2.6.2 Relocation from Gaza to the West Bank (and East Jerusalem) is likely to be difficult and unreasonable in most cases, although each will need to be considered on its facts (see [Country Policy and Information Note: background information, including actors of protection, and internal relocation](#), and [Freedom of movement](#)).

- 2.6.3 For further guidance on internal relocation see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.7 Certification

- 2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

- 2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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# Country information

Section 3 updated: July 2022

## 3. Sourcing

- 3.1.1 A wide range of sources have been consulted whilst researching this note. However, general statistical information about the demographic, socio-economic and humanitarian state of Gaza has been largely drawn from the [Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics](#) (PCBS) which uses established statistical best practice to collate data about the Occupied Palestinian Territories<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.1.2 In particular, the PCBS research includes the [multi-sectoral humanitarian needs assessment \(MSNA\) house-hold survey conducted in July 2021](#) (MSNA survey 2021), which was conducted on behalf of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). The UNOCHA described it as the ‘first-ever household-level MSNA in the OPT, which generated the most comprehensive and accurate cross-sectoral needs analysis to date, based on a representative geographic, demographic and gender and age disaggregated dataset.’<sup>2</sup> This included included surveying 4,126 households across 28 localities and 5 refugee camps in Gaza between 4 and 28 July 2021<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.1.3 NB the MSNA urvey 2021 was undertaken shortly after the May 2021 escalation in hostilities between Israel and Hamas. It is findings therefore reflect the experiences of those interviewed in this particular circumstance.
- 3.1.4 Additional statistical information on education, electricity provision, healthcare, and injuries and fatalities during periods has been drawn from the [UNOCHA data pages](#).

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Section 4 updated: July 2022

## 4. General background

- 4.1.1 For background information including history, geography, political affairs and freedom of movement in the OPTs as a whole, see the Country Policy and Information Note, [Occupied Palestinian Territories: Background information including actors of protection, and internal relocation](#).

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Section 5 updated: July 2022

## 5. Geography and demography

- 5.1.1 The UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office stated in its guidance document, Overseas Business Risk – The Occupied Palestinian Territories, 22 February 2022 (FCDO OBR report 2022): ‘The British Government defines the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) as

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<sup>1</sup> PCBS, ‘[About the PCBS](#)’, no date

<sup>2</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)’ (page 16), December 2021

<sup>3</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[2021 Multisectoral Needs...](#)’ (Findings English (Presentation)), November 2021

consisting of two separate land areas: the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.<sup>4</sup>

- 5.1.2 The OPTs are divided into 3 areas: Area A - under Palestinian civilian and security control; Area B - under Palestinian civilian administration and Israeli security control; and Area C - under Israeli civilian and security control<sup>5</sup>.



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- 5.1.3 Gaza, also referred to as the Gaza Strip, borders the Mediterranean Sea, Egypt and Israel<sup>7</sup> with a total area of approximately 365 square km<sup>8</sup> (about the size of the Isle of Wight<sup>9</sup>). There are 2 pedestrian entry/exit points -

<sup>4</sup> UK FCDO, '[Overseas Business Risk – The Occupied Palestinian Territories](#)', 22 February 2022

<sup>5</sup> DFAT, '[Thematic Report Palestinian Territories](#)' (paragraph 2.7), 15 March 2017

<sup>6</sup> DIS, '[Report of a fact finding mission to Israel and OPTs](#)' (Title page), May 2019

<sup>7</sup> US CIA, '[World Factbook](#)' (Gaza Strip), updated 1 July 2022

<sup>8</sup> PCBS, '[Palestine in Figures 2021](#)' (page 8), March 2022

<sup>9</sup> Isle of Wight Council, '[JSNA – Demographics and population](#)', no date

Rafah, with Egypt; and Erez, with Israel - and a goods-only crossing point at Kerem Shalom with Israel<sup>10</sup>.



5.1.4 Gisha's (an Israeli NGO which states its goal is to 'protect the freedom of movement of Palestinians'<sup>12</sup>) [map of movement and access in Gaza of January 2020](#) provides further information, including the main cities and towns, UN Relief and Works Agency refugee camps, open and closed crossing points, roads and other infrastructure<sup>13</sup>.

5.1.5 Gaza is estimated to have a population of over 2.1 million<sup>14</sup> 'including some 1.4 million Palestine refugees.'<sup>15</sup> The territory is 'one of the most densely populated areas in the world'<sup>16</sup> – estimated to have over 5,850 people per square km<sup>17</sup> (compared to the UK which has around 280 people per square km<sup>18</sup>). The 'population [is] concentrated in major cities, particularly Gaza City in the north'<sup>19</sup>, with '86.6 percent resid[ing] in urban areas compared to 13.4 percent in refugee camps, while only a marginal share of the population

<sup>10</sup> UK Home Office, [Report of a fact finding mission to OPTs](#) (sections 4.5, 4.7 and 4.8), March 2020

<sup>11</sup> UN OCHA, '[Gaza Strip: Snapshot - January 2021](#)', 1 March 2021

<sup>12</sup> Gisha, '[About Gisha](#)', no date

<sup>13</sup> Gisha (accessed via reliefweb), '[Gaza Strip – Mapping Movement and Access](#)', 9 January 2020

<sup>14</sup> PCBS, '[Palestine in Figures 2021](#)' (page 8), March 2022

<sup>15</sup> UNRWA, '[Where we work](#)', undated

<sup>16</sup> Al Jazeera, '[Gaza Strip: A beginner's guide to an enclave under blockade](#)', 14 March 2021

<sup>17</sup> PCBS, '[Palestine in Figures 2021](#)' (page 8), March 2022

<sup>18</sup> UNdata, '[United Kingdom](#)', 2021

<sup>19</sup> US CIA, '[The World Factbook](#)' (Gaza Strip), updated 1 July 2022

resides in rural areas (rural areas in the Gaza Strip are virtually nonexistent, due to the density and distribution of the population on the territory)<sup>20</sup>.

- 5.1.6 There are [8 refugee camps](#) located in northern, centre and southern areas of the Strip<sup>21</sup> (See [UN Relief and Works Agency \(UNRWA\)](#) for more information about its function and services, and information about the camps.)
- 5.1.7 The majority of the population is young, with approximately 40% under 15 and just over 60% under 24 years old<sup>22</sup>. Average household size is around 5.8 people<sup>23</sup>, life expectancy at birth was estimated to be 74 years<sup>24</sup>.
- 5.1.8 The main languages spoken are 'Arabic, Hebrew (spoken by many Palestinians), English (widely understood)<sup>25</sup>.
- 5.1.9 According to 2012 estimates, 98 to 99 percent are Sunni Muslim, 1 percent are Christian and 1 percent are 'other, unaffiliated or unspecified'<sup>26</sup>.

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Section 6 updated: July 2022

## 6. Political context

- 6.1.1 The FCDO OBR report 2022 observed:

'While the Ramallah-based [Palestinian Authority] PA remains the sole legitimate authority for Gaza in the eyes of the international community, [the Islamic Resistance Movement; Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya<sup>27</sup> usually referred to as]  [Hamas](#) took full control of the Gaza Strip illegally in June 2007 and has been operating as the de facto authority [since then], establishing its own security force... Although Israel withdrew its citizens from settlements [in Gaza], Israel retains control of the land borders, movement and access to Israel (and via Israel to the rest of the OPTs), airspace, and the maritime border. Thus, Israel remains the Occupying Power in Gaza, as in the rest of the OPTs. The extensive restrictions on imports into and exports from Gaza (including transfers between the West Bank and Gaza) have had a major detrimental effect on Gaza's economy and make investment in Gaza particularly difficult. Israel and Hamas have engaged in periodic conflict, characterized by rockets fire[d] into Israel, as well as Israeli airstrikes into Gaza, causing loss of life and destruction.'<sup>28</sup>

- 6.1.2 A US Congressional Research Service paper of October 2021 by Jim Zanotti, citing various sources, (USCRS paper 2021) noted that:

'Hamas's security control of Gaza... presents a conundrum for the Abbas-led PA, Israel, and the international community. They have been unable to establish a durable political-security framework for Gaza that assists Gaza's population without bolstering Hamas... After victory in the 2006 PA

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<sup>20</sup> MAS, '[Socio-Economic & Food Security Survey 2020](#)' (page 8), 2021

<sup>21</sup> UNRWA, '[Where we work](#)' (Gaza Strip), no date

<sup>22</sup> PCBS, '[Palestine in Figures 2021](#)' (page 8), March 2022

<sup>23</sup> PCBS, '[Statistical Yearbook 2021](#)' (page 15 of the English summary), December 2021

<sup>24</sup> PCBS, '[Palestine in Figures 2020](#)' (page 19), March 2021

<sup>25</sup> US CIA, '[The World Factbook](#)' (Gaza Strip), updated 1 July 2022

<sup>26</sup> US CIA, '[The World Factbook](#)' (Gaza Strip), updated 1 July 2022

<sup>27</sup> USSD, '[Country Reports on Terrorism 2020](#)' (Foreign Terrorist Organisations), 16 December 2021

<sup>28</sup> UK FCDO, '[Overseas Business Risk – The Occupied Palestinian Territories](#)', 4 January 2021

legislative elections, Hamas consolidated its power in Gaza—while losing it in the West Bank— through violent struggle with Fatah in June 2007. Hamas’s security forces have maintained power in Gaza ever since, even after its de facto government relinquished nominal responsibility to the PA in June 2014. The [US] State Department and some NGOs have raised concerns about possible Hamas violations of the rule of law and civil liberties...

‘Since Hamas’s 2007 takeover of Gaza, Israeli and Egyptian authorities have maintained strict control over Gaza’s border crossings... Israel justifies the restrictions it imposes as a way to deny Hamas materials to reconstitute its military capabilities. However, the restrictions also limit commerce, affect the entire economy, and delay humanitarian assistance... For several years, Hamas compensated somewhat for these restrictions by routinely smuggling goods into Gaza from Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula through a network of tunnels. However, after Egypt’s military regained political control in July 2013, it disrupted the tunnel system.

‘Observers routinely voice concerns that if current arrangements continue, the dispiriting living conditions that have persisted since Israel’s withdrawal in 2005 could feed radicalization within Gaza and pressure its leaders to increase violence against Israel for political ends... Israel disputes the level of legal responsibility for Gaza’s residents that some international actors claim it retains—given its continued control of most of Gaza’s borders, airspace, maritime access, and various buffer zones within the territory. Within limited parameters amid Gaza’s political uncertainties and access restrictions, UNRWA and other international organizations and nongovernmental organizations take care of many Gazans’ day-to-day humanitarian needs. These groups play significant roles in providing various forms of assistance and trying to facilitate reconstruction from previous conflicts.’<sup>29</sup>

6.1.3 An earlier USCRS paper of September 2021 observed that

‘Hamas controls Gaza through its security forces and obtains resources from smuggling, informal “taxes,” and reported external assistance from some Arab sources and Iran... Hamas also maintains a presence in the West Bank... Fatah and Hamas have reached a number of Egypt-brokered agreements aimed at ending the West Bank-Gaza split. However, problems with implementation have left Hamas in control of Gaza despite PA responsibility for some civil services.’<sup>30</sup>

6.1.4 The UNOCHA Humanitarian Response Plan for 2022 released in December 2021 observed that ‘The intra-Palestinian divide between Hamas and the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority (PA) also reduces the capacity of local institutions in Gaza to deliver basic services to the population...’<sup>31</sup>. However, the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process’ ‘Report to the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee’ of November 2021 (UNSCMEPP report 2021) observed:

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<sup>29</sup> US CRS, ‘[The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations](#)’ (pages 46 to 47), 26 October 2021

<sup>30</sup> US CRS, ‘[The Palestinians: Overview, Aid, and U.S. Policy Issues](#)’ (page 2), 9 September 2021

<sup>31</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)’ (page 17), December 2021

'The Palestinian Authority still provides significant support to the people in Gaza, particularly through salaries, pensions and social support payments and basic services. In February [2021], Prime Minister Shtayyeh announced that the PA would pay the full salaries of the 25,000 PA officials in the Gaza Strip and would again pay the pensions of PA retirees in Gaza. The PA also maintains a role in Gaza's public utilities sector, which is in urgent need of governance reforms that improve transparency, capacity, efficiency, and service delivery.'<sup>32</sup>

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Section 7 updated: July 2022

## 7. Security situation

### 7.1.1 The US CRS paper 2021 commented:

' Hamas, Israel, the PA, and several outside actors affect Gaza's difficult security, political, and humanitarian situations. Since Hamas seized de facto control within Gaza in 2007... these situations have fueled periodic violence between Israel and Hamas (along with other Palestinian militants based in Gaza) that could recur in the future.

