

BUILDING THE GAZA STRIP ANEW

Recovery Needs and Priorities, Palestinian Vision and Ownership

A Policy Reference for Regional and Global Advocacy

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Oxfam has commissioned the research from Palestinian organisations Palestine Trade Center (Paltrade) and Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS). Both organisations have conducted comprehensive literature and statistical review and stakeholder analysis with key private sector representatives, umbrella organisations, civil society and institutions and governmental bodies in Gaza and the West Bank. Additional analysis was conducted to ensure that the views and roles of women's rights organisations and persons with disabilities are embedded in the report.

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This research reflects a collective commitment by key stakeholders in Palestine that meaningful reconstruction of Gaza cannot proceed without genuine Palestinian ownership at every stage, from planning and design, through implementation and oversight. Reconstruction of Gaza must be rooted in a rights-based and reparations-oriented approach developed in this Report and address not only the immediate consequences of Israel's war on Gaza, but the deeper injustices of decades of illegal occupation, blockade and dispossession.

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THE SCALE OF GAZA'S RECONSTRUCTION NEEDS

371,888
HOUSING UNITS
DAMAGED OR DESTROYED

58,600
WOMEN-HEADED
HOUSEHOLDS
14% OF ALL
HOUSEHOLDS

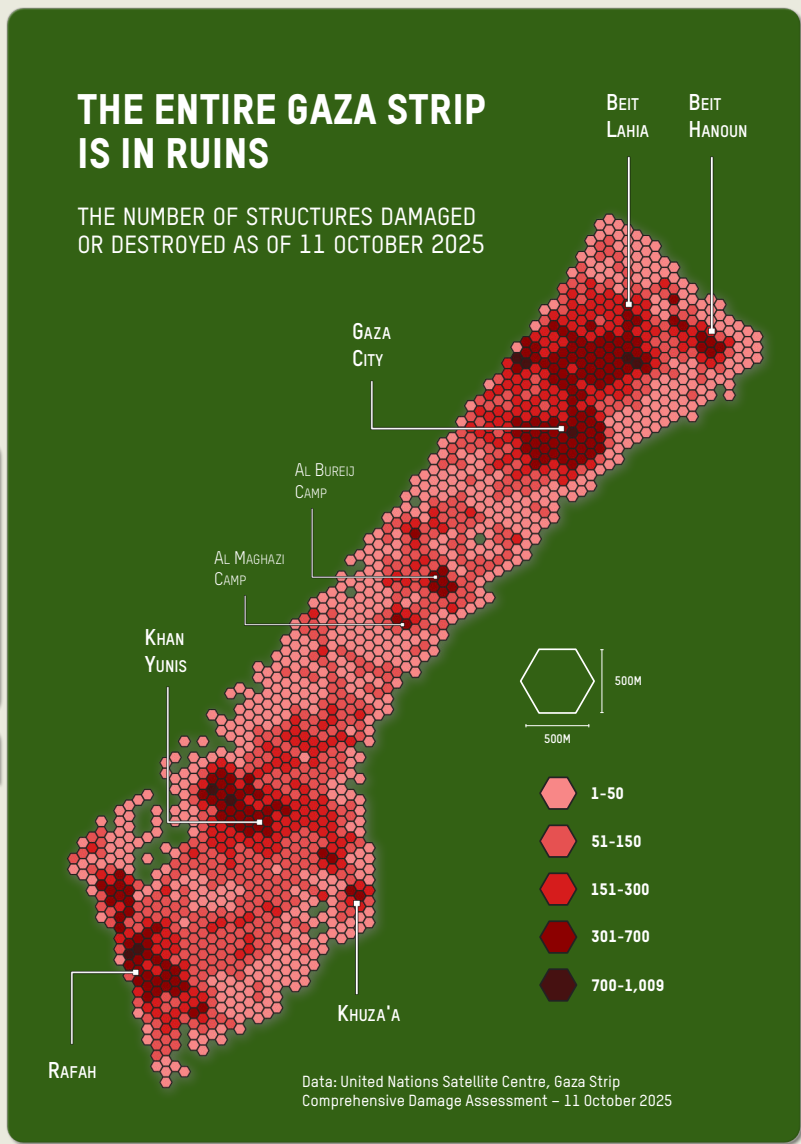
1.9 M
FORCIBLY
DISPLACED
90% OF TOTAL
POPULATION