'The precarious security situation in Gaza is linked to humanitarian conditions, and because Gaza does not have a self-sufficient economy...'<sup>33</sup>

### 7.1.2 The USCRS paper 2021 went on to state:

'Four large-scale conflicts took place between Israel and Gaza-based militants in 2008-2009, 2012, 2014, and 2021. In each of these conflicts, the militants fired rockets into Israel, while Israel conducted airstrikes in Gaza targeting militants... Israel also launched some ground operations in the 2008-2009 and 2014 conflicts. In the aftermath of each conflict, significant international attention focused on the still largely unfulfilled tasks of:

- improving humanitarian conditions and economic opportunities for Palestinians in Gaza; and
- preventing Hamas and other militants from reconstituting arsenals and military infrastructure.'<sup>34</sup>

### 7.1.3 In addition to the 4 'large-scale' conflicts, there has been a fifth significant period of conflict/civil disobedience during 2018 and 2019. The 'Great March of Return' protests at the Gaza / Israeli border began on a weekly basis in March 2018 'to demand the return of Palestinian refugees to what is now Israel'. Freedom House in its report covering events in 2018 noted

'... Some of the participants [in the Great March of Return] engaged in violent acts, and Israeli forces positioned along the de facto border regularly fired on demonstrators with live ammunition, ostensibly to prevent any breaches of the fence, resulting in scores of fatalities. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 180 Palestinians had been killed during the demonstrations in Gaza by year's

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<sup>32</sup> UNSCMEPP, '[Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee](#)' (page 10), 17 November 2021

<sup>33</sup> US CRS, '[The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations](#)' (page 16), 26 October 2021

<sup>34</sup> US CRS, '[The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations](#)' (page 17), 26 October 2021

end, and more than 25,000 had been injured, including those affected by tear gas.<sup>35</sup>

- 7.1.4 In its annual report covering events in 2019, Freedom House noted: ‘Palestinians in Gaza continued to take part in weekly “Great March of Return” protests near the de facto border with Israel, and Israeli forces regularly used live fire, rubber-coated bullets, and tear-gas canisters against the protesters, resulting in tens of thousands of injuries and more than 200 fatalities since the demonstrations began in March 2018. At year’s end, organizers announced that the marches would be held with reduced frequency in 2020.’<sup>36</sup> Sources consulted in this note do not indicate that the Great March of Return protests continued into 2020 and there is no evidence these have reoccurred at the time of writing (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 7.1.5 In ‘the context of the occupation and conflict’ the UNOCHA has gathered data on fatalities (including civilian, armed group and ‘disputed’) and injuries (which can be filtered to include those inflicted on ‘demonstrators’) between January 2008 to May 2022<sup>37</sup>:

	<b>Fatalities</b>	<b>Injuries</b>	<b>Injuries – ‘demonstrators’</b>
<b>2008</b>	831	876	270
<b>2009</b>	1,040	5,454	No data
<b>2010</b>	80	286	10
<b>2011</b>	110	475	193
<b>2012</b>	251	1,483	54
<b>2013</b>	11	88	2
<b>2014</b>	2,270	11,482	34
<b>2015</b>	27	1,402	904
<b>2016</b>	10	210	157
<b>2017</b>	28	1,205	1,124
<b>2018</b>	260	25,177	24,949
<b>2019</b>	109	11,898	11,531
<b>2020</b>	6	55	No data
<b>2021</b>	265	2,367	142
<b>2022</b>	No data	11	No data
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,298</b>	<b>62,469</b>	<b>39,370</b>

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<sup>35</sup> Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2019](#)’ (Gaza Strip), February 2019

<sup>36</sup> Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2020](#)’ (Gaza Strip), March 2022

<sup>37</sup> UN OCHA, ‘[Data on casualties](#)’ (Gaza; Palestinian fatalities), no date

<sup>38</sup> UN OCHA, ‘[Data on casualties](#)’ (Gaza; Palestinian fatalities), no date

- 7.1.6 The greatest number of fatalities in a single year occurred in 2014 – just under 2,300<sup>39</sup> - while the most recent period of escalated hostilities - the 11-day conflict in May 2021 - resulted in 261 deaths, of whom at least 130 were civilians including 67 children, and a further 2,200 injured<sup>40</sup>. In addition to deaths and injuries, the May 2021 conflict ‘... damaged residential and commercial building[s] and infrastructure, particularly hospitals and health centers, water and sanitation facilities, and transport, energy and communications networks. Exacerbated by previous trauma, this renewed round of violence had a particularly serious impact on children’s mental health.’<sup>41</sup>
- 7.1.7 UNOCHA documented over 62,400 people as being injured between 2008 and May 2022, with the cause of injury as ‘other’ for almost half these. For the remainder, the causes of injury included tear gas inhalation, live ammunition, air-launched explosives, being hit by a tear gas cannister and rubber bullets<sup>42</sup>. Based on the data above, the highest numbers of injuries broadly correspond to the 4 periods of open conflict with Israel. The exception are the years 2018 and 2019, when the majority of those injured were demonstrators most likely during the Great March of Return protests.

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Section 8 updated: July 2022

## 8. Economic situation

### 8.1 Socio-economic data

#### 8.1.1 Basic economic data for 2021/2022:

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP<sup>43</sup>) per person: US\$1,213.4 in 2021<sup>44</sup>, a slight increase over 2020 when it was US\$1,207.6 but a fall from US\$1,458.3 in 2018<sup>45</sup> (by comparison GDP per head was over US\$44,000 in Israel<sup>46</sup>, US\$2,784.8 in Lebanon<sup>47</sup>, and US\$580.2 in Yemen<sup>48</sup> in 2020)
- Consumer Price Index (inflation) was up by 3.41% and the food price index up 8.81% in May 2022 compared to a year earlier<sup>49</sup>
- people in the labour force: 35% (reasons for not working include age, illness and study/education)<sup>50</sup>
- unemployment rate:

<sup>39</sup> UN OCHA, [‘Data on casualties’](#) (Gaza; Palestinian fatalities), no date

<sup>40</sup> UNHCHR, [Human rights situation in the OPTs](#) (paragraph 6), 23 February 2022

<sup>41</sup> UNSCMEPP, [‘Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee’](#) (page 6), 17 November 2021

<sup>42</sup> UN OCHA, [‘Data on casualties’](#) (Gaza; Palestinian injuries), no date

<sup>43</sup> GDP = the total estimated value of goods and services produced

<sup>44</sup> PCBS, [‘Performance of Palestinian Economy, 2021’](#) (page 18), May 2022

<sup>45</sup> PCBS, [‘Statistical Yearbook 2021’](#) (page 121), December 2021

<sup>46</sup> UK FCDO, [‘Israel economic factsheet’](#), December 2021

<sup>47</sup> UK FCDO, [‘Lebanon economic factsheet’](#), December 2021

<sup>48</sup> UK FCDO, [‘Yemen economic factsheet’](#), December 2021

<sup>49</sup> WFP, [‘Palestine Monthly Market Dashboard – May 2022’](#), 30 June 2022

<sup>50</sup> PCBS, [‘Statistical Yearbook 2021’](#) (page 59), December 2021

- 46.9%<sup>51</sup> but an estimated 66% for 15 to 29 year olds<sup>52</sup>
- 42% of households reported at least one adult over 18 as being unemployed or seeking work (45% in refugee households; 50% of in-camp refugee households; and 35% of non-refugee households)<sup>53</sup>
- poverty rates (earning less than US\$5.50 a day, roughly US\$2,000 (around £1,700<sup>54</sup>) a year): around 60% of population<sup>55 56</sup>
- dependence on international assistance: 80% of population<sup>57 58</sup>
- debt - 15% of households did not have any debt, 38% had debts of less than 5,000 NIS (circa £1,210<sup>59</sup>), 26% had debts of between 5000 to 20,000 NIS (£1,210 to £4,840) and 21% had debts of more than 20,000NIS (£4,840+). The reasons for taking on debt included:
  - major purchase (for example a house or car): 8%
  - building reconstruction/rehabilitation: 13%
  - business-related expenses or loans: 5%
  - weddings: 8%
  - food: 8%
  - healthcare: 5%<sup>60</sup>
- remittances (total for West Bank and Gaza): estimated to be US\$2.65 (£2.25<sup>61</sup>) billion in 2020, a decline from US\$2.86 (£2.37<sup>62</sup>) billion in 2019<sup>63</sup>

8.1.2 The MSNA survey 2021 provided a breakdown of monthly income per person reported by households in New Israeli Shekels (NIS)<sup>64</sup>:

- 27% earned/received less than 100 NIS (about £24<sup>65</sup>)
- 31% earned/received 100 to 200 NIS (about £24 to £48)
- 26% earned/received 200 to 400 NIS (£48 to £96)
- 16% earned/received over 400 NIS (£96+)<sup>66</sup>

<sup>51</sup> PCBS, '[Palestine in Figures 2021](#)' (page 24), March 2022

<sup>52</sup> WB, '[Economic Monitoring Report...](#)' (paragraph 42), 17 November 2021

<sup>53</sup> UNOCHA, '[2021 Multisectoral Needs...](#)' (Findings English Gaza ... slide 15), November 2021

<sup>54</sup> Xe.com, '[USD to GBP exchange rate](#), (US\$1 = 85p), 14 July 2022

<sup>55</sup> WB, '[Gaza rapid damage and needs assessment](#)' (pages 31 and 32), June 2021

<sup>56</sup> WFP, '[Palestine Monthly Market Dashboard – May 2022](#)', 30 June 2022

<sup>57</sup> EC, '[European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations](#)' (Palestine), 10 January 2022

<sup>58</sup> WFP, '[Palestine Monthly Market Dashboard – May 2022](#)', 30 June 2022

<sup>59</sup> Xe.com, '[Currency conversion NIS to GBP](#), (100NIS = £24) 14 July 2022

<sup>60</sup> UNOCHA, '[2021 Multisectoral Needs...](#)' (Findings English Gaza ... slide 17), November 2021

<sup>61</sup> Based on exchanged rate of US\$1 = 85p as of 14 July 2022

<sup>62</sup> Based on exchanged rate of US\$1 = 85p as of 14 July 2022

<sup>63</sup> WB, '[Migration and Remittances Data](#)' (Annual Remittances Data), updated May 2021

<sup>64</sup> Average house size is 5.7 persons, see [Geography and demography](#)

<sup>65</sup> Xe.com, '[Currency conversion NIS to GBP](#), (1NIS = 24p), 14 July 2022

<sup>66</sup> UNOCHA, '[2021 Multisectoral Needs...](#)' (Findings English Gaza ... slide 16), November 2021

8.1.3 The MSNA survey 2021 also noted that average percentage of income spent on different essential goods and services (but did not indicate if these varied across the different income groups):

- food: 50%
- water: 2%
- medical care: 10%
- fuel and electricity: 12%
- rent: 32% (for households which indicated they rented)<sup>67</sup>

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## 8.2 State of the economy

8.2.1 The World Bank in its Economic Monitoring report of November 2021 (WB EM report 2021), citing various sources, observed

‘Gaza’s economy has been reduced to a fraction of its estimated potential. The Strip has been suffering for years under a blockade resulting in restrictions to movement of goods and people, leaving very limited linkages to the outside world. Data indicates that since 1994, Gaza’s compounded annual growth rate was a mere 1 percent... As a result, the contribution of Gaza’s economy to the Palestinian economy was cut by half over the past three decades, from 36 percent in 1994 to 18 percent currently.

‘Gaza has also undergone deindustrialization and the economy has become highly dependent on external transfers, weakening its economic prospects. The productive base of the economy has been eroded by the combined size of the manufacturing and agriculture sectors falling from 27 percent of GDP in 1994 to 17 percent today... Gaza’s exports virtually disappeared... Aid and remittances are almost the only source of foreign exchange inflows that fuels consumption in Gaza, particularly since exports are extremely small and investment activity is weak. It can be safely assumed that the PA’s and UNRWA’s expenditures in Gaza, in addition to informal flows to the de facto authority, have in certain years amounted to almost 100 percent of Gaza’s GDP, keeping its economy afloat despite the restrictions... These transfers have dropped in recent years given the PA’s decision to reduce salaries for Gaza employees and UNRWA’s funding gaps. As a result, Gaza’s economy has continued to shrink since 2017 and the COVID-19 shock exacerbated the situation, resulting in the economy contracting by 12 percent in 2020...

‘Gaza’s economic decline has had a severe impact on living standards as real per capita incomes have significantly dropped over the past three decades. Real per capita income (GNI) in Gaza has fallen by almost a half since 1994, from US\$2,659 to US\$1,432 currently. Consequently, while GNI per capita in the West Bank was only 8 percent higher than in Gaza in 1994, the difference has increased to 303 percent... Unemployment in Gaza reached 48 percent in the first quarter of 2021, prior to the recent conflict. This is the highest unemployment rate in the World Bank database... The overall rate disguises a particularly high youth unemployment rate, which

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<sup>67</sup> UNOCHA, [‘2021 Multisectoral Needs...’](#) (Findings English Gaza ... slide 16), November 2021

stood at 66 percent amongst those aged between 15-29 before the conflict. The latest actual poverty data for Gaza is for 2016/17 and it shows that 43 percent of the population was below the US\$5.5 a day poverty line, even though 80 percent of the population receive some sort of social assistance. Projections suggest that the poverty rate has been rising steadily since 2016/17, with an 8.3 percentage point increase between 2019 and 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, when it reached 57 percent, in response to a real GDP per capita contraction of 15 percent in 2020.<sup>68</sup>

8.2.2 The WB EM report 2021 also noted: 'In Gaza, the implementation of some confidence building measures by the [Government of Israel] Gol including granting 10 thousand Gazans trade permits to Israel, widening the fishing zone, and easing some restrictions on exports while allowing some construction material to come in to enable reconstruction after the last conflict are all expected to push growth in Gaza to around 3 percent in 2021.'<sup>69</sup>

8.2.3 The United Nations Security Council's Report of the Secretary-General on the Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, published on 24 August 2021, (UNSC report 2021) stated:

'Beyond the human tragedy for both Palestinians and Israelis, and the physical damage of 11 days of fighting, the economic impact of the hostilities in May [2021] further exacerbated the existing humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and severely weakened the economy of Gaza. On 6 July, the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union published the [Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment](#). According to the Assessment, damages in Gaza are estimated at between \$290 million and \$380 million, while economic losses may reach nearly \$200 million. The social sector was hit hardest, significantly weakening the safety net of the most vulnerable. The immediate and short-term recovery and reconstruction needs, over the first 24 months, are estimated at between \$345 million and \$485 million. Also on 6 July, a technical meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians was held to align donor efforts to help address both the aftermath of the May escalation and the significant fiscal crisis facing the Palestinian Authority.'<sup>70</sup>

8.2.4 UNOCHA's Humanitarian Response Plan issued in December 2021 (UNOCHA HRP 2021) observed:

'... the May [2021] escalation [in Gaza] resulted in... up to US\$380 million in physical damage to core infrastructure assets, including buildings, health, educational and [water and sanitation] WASH facilities, in addition to [US]\$190 million in economic losses... Although the ceasefire is holding, and the Israeli authorities have eased some of the restrictions imposed in May, the blockade remains in place, impeding the access and movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza, the implementation of infrastructure projects and delaying economic recovery. The long standing intra-Palestinian divide between Hamas and the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority

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<sup>68</sup> WB, '[Economic Monitoring Report...](#)' (paragraphs 39, 40 and 42), 17 November 2021

<sup>69</sup> WB, '[Economic Monitoring Report...](#)' (paragraph 19), 17 November 2021

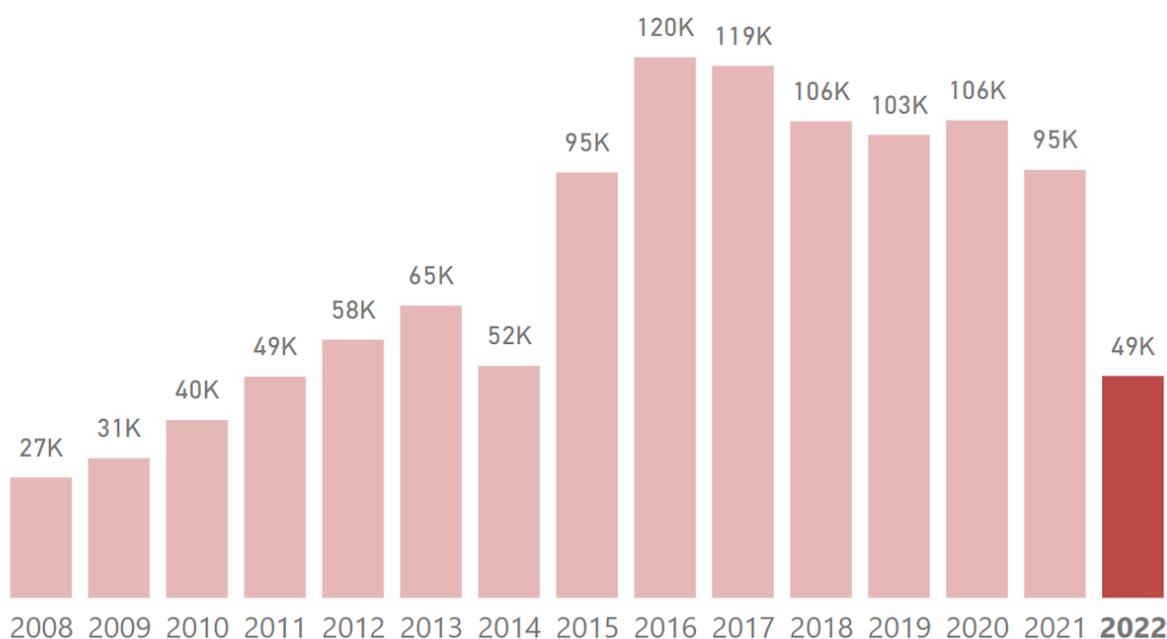
<sup>70</sup> UNSC, '[Report of the Secretary-General on the...](#)' (paragraph 23), 24 August 2021

(PA) remains unresolved, reducing the capacity of local institutions in Gaza to deliver basic services to the population. Humanitarian operations in Gaza are also increasingly impeded by restrictions imposed by Hamas. Gaza's economy remained almost stagnant in the first half of 2021 due to the May conflict, unemployment has reached 44.7 per cent and poverty almost 60 per cent... approximately 2.1 million Palestinians across the oPt will require some form of humanitarian assistance, of whom 64 per cent, or 1.3 million people, live in Gaza.<sup>71</sup>

8.2.5 The UNOCHA HRP 2021 further noted with regard to control of goods and services moving into Gaza and elsewhere: 'The Israeli authorities, citing security reasons, continue to impose physical and administrative restrictions on humanitarian programmes, including constraints on the delivery of materials needed for humanitarian projects, and limitations on the implementation of projects that involve building, expanding or rehabilitating infrastructure in the Gaza Strip... [as well as in other parts of the OPTs]<sup>72</sup>.

8.2.6 UNOCHA has collated data on movement of goods into/out of Gaza from 2008 to mid 2022. The number of entries and exists has been significantly higher between 2015 and 2022 then in the years 2008 to 2014:

### Entries and exits of commodities by year



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<sup>71</sup> UNOCHA, '[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)' (pages 7 to 8), December 2021

<sup>72</sup> UNOCHA, '[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)' (page 8), December 2021

<sup>73</sup> UNOCHA, '[Gaza crossings: movement of people and goods](#)' (Entries and exits...), no date

### 8.3 COVID-19 and its impact

8.3.1 The WHO's COVID-19 monthly situation report for February 2022 stated that as of 4 July 2022 there had been/were:

- 249,700 confirmed cases
- 38 active cases
- 2,000 deaths
- 687,400 (46.9% of the population) had been vaccinated<sup>74</sup>

8.3.2 The WHO report noted that it '... together with UNICEF and health partners continued support to [Ministry of Health] MOH in strengthening the COVID-19 vaccination across oPt'<sup>75</sup>. Further monthly updates are available on the WHO's [OPT website](#) and the [Health Cluster website](#).

8.3.3 The MSNA survey 2021 noted that as a result of COVID-19 (and the measures implemented to contain it):

- 27% of households had reported losing their job permanently (6%) or temporarily (22%)<sup>76</sup>, though this varied across the Gaza Strip with the highest rates in the governorate of Gaza (31%), the lowest in Rafah (19%)
- 53% of households had reported their monthly income had decreased (51% of refugee households; 58% of non-refugee households)
- 63% of households reported an increase in debt (with rates highest in Gaza (70%) and lowest in Deir al-Balah (54%))<sup>77</sup>

8.3.4 The UNOCHA HRP report 2021 noted: 'The MSNA also found that COVID-19 restrictions have undermined access to social services across the oPt, with greater impact on the most vulnerable, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, cancer patients in Gaza... People with disabilities, of whom many are children, continue to face special challenges, especially for rehabilitative and caregiving services.'<sup>78</sup>

8.3.5 The WB economic monitoring report 2021 specifically in regard to education:

'Learning losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic need to be mitigated to maintain and improve learning outcomes at all education levels in Gaza. The impact of the pandemic risks holding back progress in the education sector for years to come. A World Bank simulation of the potential impact of COVID-19 suggests that the pandemic may have reduced learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS) by up to 1.1 years... To determine students' knowledge and skills after the prolonged learning disruptions, teachers will need to be trained on how to prepare, implement, and make use of frequent formative assessments. To achieve [Ministry of Education] MOE's learning

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<sup>74</sup> WHO, '[Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in the occupied Palestinian territory](#)', 4 July 2022

<sup>75</sup> WHO, '[COVID-19 Monthly Situation Report](#)', February 2022

<sup>76</sup> There is a discrepancy in the MSNA presentation, which refers to a total 27% affected but this is broken down to 22% temporarily and 6% permanently losing their jobs

<sup>77</sup> UNOCHA, '[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)' (Findings English Gaza ... slide 5), no date

<sup>78</sup> UNOCHA, '[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)' (page 67), December 2021

targets for the core subjects, students will also require extensive remedial education and tutoring, especially those from disadvantaged households.<sup>79</sup>

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Section 9 updated: July 2022

## 9. Humanitarian support

### 9.1 People in need

#### 9.1.1 The UNOCHA HRP 2021 observed that

'In 2022, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) estimates that approximately 2.1 million Palestinians across the oPt will require some form of humanitarian assistance ['people in need']. Humanitarian needs have deepened, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the devastation resulting from the conflict in Gaza in May [2021], and the rise in casualties, settler violence and demolitions in the West Bank in 2021...

'Refugees outside of camps and people living below the poverty line represent the two groups with the most severe levels of need, 45.6 per cent and 29.2 cent, respectively, followed by refugees inside camps, at 22.4 per cent [in the OPTs combined]. People with damaged shelter, female-headed households, farmers and persons with disabilities, and IDPs each represented less than 15 per cent.'<sup>80</sup>

#### 9.1.2 The UNOCHA HRP report 2021 also observed:

'... the severity of need is greater in Gaza, the MSNA found that about 64 per cent of those in need of assistance, or 1.57 million people, live in Gaza and 36 per cent, 880,000 people, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

'In addition to a significant variance in the severity of needs between Gaza and the West Bank, pockets of extreme severity are found in geographical areas within the two territories. One of the main findings of the MSNA is that although the severity of core sectoral needs appears to be significantly lower than in many other humanitarian contexts, aid dependency in the oPt (particularly in Gaza) is almost unparalleled, creating a very fragile stability and a high degree of aid dependency. In addition, although a relatively large number of households appear to be meeting their very basic needs, a high percentage are employing negative coping mechanisms, such as taking on debt, in order to meet these needs, adding to their longterm vulnerability. Consequently, the joint humanitarian response in 2022 will remain focused on addressing the acute humanitarian needs of the vulnerable groups identified in the [humanitarian needs overview] HNO who face a range of protection threats, lack of accountability and effective remedy.'<sup>81</sup>

#### 9.1.3 The World Food Programme in its Monthly Market Dashboard for May 2022 noted:

'... 80 percent of the population in the Gaza Strip depends on humanitarian assistance, with WFP and UNRWA providing food assistance to around 1.5

<sup>79</sup> WB, '[Economic Monitoring Report...](#)' (paragraph 95), 17 November 2021

<sup>80</sup> UNOCHA, '[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)' (page 16), December 2021

<sup>81</sup> UNOCHA, '[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)' (page 67), December 2021

million people. The situation has been further exacerbated by the ongoing crisis in Ukraine with wheat flour prices increasing by... 36 percent in the Gaza Strip. While the stocks reserves remain at their normal level of 2-3 months, this is a growing concern in light of the ongoing global supply chain constraints, recalling that Palestine is an import-dependent country.<sup>82</sup>

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## 9.2 De facto government support

9.2.1 The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its report on the human rights situation in the OPTs generally, covering the period August 2019 to April 2022 (Dutch MFA report 2022), citing various sources, noted:

‘According to sources, government assistance is inconsistent and families must try to survive for extended periods without government aid or must borrow money from relatives... Hamas is said to have an estimated fifty thousand civil servants... Most civil servants in Gaza are said to receive around 55% of their salaries. Qatar is supporting Gaza by supplying fuel to Hamas, which is allegedly selling it and using the proceeds to pay government salaries...’<sup>83</sup>

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## 9.3 International aid provision

9.3.1 The USCRS paper of October 2021, citing various sources, noted:

‘... because Gaza does not have a self-sufficient economy... external assistance largely drives humanitarian welfare. Gazans face chronic economic difficulties and shortages of electricity and safe drinking water... Large transfers of aid to the PA (particularly from Western countries, Arab states, and international organizations) have historically been critical inputs for the economy in the West Bank and Gaza, but according to the World Bank the PA received [US]\$488 million in aid in 2020, 20% less than in 2019 and the lowest level in decades... According to PA financial statements, the PA has received only around [US]\$100 million in foreign aid for 2021 through August...

‘The possibility that humanitarian crisis could destabilize Gaza has prompted some efforts aimed at improving living conditions and reducing spillover threats. In fall 2018, Israel started allowing shipments of Qatari fuel and cash into Gaza to partially alleviate the electricity and funding shortages... In early 2021, Qatar announced that it would increase its annual contribution to Gaza by around 50% to [US]\$360 million, and also pledged [US]\$60 million to ease Gaza’s energy crisis by helping build a natural gas pipeline to Gaza from Israel....

‘[However] No significant breakthrough has occurred to reconcile civilian infrastructure needs with security considerations. Officials in Gaza responsible for post-conflict reconstruction estimate that rebuilding costs from the May 2021 conflict would be [US]\$479 million, while remaining damages from past conflicts would cost another [US]\$600 million to repair...