173,000
INJURED
24%
WITH
LIFE-CHANGING
INJURIES

66 M TONNES
OF RUBBLE

70%
OF INJURIES
CONCENTRATED
AMONG WOMEN
& CHILDREN

USD 71.4 BN
COST TO REBUILD
USD 17.7 BN
STATE OF PALESTINE
GDP IN 2025



List of Acronyms

AHLC	Ad Hoc Liaison Committee
AMA	Agreement on Movement and Access
BoP	Board of Peace
BOT	Build-Operate-Transfer
CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation
EBI	Emergency Basic Income
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GITA	Gaza International Transitional Authority
GREAT	Gaza Reconstitution, Economic Acceleration and Transformation
GRRF	Gaza Recovery and Reconstruction Fund
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDI	Gender, Disability and Inclusion
GDP	Gross domestic product
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
IRDNA	Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICC	International Criminal Court
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation
NCAG	National Committee for Administration of Gaza
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
oPt	Occupied Palestinian territory
OPD	Organisation(s) of Persons with Disabilities
MAS	Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute

PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
PMA	Palestine Monetary Authority
PNC	Palestine National Council
PALTRADE	Palestine Trade Centre
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PWA	Palestine Water Authority
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
RDNA	Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment
SWGS	Sector Working Groups
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SoP	State of Palestine
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR 2803	United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WLO	Women-Led Organisation(s)
WRO	Women's Rights Organisation(s)
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Summary

The reconstruction of the Gaza Strip is not just a technical challenge awaiting an engineering or financing solution. It is a political contest over who governs, who decides, and who benefits from the rebuilding of a society that has been comprehensively destroyed. This study argues that meaningful reconstruction is only possible under genuine Palestinian ownership, which itself must be operational, inclusive, and legally grounded, and that any international framework that does not uphold this principle will fail, as previous frameworks have failed.

Israel's war on the Gaza Strip, waged since the 7 October 2023 attacks on Israel by Hamas and Palestinian armed groups, has inflicted destruction of a scale and nature that places it among the most devastating episodes of modern warfare against a civilian population. Hence, the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2803 facilitated an end to large-scale Israeli military actions, and a loosening of restrictions on entry of aid and commercial goods. However, other provisions of the Resolution and the Gaza peace plan it enshrines remain pending with only incremental progress reported. Even since the October 2025 declared ceasefire, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed in Israeli attacks, while wanton demolition of remaining housing and infrastructure in areas under full Israeli military control has proceeded apace.

The Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA) of April 2026, jointly conducted by the World Bank, European Union, and UN, estimates physical infrastructure damage at \$35.2 billion and economic losses at \$22.7 billion, bringing the total conflict-related impact on physical assets to \$57.9 billion. Recovery and reconstruction needs are estimated at approximately \$71.4 billion over the coming decade (with \$26.3 billion required in the first 18 months). This is seven times, in real terms, the combined cost of reconstruction after every major Israeli military offensive there over the past two decades.¹

The human toll is catastrophic. At least 73,000 Palestinians (and possibly over 100,000) have been killed by direct violence, with independent epidemiological research suggesting the true toll may be significantly higher. More than 173,000 have been injured, tens of thousands require complex reconstructive surgery and 1.9 million people have been forcibly displaced. Human development has been set back by an estimated 77 years.

This study offers an evidence-based, Palestinian-anchored analytical framework for understanding the challenges of Gaza's reconstruction within a vision for Palestinian economic empowerment and sovereignty. Its interrelated chapters constitute a credible five-year framework for appreciating the spectrum of reconstruction challenges: from the immediate context of devastation through the principles of Palestinian ownership, rights-based approaches, sovereignty strategy, governance coordination, financing mobilisation, and a phased implementation.