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<sup>82</sup> WFP, ‘[Palestine Monthly Market Dashboard – May 2022](#)’, 30 June 2022

<sup>83</sup> Dutch MFA, ‘[General Country of Origin Information Report...](#)’ (page 22), 30 April 2022

Although some countries, including Qatar and Egypt, have pledged in 2021 to assist with reconstruction, international actors only implemented around 15% of the rebuilding assistance pledged after the 2014 conflict, due partly to the security concerns...<sup>84</sup>

9.3.2 The USCRS October 2021 paper further noted:

‘The May 2021 Israel-Hamas conflict disrupted the Qatari fuel shipments and cash payments to Gaza that... Israel had allowed since 2018. The fuel shipments resumed in June 2021... Due to Israeli concerns about the potential for Hamas to divert money to its militia or for other purposes, Qatar began an arrangement in October 2021 to provide money transfers to needy families through the United Nations... However, this mechanism does not address the unresolved issue of providing salaries to Gaza’s civil servants... Other Israel-Hamas disputes have continued and could conceivably escalate, including over what Israel allows into Gaza, and Israelis in Hamas custody...’<sup>85</sup>

9.3.3 The USCRS paper of September 2021 commented on the US policies and aid to OPTs generally, noting:

‘The extent to which the Biden Administration might improve U.S.-Palestinian relations remains unclear. Relations significantly worsened in light of various developments during the Trump Administration, including the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and the suspension of U.S. aid... While the Biden Administration has announced the resumption of some types of bilateral aid... and voluntary contributions to UNRWA ([US]\$318.8 million to date during FY2021), some complications remain. The Taylor Force Act... prohibits most Economic Support Fund (ESF) aid directly benefitting the PA unless the PLO/PA curtails domestically popular payments that arguably incentivize acts of terror. The Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act of 2020... has authorized future Israeli-Palestinian people-to-people and economic cooperation initiatives.’<sup>86</sup>

9.3.4 The UNSCMEPP report 2021, covering the period February to October 2021, dated 17 November 2021 noted:

‘Partners and donors such as the United Nations, including UNRWA and WFP, along with the European Union and the State of Qatar provide substantial support to the people of Gaza. Beginning in September [2021], the United Nations began providing cash assistance to some 95,000 needy and vulnerable families financed by a contribution of US\$40 million from the State of Qatar over four months. Due to funding constraints and a technical delay in the European Union’s regular budget support, the Palestinian Authority has been unable to deliver its most recent social protection payments to over 115,000 of the most vulnerable households across the OPT, including about 79,000 households in Gaza. The PA’s highly effective program of social assistance is vital and financing sources must be identified to restart these payments. Addressing UNRWA’s immediate financial needs to meet costs, including salaries in Gaza, to the end of the year and ensuring

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<sup>84</sup> US CRS, [‘The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations’](#) (pages 16 to 17), 26 October 2021

<sup>85</sup> US CRS, [‘The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations’](#) (page 18), 26 October 2021

<sup>86</sup> US CRS, [‘The Palestinians: Overview, Aid, and U.S. Policy Issues’](#) (page 2), 9 September 2021

sustainable financing to UNRWA are also critical to ensuring social support and basic services, which left unaddressed would undermine stability in Gaza.<sup>87</sup>

9.3.5 The UNSCMEPP also observed ‘The United Nations and partners will continue critical support to health, education, and basic services to Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, particularly with the COVID-19 vaccine. The United Nations will also work closely with the PA to support its socioeconomic response to COVID-19, including on fundraising, technical assistance, and implementation.’<sup>88</sup>

9.3.6 The UNOCHA HRP 2021 provided a table of the number of people the UN has targeted in its humanitarian response plans between 2013 and 2021 as well as funding required and received for the OPTs in total<sup>89</sup>.

YEAR OF APPEAL	PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	FUNDING RECEIVED	% FUNDED
2013	2.1m	1.8m	400.8m	270.0m	67.4%
2014	2.3m	1.9m	931.1m	506.4m	54.4%
2015	1.9m	1.6m	706.1m	399.5m	56.6%
2016	2.3m	1.6m	570.7m	284.4m	49.8%
2017	2.0m	1.6m	551.9m	258.9m	46.9%
2018	2.5m	1.9m	539.7m	239.6m	46.4%
2019	2.5m	1.4m	350.6m	277m	79%
2020	2.4m	1.5m	420m	300.5	71.5
2021	2.45m	1.8m	417.6m	324.7m	77.8%

9.3.7 The funding is required to the meet 3 objectives supporting:

- ‘[t]he rights of Palestinians living under occupation, including those living under the blockade and other restrictions, are protected, respected and promoted in accordance with [international humanitarian law] IHL and [international human rights law] IHRL, while duty-bearers are increasingly held to account
- ‘[t]he basic needs of vulnerable Palestinians living under occupation are met through the provision of quality basic services and improved access to resources, in accordance with the rights of protected persons under IHL
- ‘[t]he capacity of vulnerable Palestinians to cope with and overcome protracted crisis, including from environmental threats, is supported,

<sup>87</sup> UNSCMEPP, ‘[Report to the Ad Hoc Liasion Committee](#)’ (page 11), 17 November 2021

<sup>88</sup> UNSCMEPP, ‘[Report to the Ad Hoc Liasion Committee](#)’ (page 13), 17 November 2021

<sup>89</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)’ (page 14), December 2021

while solutions to violations and other root causes of threats and shocks are pursued<sup>90</sup>

9.3.8 In the 6 months prior to the MSNA survey 2021:

- 66% of households reported having received aid (73% refugee households, 51% of non-refugee). Of this aid:
  - 94% was food
  - 21% cash
- 57% of households were satisfied with the aid they received, the most common reason for dissatisfaction was over the quantity
- 23% of households (16% of refugee, 36% of non refugee) with income below 200 NIS per month (around £48<sup>91</sup>) did not receive aid (suggesting 77% did)
  - However, there were geographical variations in receipt of aid with the top 3 areas **not** receiving aid living in Gaza city (33%), Abasan al Kabira (26%) and Al Musaddar (26%), and the lowest in Al Bureij Camp (4%), Al Bureij (5%) and Al Maghazi Camp (6%)<sup>92</sup>

9.3.9 The MSNA survey 2021 also stated that at the time of the survey was conducted (July 2021), 53% of households reported having received assistance of some kind since the start of the May 2021 conflict. The survey, however, also indicated that there continued to be a demand for aid with 94% of households wanting to receive assistance in future, the large majority preferring this as cash. The survey further found that 63% of households experienced barriers to receiving aid, the most common reasons were:

- 34% were ineligible
- 18% did not know how to apply
- 12% did not understand the application
- 7% lack of resources by providers<sup>93</sup>

9.3.10 The MSNA survey 2021 noted that 17% of households reported that humanitarian assistance was their primary source of income<sup>94</sup>.

9.3.11 The Dutch MFA report 2022, citing UNOCHA and a BBC-Monitoring article, noted 'after the escalation of violence in May 2021, Qatar began to provide support through the UN for one hundred thousand poor families who consequently received USD 100 per month up to the end of 2021... In early December 2021, Egypt reopened the Rafah border crossing with Gaza – among other things to allow humanitarian aid... to pass through...'<sup>95</sup>

9.3.12 The WFP in its monthly dashboard for May 2022 commenting on support for the OPTs generally noted: 'The EU recently... renewed its financial support

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<sup>90</sup> UNOCHA, '[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)' (pages 8 to 9), December 2021

<sup>91</sup> Xe.com, '[Currency converter](#)', 28 February 2022

<sup>92</sup> UNOCHA, '[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)' (Findings English Gaza ... slide 9), no date

<sup>93</sup> UNOCHA, '[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)' (Findings English Gaza ... slide 14), no date

<sup>94</sup> UNOCHA, '[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)' (Findings English Gaza ... slide 16), no date

<sup>95</sup> Dutch MFA, '[General Country of Origin Information Report...](#)' (page 22), 30 April 2022

to the Palestinian Authority with a EUR €224.8 million assistance package. This package includes €145.35 million to support the Palestinian Authority in the payments of the salaries and pensions of civil servants, the social allowances to vulnerable families, the referrals to the East Jerusalem Hospitals, and the purchase of COVID-19 vaccines.<sup>96</sup>

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#### 9.4 UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

9.4.1 UNRWA was established ‘Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict... to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees. The Agency began operations on 1 May 1950. In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate...’ UNRWA’s

‘... services encompass [education](#), [health care](#), [relief and social services](#), [camp infrastructure and improvement](#), [microfinance](#) and [emergency assistance](#), including in times of armed conflict... [provided to] Palestine refugees, defined as “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict.” The descendants of Palestine refugee males, including legally adopted children, are also eligible for registration.

‘UNRWA services are available to all those living in its areas of operations who meet this definition, who are registered with the Agency and who need assistance.’<sup>97</sup>

9.4.2 The UNHCR in its position paper on returns to Gaza of March 2022, citing correspondence with UNRWA in September 2021 and March 2022, as well as UNRWA published documentary material, noted:

‘UNRWA basic education and primary health services are available on a principle of universality regardless of whether beneficiaries are living in or outside the refugee camps, whilst eligibility criteria are applied to determine access to other types of assistance. In times of conflict, UNRWA may also assist non-refugees in need of urgent medical care... Acute and chronic medical needs requiring tertiary treatment are referred for treatment in public hospitals, which have been severely affected by the Israeli-imposed blockade, recurrent hostilities, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic... The UNRWA health program partners with NGOs and private hospitals to support refugees with hospitalization services for limited types of surgical procedures, provided funds are available. UNRWA maintains an essential drugs list offering access to some common pharmaceutical products and medicines, subject to funding and in-kind donations. The range of prescription medicine made available through UNRWA is not exhaustive and may not cover all conditions...’<sup>98</sup>

9.4.3 The Agency ‘is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from UN Member States. UNRWA also receives some funding from the Regular

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<sup>96</sup> WFP, [‘Palestine Monthly Market Dashboard – May 2022’](#), 30 June 2022

<sup>97</sup> UNRWA, [‘Who we are’](#), no date

<sup>98</sup> UNHCR, [‘UNHCR position on returns to Gaza’](#) (paragraph 44), March 2022

Budget of the United Nations, which is used mostly for international staffing costs.<sup>99</sup>

#### 9.4.4 The UNRWA website also noted:

'In recent years, UNRWA has made significant improvements to its services in Gaza as part of Agency-wide reform as, for example, in the fields of education and health care. Notwithstanding the Agency's ongoing funding crisis, which has forced UNRWA in Gaza to take mitigating measures, particularly with regard to its emergency interventions, UNRWA continues to: Improve the academic achievement, behaviour and values of school students. Provide critical primary health care to patients, including psychosocial support, as well as screening and treatment of non-communicable diseases and healthy lifestyle education. Construct desperately needed infrastructure, including schools and shelters Improve the quality and targeting of its food and cash assistance to the poorest of the poor. Promote gender equality and human rights for all.'<sup>100</sup>

#### 9.4.5 The UNOCHA HRP report 2021 observed

'A unique aspect of the humanitarian and development context in the oPt is the provision of services to refugees by UNRWA. UNRWA provides basic education, health and sanitation service... in Gaza, where the majority of the population are refugees... Funding is provided through voluntary contributions for the agency's Programme Budget, which has been significantly reduced in recent years. While not directly addressed in the HRP, UNRWA's core programming plans form part of the foundational assumptions for other humanitarian actors, as any reduction in UNRWA's support would see a significant rise in the humanitarian needs detailed in the HNO. One recent indication of the importance of UNRWA's key role in Gaza was clearly highlighted during the May [2021] escalation when some 59 Agency schools were used as temporary shelters for up to 77,000 displaced people.'<sup>101</sup>

#### 9.4.6 UNRWA records having over 1.4 million registered refugees. Its support provision included:

- over 12,000 staff (as of December 2020)<sup>102</sup>
- 278 schools, educating over 280,000 pupils
- 22 primary health facilities which receive an average of 2.68 million patient visits each year
- almost 100,000 social safety net beneficiaries
- 7 women's centres<sup>103</sup>
- 1,790 microfinance loans totalling over 2.2million in 2020<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> UNRWA, '[Who we are](#)', no date

<sup>100</sup> UNRWA, '[Where we work](#)', undated

<sup>101</sup> UNOCHA, '[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)' (page 18), December 2021

<sup>102</sup> UNRWA, '[UNRWA in figures 2020-2021](#)', 6 September 2021

<sup>103</sup> UNRWA, '[Where we work](#)' (Gaza Strip), no date (but figures updated to May 2021)

<sup>104</sup> UNRWA, '[UNRWA in figures 2020-2021](#)', 6 September 2021

9.4.7 However, the UNHCR position paper on returns to Gaza, citing various sources, cautioned

‘The majority of Palestine refugees have become even more dependent on UNRWA’s assistance to cover their basic needs following a further deterioration of their living conditions and reduction of their coping skills as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic... However, the level of services that UNRWA is able to provide depends on the Agency’s funding situation and “may not correspond to the needs of Palestine refugees”... Continuing funding shortfalls threaten the sustainability of UNRWA’s operations and constrain emergency activities, in particular food and cash assistance... The precarious financial situation also threatens the livelihood of UNRWA’s 12,800 employees in Gaza, where the Agency is the second largest employer after the public sector...’<sup>105</sup>

9.4.8 UNRWA provided ‘services in 8 Palestine refugee camps... [but] does not administer or police the camps, as this is the responsibility of the host authorities.’ The camps are:

- [Beach camp](#)
- [Bureij camp](#)
- [Deir El-Balah Camp](#)
- [Jabalia Camp](#)
- [Khan Younis Camp](#)
- [Maghazi camp](#)
- [Nuseirat camp](#)
- [Rafah camp](#)<sup>106</sup>

9.4.9 The [UNRWA has produced a map of its field of operations](#), including in Gaza, which provides information on the ‘number of registered Palestine refugees, official camps, UNRWA schools, health centres and other facilities.’<sup>107</sup>

9.4.10 With regard to its interactions with Hamas, the US State Department (USSD) human rights report for 2021 observed: ‘In Gaza de facto authorities [Hamas] generally cooperated with UNRWA and allowed it to operate without interference. After the May conflict and a controversial interview given by UNRWA’s Gaza field director, Hamas announced it would no longer guarantee his and his deputy’s safety, effectively forcing out UNRWA’s two most senior officials.’<sup>108</sup>

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## 9.5 Domestic NGOs

9.5.1 Freedom House in its report covering events in Gaza in 2021 stated:

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<sup>105</sup> UNHCR, ‘[UNHCR position on returns to Gaza](#)’ (paragraph 45), March 2022

<sup>106</sup> UNRWA, ‘[Where we work](#)’ (Gaza Strip), no date (but figures updated to May 2021)

<sup>107</sup> UNRWA, ‘[UNRWA fields of operations map 2021](#)’, 6 September 2021

<sup>108</sup> USSD, [Human rights report 2021](#) (2F), 12 April 2022

‘There is a broad range of Palestinian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civic groups, and Hamas operates a large social-services network. However, Hamas has restricted the activities of organizations that do not submit to its regulations, and many civic associations have been shut down for political reasons since the 2007 PA split. Aid and reconstruction efforts by NGOs after periodic conflicts with Israel have been held up in part by disagreements over international and PA access to the territory and control over border crossings. The Israeli government also imposes restrictions on access to Gaza for human rights researchers and NGO staff.’<sup>109</sup>

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## 9.6 Restrictions on aid agencies

### 9.6.1 The USSD human rights report 2021 noted:

‘Gaza-based NGOs reported that harassment and restrictions on civil society increased during the year. Hamas representatives appeared unannounced at their offices to seek tax payments, demand beneficiary lists and salary information, and summon NGO representatives to police stations for questioning. Humanitarian organizations continued to raise concerns regarding the shrinking operational space for international NGOs in Gaza, including Israeli travel bans affecting their Gaza-based staff.’<sup>110</sup>

### 9.6.2 See also [Freedom of movement](#) below.

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Section 10 updated: July 2022

## 10. Shelter

### 10.1.1 The MSNA survey 2021 reported that:

- 85% of households owned their properties
- 6% rented
- 9% were housed without rent
- 5% (or 7%, the survey provides 2 figures) of household reported being at risk of eviction with the main reasons:
  - lack of funds to pay rental costs (32%)
  - requests to vacate from owner of building/land (23%)
  - host family no longer able to host (15%)
  - no valid tenancy agreement (15%)<sup>111</sup>

### 10.1.2 The MNSA survey 2021 also noted that:

- 21% of households were temporarily displaced by the May 2021 conflict

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<sup>109</sup> FH, ‘[Freedom in the World 2022](#)’ (Gaza Strip), February 2022

<sup>110</sup> USSD, [Human right report 2021](#) (section 5), 12 April 2022

<sup>111</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)’ (Findings English... slides 24 and 34), no date

- 63% of households reported their shelter had been damaged or destroyed since 2014, of these
  - 31% reported this had occurred in as a result of the May 2021 conflict
  - 85% had no capacity to repair their shelters<sup>112</sup>

10.1.3 The WB EM report 2021 noted:

‘A large portion of the population, including the refugees, has been displaced more than once. To address demographic growth alone, there is a backlog of thousands of housing units in Gaza. The housing shortage significantly increased after the recent [May 2021] conflict, which resulted in the destruction of 4,100 housing units: around 1,600 units were totally destroyed and 2,500 partially damaged... This has exacerbated the housing needs that were yet to be addressed due to damages caused by the 2014 war, after which around 5,500 families were still displaced prior to the 2021 conflict.’<sup>113</sup>

10.1.4 The UNSG report 2021 noted:

‘By 2021, 9,566 of 11,000 houses destroyed during the 2014 conflict in Gaza had been rebuilt and the construction of another 639 houses was under way. ... Over 113,000 Palestinians were temporarily displaced in UNRWA schools or with host families during the hostilities, heightening the risk of the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) owing to overcrowding. Approximately 600 families (3,600 individuals) have remained internally displaced for more than six years, since the 2014 conflict.’<sup>114</sup>

10.1.5 The UNOCHA HRP report 2021 observed:

‘About 58,000 housing units were damaged or destroyed [after the May 2021 conflict], of which 9,500 housing units suffered moderate to severe damage and 1,255 housing units were destroyed and rendered uninhabitable, leaving 8,250 people still displaced. Some 3,000 Palestinians in Gaza are still displaced from previous escalations:... according to the MSNA, 63 per cent of respondents have had their shelter damaged or destroyed since 2014, and 85 per cent of these reported no capacity to repair their homes.’<sup>115</sup>

10.1.6 The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in their report of 27 June 2022 (ICRCRCS report 2022) covering the period 14 May 2021 to 31 March 2022 provided slightly different data on the numbers of building damaged or destroyed in the May 2021 hostilities: ‘According to the Ministry of Public Work and Housing (MoPWH), during the hostilities, some 300 buildings were destroyed, comprising over 1,100 housing units destroyed and more than 1,000 units severely damaged and rendered uninhabitable, in addition to nearly 15,000 housing units damaged to various extents.’<sup>116</sup>

10.1.7 The IFRCRCS report 2022 also noted:

<sup>112</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)’ (Findings English... slide 13), no date

<sup>113</sup> WB, ‘[Economic Monitoring Report...](#)’ (paragraph 43), 17 November 2021

<sup>114</sup> UNSC, ‘[Report of the Secretary-General on the...](#)’ (paragraph 24), 24 August 2021

<sup>115</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)’ (page 16), December 2021

<sup>116</sup> IFRCRCS, ‘... [Palestine: Complex Emergency](#)’, 27 June 2022

'The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) estimated that approximately 6,950 people are still displaced as of July 15 [2021], mostly with host families. Some displaced families are expected to return to their homes, and stay inside or around them, even if uninhabitable. This new caseload of displaced persons is added to some 4,000 people, who lost their homes in the 2014 escalation of hostilities and remained displaced, and 16,000 who live in homes that were damaged in that context and are yet to be repaired. Prior to the conflict, the MoPWH estimated a longstanding housing shortage of some 120,000 units in Gaza, resulting in families, especially vulnerable and displaced, living either with extended families or in rental accommodation. Before the hostilities, it was estimated that some 9,500 families in Gaza living in rented homes were at risk of eviction due to their inability to pay rental costs, a figure that was expected to rise as a result of the increase in unemployment, COVID-19, and poverty.'<sup>117</sup>

10.1.8 Sources above document the number of properties destroyed or damaged, and persons displaced in May 2021 but provide varying numbers, which may reflect the primary source of data. In summary

- as of May 2021 approximately 3,000 to 4,000 people remain displaced from previous hostilities in 2014
- between 4,000 to 58,000 housing units were damaged or destroyed in the May 2021 conflict
- over 100,000 people were initially displaced in May 2021
- between 7,000 to 8,250 continued to be displaced after July 2021
- there is a housing shortage of 120,000 units

10.1.9 The MSNA survey 2021 stated 62% of households reported damage to their shelter at the time of the data collection. The most common types were:

- large cracks/opening in most walls: 39%
- opening or cracks in roof: 31%
- broken or cracked windows: 33%
- exterior doors/broken/cannot shut: 8%<sup>118</sup>

10.1.10 The Dutch MFA report 2022, citing various sources, observed:

'For emergency humanitarian aid and the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure in the Palestinian Territories, USD 95 million was requested in July 2021 from an alliance between several organisations and OCHA. By July 2021, half of this money had been raised. Besides rebuilding basic services such as healthcare and access to water, OCHA also made funds available for housing benefits for displaced persons whose houses had been destroyed... Several countries supported humanitarian aid for Gaza – among other things through humanitarian partners, UN organisations, NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent (International Committee of the Red Cross - ICRC)... A number of aid organisations were active in Gaza after the Israeli

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<sup>117</sup> IFRCRCS, '[Palestine: Complex Emergency](#)', 27 June 2022

<sup>118</sup> UNOCHA, '[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)' (Findings English Gaza ... slide 24), no date

air strikes. UNRWA supported displaced persons with emergency shelters in UNRWA schools. Various organisations were active in providing food parcels, access to water and sanitation, non-food items such as toiletries and medicines and financial support, including credits for the purchase of food...

'In September 2021, Israel allowed building materials into Gaza again... In early December 2021, Egypt reopened the Rafah border crossing with Gaza – among other things to allow... building materials to pass through... With the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the rubble from destroyed homes and buildings in Gaza is being recycled in part for road construction as well as for the construction of cement and building blocks in the private sector. However, it has been reported that these building blocks do not comply with the applicable safety standards... According to a news report, by January 2022 fifty of the 1,650 destroyed homes in Gaza had been restored... One source said that at the end of January 2022 no reconstruction had taken place in Gaza...'<sup>119</sup>

- 10.1.11 The [PCBS publishes a range of datasets](#) on the housing stock in Gaza (segregated by governorate), including type, size, number of bedrooms and ownership.

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Section 11 updated: July 2022

## 11. Food security

- 11.1.1 A report by the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), a Palestinian 'independent, non-profit... institution' based in Ramallah<sup>120</sup>, documented food security in 2020 (MAS food security report 2020). The report was based on surveys of 1,253 households in Gaza during 2020 conducted by the PCBS. The report providing a definition of the 4 terms used: food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure or severely food insecure.

- 'A household classified as **food secure** is able to achieve adequate food consumption levels, in terms of quantity and quality, and meet essential nonfood needs without resorting to coping mechanisms.
- '**Marginally food-secure** households are considered at risk of not being able to maintain adequate food consumption levels in a stable manner. In particular, these households have not adopted a nutritionally sufficient diet, although they have adequate financial means.
- '**Moderately food-insecure** households face challenges in maintaining adequate food consumption due to limited financial means or an inability to avoid negative coping mechanisms.
- '**Severely food insecure** households experience a significant consumption gap that they cannot counter through economic means or coping mechanisms...'<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Dutch MFA, '[General Country of Origin Information Report...](#)' (page 22), 30 April 2022

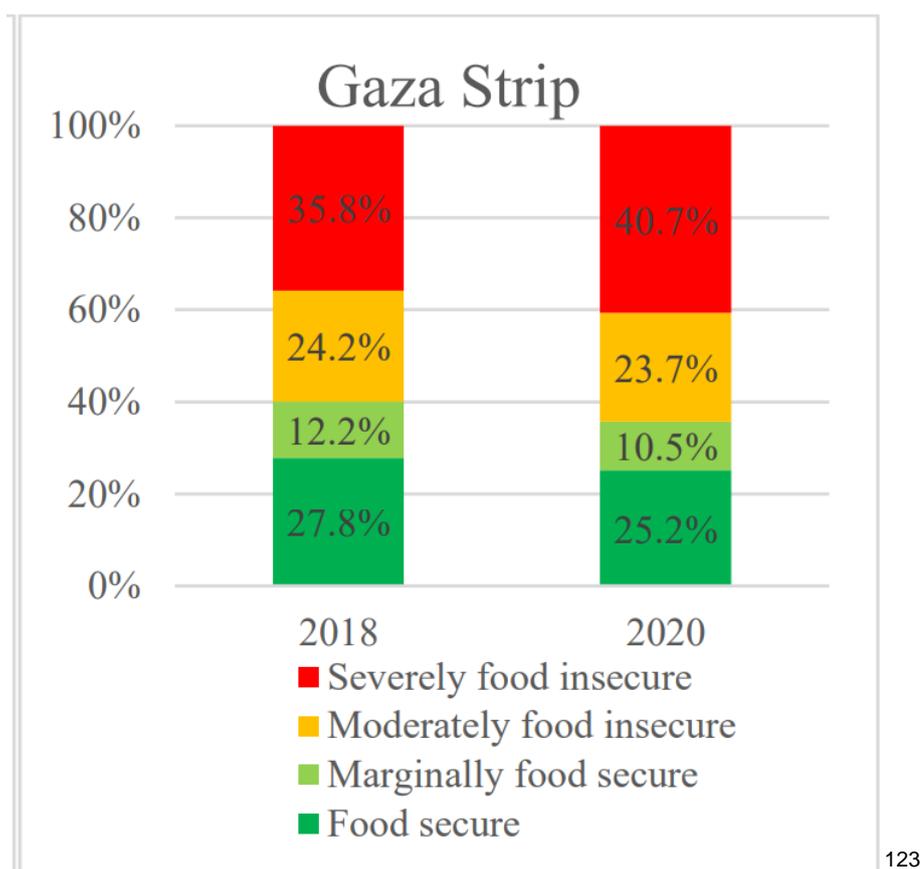
<sup>120</sup> MAS, '[Background & Mission Statement](#)', no date

<sup>121</sup> MAS, '[Socio-Economic & Food Security Survey 2020](#)' (page 1), 2021

11.1.2 The MAS food security report 2020 stated:

'... the status of food security in the Gaza Strip worsened in 2020, with the share of severely food insecure households reaching 40.7 percent (171 445 households), up 4.9 percentage points from 2018. This brings the total share of households experiencing severe or moderate food insecurity in the Gaza Strip up to a staggering 64.4 percent. These circumstances diverge dramatically from the West Bank, considering that the share of severely food insecure households in the Gaza Strip is more than 20 times higher than in the West Bank. Furthermore, while the share of food secure households in the Gaza Strip declined by just 2.6 percentage points since 2018 to 25.2 percent (106 181 households or 409 801 individuals), this percentage is less than half the corresponding share in the West Bank. The findings indicate that 2020 presented further difficulties for households already food insecure in the Gaza Strip in meeting consumption needs and pushed some food secure households into marginal food security in the West Bank.'<sup>122</sup>

11.1.3 The MAS food security report 2020 provided the following bar graph:



11.1.4 The MAS food security report 2020 also observed slight variations in levels of food insecurity between the north, centre and south of Gaza<sup>124</sup>.

<sup>122</sup> MAS, '[Socio-Economic & Food Security Survey 2020](#)' (page 5), 2021

<sup>123</sup> MAS, '[Socio-Economic & Food Security Survey 2020](#)' (page 5), 2021

<sup>124</sup> MAS, '[Socio-Economic & Food Security Survey 2020](#)' (page 7), 2021

- 11.1.5 However, the MSNA survey 2021 found that 95% of refugee and non-refugee households had an ‘acceptable’<sup>125</sup> food consumption score (FCS)<sup>126</sup>, while 5% of non-refugee households and 6% of refugee households had a borderline or poor FCS<sup>127</sup>.
- 11.1.6 The World Food Programme Palestine’s Country Brief, May 2022, (WFPP CB 2022) estimated that of the 1.1 million Palestinians who were severely food insecure, around 90% lived in Gaza (although it is not clear from the source how this data has been calculated)<sup>128</sup>. This is around 1 million people, just under half the Gaza population (see [Geography and demography](#)). The WFPP CB 2022 also explained in regard to the OPTs generally:
- ‘... [the] protracted conflict, economic stagnation, restricted trade and access to resources, coupled with high unemployment and poverty rates, continue to pose serious challenges to food security and nutrition situation. As economic conditions worsened by the impact of Ukraine crisis, the purchasing power of Palestinians, particularly the most vulnerable, is further eroding and disrupting their access to food and other essentials. WFP food assistance is currently the only standing safety net for vulnerable and food insecure Palestinian families.’<sup>129</sup>
- 11.1.7 The WFPP CB 2022 described what support the agency provides Palestinians, but did not segregate data between the West Bank and Gaza: ‘In May [2022], WFP supported 370,914 people in need. Of those, 301,582 received cash-based transfers, reaching 99 percent of the prioritized beneficiaries in the West Bank, and 80 percent in Gaza. 69,332 people are reached through the quarterly in-kind distributions. Resilience and vocational training also continued, as did the operation’s social behavior change initiative.’<sup>130</sup>
- 11.1.8 The WFPP CB 2022 also noted the findings of a 325 face-to-face interviews with households in Gaza who were ‘recipients of electronic [cash] vouchers and in-kind food’. The WFP of the interviewees ‘... 74 percent in Gaza had acceptable food consumption, while... 10 percent in Gaza did not have access to adequate food, rich with protein, vitamins, and minerals. However, many families continued the use of negative coping mechanisms to meet their food needs...’<sup>131</sup>
- 11.1.9 The MSNA survey 2021 reported that 81% of households had employed ‘stress’ strategies to cope with a lack of food or money to buy food, while 24% used ‘crisis’ and 16% ‘emergency’ strategies although the survey does not define these categories. However, the survey did report the percentages of specific coping strategies adopted by households:
- 75% bought food on credit

<sup>125</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)’ (Findings English Gaza ... slide 34), no date

<sup>126</sup> The Food Consumption Score is ‘calculated using the frequency of consumption of different food groups consumed by a household during the 7 days before the survey’. See World Food Programme, [Technical Guidance Sheet](#), Food Consumption Analysis, February 2008

<sup>127</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)’ (Findings English Gaza ... slide 34), no date

<sup>128</sup> WFPP, ‘[Country Brief](#)’, May 2022

<sup>129</sup> WFPP, ‘[Country Brief](#)’, May 2022

<sup>130</sup> WFPP, ‘[Country Brief](#)’, May 2022

<sup>131</sup> WFPP, ‘[Country Brief](#)’, May 2022

- 52% reduced expenditure on non-food items
- 34% sold household properties
- 16% sent household members to eat elsewhere
- 11% ‘accepting that adults engage in risky behaviour’ (the nature of such behaviour is not explained)<sup>132</sup>

11.1.10 The WFPP CB 2022 based on its survey of 325 households in Gaza also reported coping strategies used:

- 25% consumed food of less quality or less preferred food
- 6% borrowed food or relied on help from relatives
- 5% purchased food on credit
- 2% reduced the portion size/number of meals per day<sup>133</sup>

11.1.11 The MSNA survey 2021 and WFPP CB 2022 are not consistent on the types of strategy used or where they report the same strategy the proportion of people adopting it. For example, buying food on credit, the MNSA found 75% of people surveyed did so while the WFPP recorded only 6%. The reasons for discrepancies are not evident in the source material but may be for a number of reasons, such as different sample sizes, household circumstances and questions asked.

11.1.12 The WHO has observed that malnutrition indicates ‘deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person’s intake of energy and/or nutrients’ as a result of a number of factors including lack of food<sup>134</sup>. PCBS data for 2021 indicated that among children under 5 in 2019-20 in Gaza, 9% were stunted, 2.1% were underweight and 0.8% experienced ‘wasting’ – a total of 11.9% experiencing ‘under nutrition’. A further 5.8% were overweight (which may also be a result of poor nutrition)<sup>135 136</sup>. The counterfactual is that over 82% of children under 5 did not experience malnutrition in Gaza.

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Section 12 updated: July 2022

## 12. Water and sanitation

12.1.1 A report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of October 2021 stated that, ‘96 percent of the water in Gaza is currently unsafe for human consumption’<sup>137</sup>. However, the MSNA survey 2021 noted that 93% of households had ‘access to a sufficient quantity of drinking water’, while 82% of households had ‘access to a sufficient quantity of water for drinking and domestic purposes’. The large majority of drinking water - 85% - was

<sup>132</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)’ (Findings English Gaza ... slide 19), no date

<sup>133</sup> WFPP, ‘[Country Brief](#)’, May 2022

<sup>134</sup> WHO, ‘[Malnutrition](#)’, 9 June 2021

<sup>135</sup> PCBS, ‘[Palestine in Figures 2021](#)’ (page 42), March 2022

<sup>136</sup> WHO, ‘[Malnutrition](#)’, 9 June 2021

<sup>137</sup> UN HRC, ‘[Allocation of water resources...](#)’ (paragraph 69), 15 October 2021

obtained from water trucks, while 9% and 4% was from communal or private networks respectively<sup>138</sup>.

12.1.2 The MSNA survey 2021 also found that 99% of households reported having access to improved sanitation facility – latrine, flush or pour toilet - with households reporting access to the following:

- bidet: 96%
- toilet paper: 43%
- soap: 95%
- handwashing station: 95%
- toilet seat: 99%<sup>139</sup>

12.1.3 However, the WB EM report 2021, citing a number of sources, observed:

‘Gaza faces serious challenges in providing water and wastewater services due to problems in quantity and quality of bulk water. Access to improved water has plummeted from near total coverage two decades ago to almost zero today. Although 95 percent of the population is connected to the piped network, only 1 percent of the population has access to improved drinking water that meets [World Health Organisation] WHO standards. Over the past few decades, the Coastal Aquifer - the only source of water in Gaza - has been overexploited, as a result significant seawater intrusion has occurred, contaminating the aquifer with salts. Wastewater treatment has historically been limited, further contaminating the aquifer. Given limited bulk water availability, water service is intermittent and only one-third of Gaza households receive water daily. Climate change and population growth will further reduce per capita availability. Given these challenges, residents rely on expensive and unregulated small-scale private providers... Access to improved sanitation is universal in Gaza, with 73 percent of the population connected to sewerage networks and treatment of 75 percent of the waste from those on-sewer households; 27 percent of people rely on on-site services. However, sewage overflows are commonplace and treatment for the remaining 45 percent of the population is much needed.’<sup>140</sup>

12.1.4 The PCBS reported that in 2021 99.6% of Gazans had access to improved drinking water, with the main improved sources being tanker truck (69.9%), public tap or stand pipe (10.8%) and ‘cart with small tank’ (7.4%). Over 99% had access to an improved sanitation facility<sup>141</sup>.

12.1.5 The [UNOCHA provides regularly updated data](#) on the volume of piped water per person per day, desalinated water production, pollution of wastewater in the sea, and daily discharge of wastewater into the sea. Additionally, the [PCBS publishes a range of datasets](#) on the availability of water and rates of consumption, water sources and treatment of wastewater.

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<sup>138</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)’ (Findings English Gaza ... slide 23), no date

<sup>139</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)’ (Findings English Gaza ... slide 23), no date

<sup>140</sup> WB, ‘[Economic Monitoring Report...](#)’ (paragraph 54), 17 November 2021

<sup>141</sup> PCBS, ‘[Palestine in Figures 2021](#)’ (pages 81 to 82), March 2022

### 13. Electricity

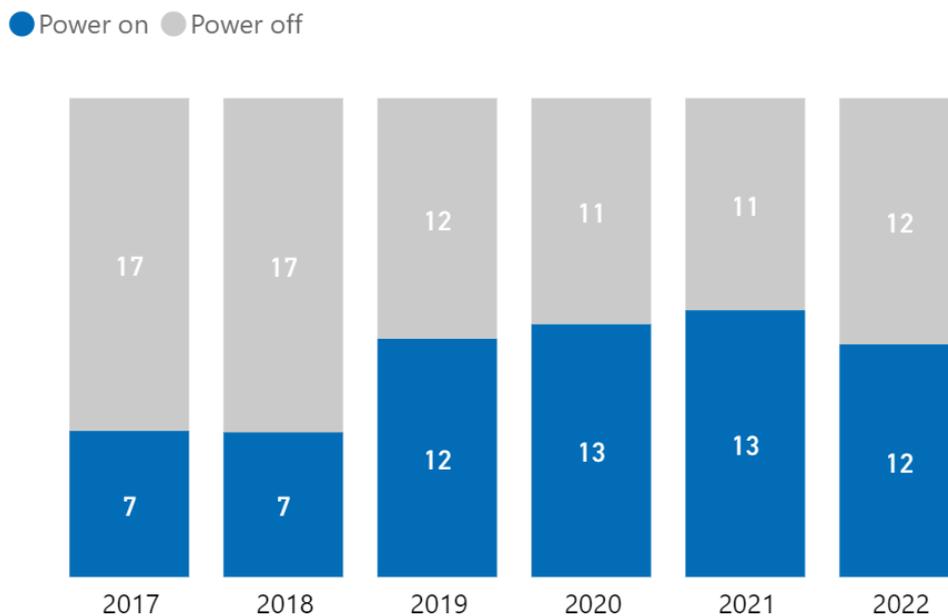
#### 13.1.1 The UNOCHA website stated in an undated entry

‘For the past decade, the Gaza Strip has suffered from a chronic electricity deficit, which undermined already fragile living conditions. The situation has further deteriorated since April 2017 in the context of disputes between the de facto authorities in Gaza [ Hamas ] and the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority. The ongoing power shortage has severely affected the availability of essential services, particularly health, water and sanitation services, and undermined Gaza’s fragile economy, particularly the manufacturing and agriculture sectors.

‘The data presented in the following charts is provided to OCHA on a daily basis by the [Gaza Electricity Distribution Company \(GEDCO\)](#), the official body in charge of electricity supply in the Gaza Strip. The variation in electricity demand per day is estimated based on the temperatures recorded on that day.’<sup>142</sup>

#### 13.1.2 UNOCHA provided a bar graph of the average daily electricity supply in hours for the years 2017 to July 2022. Despite the outbreak of conflict in May the average daily electricity supply was at its highest in in 2021 over this 5-year period, at 13 hours each day:

### Availability of electricity (average hours per day)



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#### 13.1.3 The WB EM report 2021 noted

<sup>142</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Electricity in the Gaza Strip](#)’, no date

<sup>143</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Electricity in the Gaza Strip](#)’, no date

'The energy crisis in the Gaza Strip has persisted for decades. The source of the crisis is the lack of energy supply and severely limited options for power generation within Gaza. The transmission and distribution networks have continuously deteriorated due to long-term suboptimal operation caused primarily by the high levels of unmet demand, regular energy shortage, and funding limitations. Following the 2014 conflict, the electricity network was rehabilitated, but neither the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) nor the distribution systems were fully restored and there were no efforts to address the ever-growing demand. While the May 2021 conflict lasted for a shorter period, the dispersed nature of the attacks has exacerbated the fragility of the electricity sector's distribution network. In fact, the physical damages were primarily in the distribution network, with extensive damage to power infrastructure around targeted roads, buildings, and neighborhoods. Rehabilitation needs are centered around replacement of damaged power equipment and repair of networks.

'Increasing electricity supply is essential to enable economic growth, improve public services, and enhance quality of life in Gaza. As of 2021, Gaza's average demand for electricity is estimated at 550 – 600MW and the total electricity supply is 165-190MW. Actual supply from the GPP varies (45-70MW) depending on the diesel supply, and supply from Israel Electric Corporation (IEC) is around 120MW. The ongoing power supply shortage is 60 percent, which increases to 80 percent in case of non-availability of fuel for GPP. In an effort to ensure continuous power supply for critical public services, including health, water, and wastewater services, the electricity supply for private sector and residential customers is further reduced, which results in limited availability (8-16 hours/day).'<sup>144</sup>

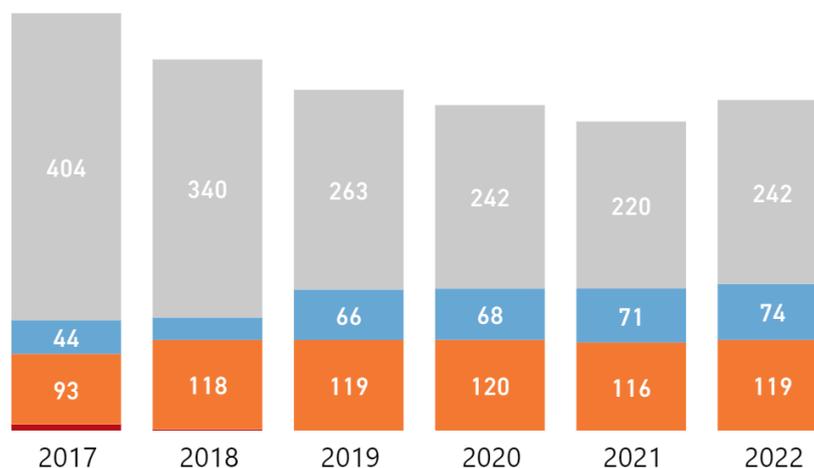
- 13.1.4 The UNOCHA website also provided data on supply and demand for electricity, indicating that supply has consistently fallen short of demand between 2017 and July 2022, albeit supply has also increased over this period:

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<sup>144</sup> WB, '[Economic Monitoring Report...](#)' (paragraphs 46 and 47), 17 November 2021

## Electricity supply vs. demand (average megawatts per day)

● Egyptian lines ● Israeli lines ● Gaza Power Plant ● Gap



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Section 14 updated: July 2022

### 14. Healthcare

- 14.1.1 The PCBS collates a range of data which provide an indication of Gazans general health and the availability and accessibility of public health services<sup>146</sup>. The PCBS' Survey Findings Report of its 'Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019-2020' also provides healthcare data as well as other socio-economic data about the lives of Palestinians<sup>147</sup>.
- 14.1.2 UNRWA assessed in an undated entry on its website 'Years of socioeconomic decline, conflict and closure have left the health sector across the Gaza Strip lacking adequate physical infrastructure and training opportunities. Facilities are overstretched, and service is frequently interrupted by power cuts. These challenges further threaten the health of the population, which is already at increasing risk.'<sup>148</sup>
- 14.1.3 A 'political economy analysis... of the health sector in Gaza' by Dr Mona Jebril at the Centre for Business Research at the University of Cambridge, based on a review of literature between 2019 and 2021, and interviews with interlocutors in Gaza between September and December 2019 (PEA report 2021), citing the WHO, observed 'The health system in Gaza is "difficult to examine adequately"... This is because "a defining feature of the health system in Palestine is its fragmentation at the historical, geographic,

<sup>145</sup> UNOCHA, '[Electricity in the Gaza Strip](#)', no date

<sup>146</sup> PCBS, '[Public Health](#)' (Annual Statistics), no date

<sup>147</sup> PCBS, '[MICS Survey Findings Report](#)', January 2021

<sup>148</sup> UNRWA, '[Health in the Gaza Strip](#)', no date

institutional and organizational levels”...’ The report further noted, citing various sources:

‘There are four main health providers in Gaza: UNRWA (since 1948), health NGO sector including those profit and non-profit (developed in early 1970s); the Palestinian [Ministry of Health] MoHs (Ramallah MoH / 1994; and the Gaza MOH / 2007); and the private medical sector, which is according to, “increasingly occupies a major role in service provision”... But, there are other actors, which also contribute to health care in Gaza such as UN agencies including WHO... Also, “traditional alternative medicine continues to play an important role in health care”... People in Gaza use services in the West Bank and “specialized medical care that is available only in Israel or abroad”... In this case, “permits must be obtained for each health consultation requiring travel to Jerusalem or to neighbouring countries, including Israel, as well as for Gaza patients to travel to the West Bank, and applications for permits are often delayed or denied without apparent reason”...’<sup>149</sup>

#### 14.1.4 The UNOCHA HRP report 2021 observed:

‘Some 33 health facilities in Gaza sustained damage during the May [2021] escalation [however the UN Secretary-General observed in an August 2021 report that 16 health facilities were damaged during the conflict<sup>150</sup>], placing additional pressure on Gaza’s health system, already overwhelmed by chronic drug shortages and inadequate equipment, which is struggling to meet the needs of those injured during the escalation. The health system oPt-wide also requires additional support to address the additional challenges generated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, due to the reallocation of resources and mobility restrictions, which have further undermined the access of people to regular health-care, including mental health, obstetric and neonatal care, and emergency nutrition services.’<sup>151</sup>

#### 14.1.5 The PEA report 2021 also noted:

‘In brief, “all four main health-service providers (the Palestinian Ministr[y] of Health, the [UNRWA], non-governmental organisations, and the private medical sector contribute to all areas of health care”... The Ramallah-based “Ministry of Health is considered the main provider of secondary health care services (hospitals in Palestine)”... However, “tens of thousands of patients are referred for treatment outside the Palestinian healthcare system when the medical treatment they require is unavailable in the Palestinian territory”... In Gaza, for example, there is no cardiac surgery, specialist cancer care, children’s DIALYSIS, Specialist Rehabilitation services or complex eye surgery... Of all, “cancer treatments were by far the top need for both West Bank and Gaza referrals”... That said, “the cost of [referral] treatment is covered by the Palestinian Ministry of Health” in Ramallah...

‘Because of the conflict, statistics regarding existing health facilities should be taken tentatively. Hence, an accurate number of existing hospitals in Gaza is difficult to discern from the literature/interviews...

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<sup>149</sup> Jebril, Dr Mona, ‘[The Political Economy of Health in the Gaza Strip](#)’ (page 55), November 2021

<sup>150</sup> UNSC, ‘[Report of the Secretary-General on the...](#)’ (Paragraph 25), 24 August 2021

<sup>151</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Humanitarian Response Plan – OPT](#)’ (page 18), December 2021

‘Despite this, under Hamas government, the health system in Gaza seems to have “undergone a period of expansion”... This includes increasing the number of hospital beds and beds in special care units, appointing new professional, clinical, and administrative staff... Hamas also “established the Palestinian Medical board, which coordinates and oversees medical education and training”...’<sup>152</sup>

14.1.6 The [Health Cluster](#) – a partnership of 70 local and international organisations, and the UN – in a bulletin covering the period October to December 2021 - reported that there were 29 hospitals (all of which were fully functioning) and 149 primary healthcare clinics (of which 148 were fully functioning)<sup>153</sup>. The PEA report 2021, citing various sources many of which were published before May 2021, noted ‘... there are 32 hospitals in Gaza (13 owned by [Ministry of Health] MoH, 16 by NGOs, Two by Ministry of Interior and National Security, and one by the Private Sector)... Gaza MoH is also responsible for 76.1 per cent of all hospital beds which reached 2.943... According to an earlier estimation by UNDP, also, “the Hamas-run MoH oversees... roughly half of health clinics... UNRWA (2018b) states that UNRWA runs 22 primary health care facilities, 7 women’s programme centers; and 7 community rehabilitation centers in Gaza.’<sup>154</sup>

14.1.7 The PCBS yearbook also noted that there were:

- 2,536 hospital beds with a ratio of 1.24 beds for 1,000 people<sup>155</sup> (in comparison Israel had 2.98 beds per 1,000 (in 2018), Lebanon 2.73 beds per 1,000 (in 2017) and Yemen 0.71 per 1,000 (in 2017)<sup>156</sup>)
- 3,090 pharmacists, approximately 1.5 per 1,000 people (in comparison Israel had 1 per 1,000 (in 2020), Lebanon 1.3 (in 2018), Yemen 0.1 (in 2014) per 1,000 respectively<sup>157</sup>)
- 1,613 dentists, approximately 0.8 per 1,000 (in comparison Israel had 1.2 (in 2020), Lebanon 1 (in 2018), and Yemen 0.1 (in 2014) per 1,000<sup>158</sup>)
- 11,556 nurses, approximately 5.5 per 1,000 (in comparison Israel had 12 (in 2020), Lebanon 1.7 (in 2018), and Yemen 0.8 (in 2018) per 1,000<sup>159</sup>)
- 5,553 doctors, approximately 2.6 per 1,000 (compared to Israel had 3.63 (in 2020), Lebanon 2.63 (2018) and Yemen 0.5 per (in 2014) 1,000 respectively<sup>160</sup>)<sup>161</sup>

14.1.8 The UNOCHA provided line and bar graphs, based on World Health Organisation data, showing the percentage of essential drugs with a stock of less than a month for each month in 2021 and up to May in 2022. Th3

<sup>152</sup> Jebiril, Dr Mona, ‘[The Political Economy of Health in the Gaza Strip](#)’ (page 61), November 2021

<sup>153</sup> Health Cluster, ‘[Health Cluster Bulletin, oPT, December 2021](#)’, 1 February 2022

<sup>154</sup> Jebiril, Dr Mona, ‘[The Political Economy of Health in the Gaza Strip](#)’ (page 62), November 2021

<sup>155</sup> PCBS, ‘[Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2021](#)’ (page 47), December 2021

<sup>156</sup> WHO, ‘[Global Health Observatory](#)’ (Hospital beds), updated 1 July 2020

<sup>157</sup> WHO, ‘[Global Health Observatory](#)’ (Health workforce), updated 8 February 2022

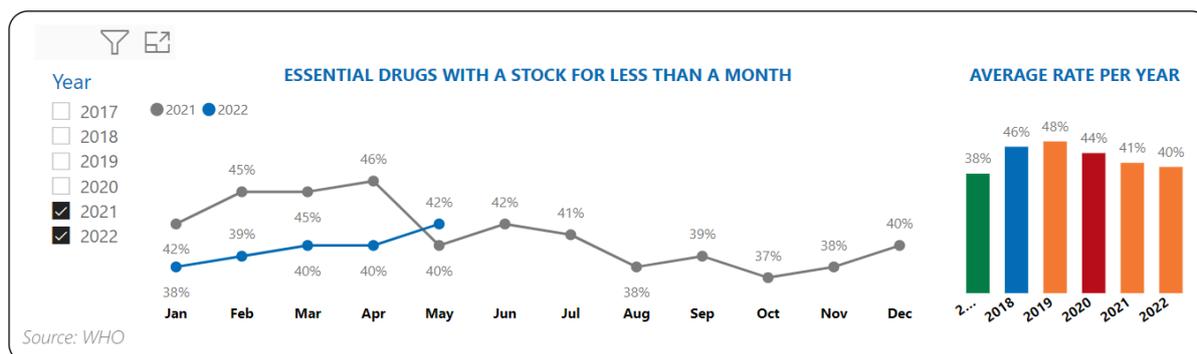
<sup>158</sup> WHO, ‘[Global Health Observatory](#)’ (Health workforce), updated 8 February 2022

<sup>159</sup> WHO, ‘[Global Health Observatory](#)’ (Health workforce), updated 8 February 2022

<sup>160</sup> WHO, ‘[Global Health Observatory](#)’ (Health workforce), updated 8 February 2022

<sup>161</sup> PCBS, ‘[Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2021](#)’ (page 47), December 2021

UNOCHA does not, however, provide a specific definition of ‘essential drugs’:



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#### 14.1.9 The MSNA survey 2021 noted:

- 60% of household reported that at least one member needed to access health services in 3 months prior to the survey [including the May 2021 conflict which when movement of goods and people into and out of Gaza was interrupted]
- Of these, 27% reported barriers to access healthcare the most common of which were:
  - 64% reported the cost of services/medicines was too high
  - 29% reported no medicine being available
  - 21% reported the required treatment was not available<sup>163</sup>

14.1.10 The MSNA survey 2021 also noted that 38% of households reported that at least one member was showing signs of psychosocial stress in the 30 days before the survey<sup>164</sup>.

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Section 15 updated: July 2022

## 15. Education

15.1.1 The PCBS reported that in Gaza in 2020/21 there were:

- 637 kindergardens with over 56,000 children
- 764 schools, over 590,000 children, 39.4 children per class, with a drop-out rate of 0.4%
- over 72,400 students at university and over 5,600 students at community colleges<sup>165</sup>

15.1.2 The PCBS statistical yearbook reported that there 543 ‘basic’ (primary), of which 225 were government-run, 278 were UNWRA-run and 40 private schools. There were also 221 secondary schools, 197 were government and

<sup>162</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Gaza Strip: Humanitarian Indicators](#)’ (Health), no date

<sup>163</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)’ (Findings English Gaza ... slide 26), no date

<sup>164</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment](#)’ (Findings English Gaza ... slide 26), no date

<sup>165</sup> PCBS, ‘[Selected Indicators for Education in Palestine by Level of Education and Region](#)’, no date

24 private<sup>166</sup>. Almost half the population have been educated to secondary school level or above, while overall literacy rates were at 98% with levels for those under 44 at almost 100%<sup>167</sup>.

15.1.3 The WB economic monitoring report 2021 provided an assessment of the educational sector:

‘By ages 4 and 5, only half of Gazan children receive an early childhood education (ECE). According to estimates from the Palestinian Ministry of Education (MOE), approximately 49 percent of four-year-old children in Gaza attend Kindergarten Level 1 (KG 1). While this rate increases to roughly 70 percent for five-year-olds attending KG2... it is estimated that most children from the two bottom income quintiles... are deprived from the protective benefits that ECE offers, particularly in mitigating young children’s toxic stress, providing for their physical and emotional care, and promoting their healthy development. As such, reaching universal access to quality ECE, and particularly ensuring that the most vulnerable children receive the protective benefits of KG services, is one of the most important education priorities for Gaza in the next five years.

‘Participation in primary and secondary education is high, reflecting the strong value that Gazan families place on education. In 2020, the primary enrollment rate was virtually universal, with a 99.5 percent completion rate at Grade 4—the last year of the lower basic education level in Gaza. By Grade 9—the last year of upper basic education...—completion rate stood at 93.2 percent, and by Grade 12—the last grade of secondary education—65.9 percent of the relevant cohort completed their education cycle... In the next five years, a strong focus should be placed on improving the completion rate at secondary level, which may require targeted demand-side interventions, as well as supply-side investments to improve the quality and relevance of education.

‘Beyond high participation rates in basic education, Gazan students consistently outperform their West Bank peers in Science, Arabic, and Mathematics. Absent data from international standardized assessments, the Palestinian National Standardized test is the only quantitative indicator of students’ learning outcomes in Gaza. The 2018 test results showed that at both the lower and upper basic education levels, Gazan students outperformed their West Bank peers in all assessed subjects: Science, Arabic, and Mathematics... Yet, while learning outcomes in Gaza were higher than in the West Bank, the average performance of Gazan students still falls short of national targets set by the Palestinian MOE for all assessed subjects. The largest gap between MOE targets and Gazan students’ performance occurs in Mathematics at Grades 5 and 9, and Science at Grade 9. Overall, the results further suggest that girls significantly outperform boys at both grade levels. In the next five years, educational investments should aim to close this learning and gender gap.

‘At the tertiary education level, three out of four Gazan students graduate, but their employment prospects are bleak. 2019 MOHE estimates indicate

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<sup>166</sup> PCBS, [‘Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2021’](#) (page 73), December 2021

<sup>167</sup> PCBS, [‘Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2021’](#) (pages 81 to 82), December 2021

that roughly 55,600 students are enrolled in tertiary education institutions, of which 73 percent pursue a Bachelor's degree and 27 percent a Technical Vocational Diploma. Of these students, 75 percent complete their studies, with 34,939 students graduating with a Bachelor's degree and 6,792 with a Diploma.<sup>42</sup> Yet, upon graduation, their employment prospects are bleak. Four out of ten higher education graduates in Gaza are unemployed... The situation is particularly dire for women: almost two-thirds of women with postsecondary education are out of work, compared to 36 percent of men with the same education background... The substantial gender disparities are also manifested in labor force participation rates. Women in Gaza are more likely to be part of the labor force the more educated they are. However, even among those with 13 or more years of schooling, only 39 percent participate in the labor force, compared to 64 percent of educated men... The reasons are manifold and range from social norms to structural barriers such as lack of childcare, inadequate public transportation, and unfavorable labor regulations... Improving the education-to-work transition in Gaza will require a dedicated focus on establishing an enabling, safe labor market environment for women...

'Ensuring access to education for all children and youth in Gaza requires urgent action to address the immediate needs created by the recent conflict. the Gaza RDNA indicates that more than 300 educational institutions sustained damage to their infrastructure, including private kindergartens, public schools, UNRWA schools, and universities... In addition, the conflict has further exacerbated the need for mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) among children and youth, who have been suffering from toxic stress and repeated trauma for years. Repairing the educational infrastructure and providing MHPSS to all children in need is of utmost priority to meet the medium- and long-term aspirations for the Gazan education sector, in particular with regard to improving completion rates at the upper secondary and tertiary education levels.'<sup>168</sup>

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Section 16 updated: July 2022

## 16. Freedom of movement

16.1.1 Background information on freedom of movement between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, residency, ID documentation and entry/exit requirements into Gaza from Israel and Egypt is available in:

- The UK Home Office's [Country Policy and Information Note \(CPIN\): Background information, including actors of protection and internal relocation](#)
- The Danish Immigration Service's [Palestinians: Access and Residency for Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, June 2019](#)
- UK Home Office [Report of a facting mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territories conducted in September 2019, March 2020](#)

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<sup>168</sup> WB, '[Economic Monitoring Report...](#)' (paragraphs 91 to 94, and 96), 17 November 2021

- UNHCR's [Position on returns to Gaza, March 2022](#)

16.1.2 The CPIN also provides an assessment of the reasonableness of internal relocation between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem).

16.1.3 The UN OCHA noted 'Longstanding restrictions on the movement of people and goods to and from Gaza have undermined the living conditions... Many of the current restrictions, originally imposed in the early 1990s, were intensified in June 2007, following the Hamas takeover of Gaza and the imposition of a blockade by Israel.'<sup>169</sup>

16.1.4 The USSD's human rights report covering events in 2020 noted:

'Hamas in Gaza occasionally enforced movement restrictions on Palestinians attempting to exit Gaza to Israel via the Erez Crossing and to Egypt via the Rafah Crossing. Palestinians returning to Gaza were regularly subject to Hamas interrogations regarding their activities in Israel, the West Bank, and abroad.

'Hamas required exit permits for Palestinians departing through the Gaza-Israel Erez Crossing. Hamas also prevented some Palestinians from exiting Gaza based on the purpose of their travel or to coerce payment of taxes and fines. There were some reports unmarried women faced restrictions on travel out of Gaza.

'On February 14, Gaza's Supreme Judicial Council issued a notice allowing male guardians to restrict unmarried women's travel. Following significant public backlash, the notice was revised to allow a male guardian (i.e., a father, brother, or grandfather) to apply for a court order preventing an unmarried woman from traveling if they assess the travel will cause "absolute harm." She could also be prevented from traveling if the guardian had a pending lawsuit against her that requires a travel ban. The notice also allows parents and the paternal grandfather to apply for travel bans on their adult children and grandchildren if they can show travel could result in similar harm...

'Israeli authorities often denied or did not respond to Palestinian applications for travel permits through the Erez Crossing, including for patients seeking medical care unavailable inside Gaza, citing security concerns... These limitations prevented some Palestinians from transiting to Jerusalem for visa interviews; to Jordan (often for onward travel) via the Allenby Bridge; and to the West Bank for work or education...

'The Israeli travel permit system restricted Palestinians' ability to travel from Gaza to the West Bank. Palestinian higher education contacts reported that permits for Gazans to attend West Bank universities were seldom granted. According to the NGO HaMoked, Israeli authorities required Palestinians from the West Bank who are married to a Palestinian in Gaza and reside in Gaza to sign a "Gaza resettlement form" and permanently forego their right to move back to the West Bank...

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<sup>169</sup> UNOCHA, '[Gaza crossings: movement of people and goods](#)', no date

'Israeli officials imposed restrictions on movement of materials, goods, and persons into and out of Gaza based on security and economic concerns... Amnesty International and HRW reported difficulties by foreign workers in obtaining Israeli visas, which affected the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the West Bank and Gaza. Amnesty International and HRW also reported that the Israeli government denied permits to their employees to enter Gaza from Israel. The United Nations and several international NGOs reported that the Israeli government denied permits to UN and NGO local Gazan staff to exit Gaza into Israel. The Israeli government stated all Gaza exit requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with security considerations arising from Hamas's de facto control of Gaza.'<sup>170</sup>

16.1.5 Human Rights Watch observed in its annual report covering events in 2021:

'For a 14th consecutive year, Israeli authorities blocked most of Gaza's population from traveling through the Erez Crossing, the sole passenger crossing from Gaza into Israel through which Palestinians can travel to the West Bank and abroad. A generalized travel ban applies to all, except those whom Israeli authorities deem as presenting "exceptional humanitarian circumstances," mostly persons needing vital medical treatment and their companions, as well as prominent business people. Even the few seeking to travel under these narrow exemptions, including those seeking urgent medical care outside Gaza, often face denials or failures to respond to in a timely manner to their requests.

'Israeli authorities tightened the closure amid the Covid-19 pandemic. During the first nine months of 2021, an average of 86 Palestinians in Gaza exited via Erez each day, just 17 percent of the daily average of 500 in 2019 and less than 1 percent the daily average of more than 24,000 before the beginning of the Second Intifada or Palestinian uprising in September 2000, according to the Israeli rights group Gisha.

'Gaza's exports during this period, mostly produce destined for the West Bank and Israel, averaged 300 truckloads per month, compared to the monthly average of 1,064 truckloads prior to the June 2007 tightening of the closure, according to Gisha. During the May hostilities and up until August, Israeli authorities banned the entry of construction materials and other vital materials and limited access to Gaza's territorial waters for Palestinian fishermen, measures targeting Gaza's general civilian population that amount to unlawful collective punishment. Authorities continue to severely restrict the entry of construction materials and other items they deem "dual-use" materials that could also be used for military purposes. The list of such items also includes X-ray and communications equipment and spare parts.... Egypt also restricts the movement of people and goods via its Rafah crossing with Gaza, at times fully sealing the crossing. In the first nine months of 2020, an average of 13,678 Palestinians crossed monthly in both directions, less than the monthly average of over 40,000 before the 2013 military coup in Egypt, according to Gisha.'<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> USSD, [Human right report 2021](#) (section 2d), April 2022

<sup>171</sup> HRW, [World Report 2022](#) (Israel and Palestine), January 2022

16.1.6 The USSD report for 2021 also noted in regard to travel within Gaza: ‘In an effort to combat the spread of COVID-19, Hamas occasionally enforced restrictions on internal movement in Gaza. Pressure to conform to Hamas’s interpretation of Islamic norms generally restricted movement by women, who often had to travel in groups when visiting certain public areas such as the beach. There were sporadic reports of security officers requiring men to prove a woman with them in a public space was their spouse.’<sup>172</sup>

16.1.7 Freedom House’s report covering events in 2021 similarly noted:

‘Freedom of movement for Gaza residents is severely limited. Israel and Egypt exercise tight control over border areas, and Hamas imposes its own restrictions on travel. Israel often denies Gaza residents permits to travel outside of the territory on security grounds, authorizing only certain medical patients and other individuals to leave. University students have difficulty acquiring the necessary permits to leave the territory to study abroad. Corruption and the use of bribes at crossing points is common.

‘The Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt was opened more regularly in 2021 compared with 2020, but conditions remained largely unpredictable and restrictive. The May conflict led to a total shutdown of Israeli-controlled crossings, with partial openings initiated later in the year. In December, Israeli officials announced the completion of a more robust physical barrier separating Israel from Gaza, with surveillance devices and an underground wall to deter tunneling. The Israeli army prevents Palestinians from approaching the fencing itself and a surrounding “buffer zone” that extends up to 300 meters into the territory, though the de facto border is not recognized by the international community or key stakeholders. Israeli authorities also periodically restrict or close Gaza’s offshore fishing zone. During 2021, the zone was reduced from 15 to as little as 6 nautical miles from shore in response to militant activity.

‘Since 2020, local authorities have imposed curfews and other temporary restrictions on internal movement to limit the spread of COVID-19, generally adjusting the measures in light of increasing or decreasing case numbers.’<sup>173</sup>

16.1.8 UN OCHA provides regularly updated data from the Ministry of National Economy, Border and Crossing Authority, UNRWA and Pal-Trade on the [number \(and in the case of goods, volume/weight\) of crossings of goods and people between Gaza, Egypt and Israel](#). These data indicate that the number of entries/exits for both goods and people, and volume of goods, fluctuate, with declines notable during escalations in the conflict between the Israel and Hamas<sup>174</sup>.

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<sup>172</sup> USSD, [Human right report 2021](#) (section 2d), April 2022

<sup>173</sup> FH, ‘[Freedom in the World 2022](#)’ (Gaza Strip), February 2022

<sup>174</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Gaza crossings: movement of people and goods](#)’, no date

# Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToR, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- geography/demography
- political context
- security situation
- humanitarian concerns
  - economic situation
    - employment
    - income
  - food
  - WASH
  - electricity
  - accomodation/shelter
    - displacement
  - healthcare
    - Impact of COVID-19
  - education
- humanitarian aid
  - international support
  - domestic NGOs
  - UN Relief and Works Agency
- freedom of movement

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# Version control

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **3.0**
- valid from **19 July 2022**

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### **Official – sensitive: Start of section**

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

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### **Official – sensitive: End of section**

## Changes from last version of this note

Updated COI across all sections. Guidance remains unchanged.

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