The study advocates for a rights-based, reparations-oriented approach aligned with international humanitarian law, however much the latter's status has been degraded over the course of the war in Palestine. It argues that reconstruction must be understood not merely as a technical or humanitarian endeavour but as a political act that either advances or

undermines Palestinian self-determination. The study strengthens the case for Gaza's economic and institutional links with the West Bank through a unified national vision for statehood and sovereignty, rejecting models that treat Gaza as a separate entity or that subordinate Palestinian agency to external governance arrangements. This potential for unity of governance has been manifested in the establishment of a National Committee for Administration of Gaza (NCAG) under the Board of Peace (BoP) Gaza Executive, as embodied in the provisions of UNSCR 2803, within a cooperative working relation with the institutions of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and State of Palestine (SoP).

The core argument of this study is that meaningful reconstruction of Gaza cannot proceed without genuine Palestinian ownership at every stage, from planning design through implementation and oversight. This ownership must be operational, not merely formal, encompassing central and local government institutions, the private sector, civil society, and affected communities. The study rejects models that reduce Palestinians to passive recipients or beneficiaries within externally designed frameworks, whether these take the form of international trusteeship, investment-led privatisation, or technically driven spatial reorganisation that ignores community identity and social fabric.

The concept of economic functions of sovereignty is examined here not as a stand-alone goal for Gaza but as the ensemble of economic functions that the future SoP must begin to establish, in trade, monetary and fiscal policy, development strategy, and investment, even under non-sovereign conditions. The financing strategy identifies four pillars: donor grants; Palestinian fiscal resources; international and Palestinian investment finance; and Palestinian diaspora engagement. A phased financing approach matches instruments to priority needs at each stage of reconstruction, with donor grants predominating in the emergency phase and private investment becoming progressively more important in later phases.

The implementation roadmap, coherent with the RDNA and Palestinian Authority (PA) planning horizons, proposes four overlapping phases: emergency relief and stabilisation (months 1–12), short-term recovery (months 12–24), medium-term reconstruction (months 18–48), and long-term development and economic sovereignty (months 48–60). Each phase has its own priorities, governance requirements, and financing mix, with cross-cutting principles of Palestinian ownership, rights-based approaches, geographic unity, inclusiveness, transparency, and adaptability guiding the entire process.

The study insists above all on the urgency of a unified national Palestinian policy vision and message (*One Palestine*), managed and coherently expressed by relevant public, private and civil institutions, regarding the design, priorities, and delivery modalities of reconstruction. In the context of full implementation of UNSCR 2803 as the internationally accepted framework for rebuilding Gaza, sympathetic international partners, especially the European Union, Egypt, Arab Gulf states, the UN, and international Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), can be expected to rally around such a formula. This would provide political legitimacy, address obstacles, and help to pool resources within a framework anchored in international law and international organisations. Without a deliberate engagement by partners to create the "pathway" to realising sooner rather than later the Palestinian right of self-determination as promised in UNSCR 2803, the risks will only grow from imposed planning schemes hostile to Palestinian interests, with all the pressures of politics, money and power that such propositions entail.

Preface: Scope, Purpose and Methodology

This study was commissioned by Oxfam, in partnership with the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) and the Palestine Trade Centre (Paltrade), to provide a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the challenges facing the Gaza Strip and its reconstruction. It is framed against the backdrop of Israel's devastating war and its conduct, for which it has been accused of genocide before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). At a critical juncture defining the prospects for Gaza and Palestine, the Report is intended to serve as a key reference tool to inform regional and global advocacy, with the goal that future reconstruction initiatives align with Palestinian-defined priorities and create economic pathways toward sovereignty and self-reliance. Following the development of the core reconstruction analysis, the study was further strengthened through a gender, disability and inclusion analysis conducted by Asmaa Abu Mezied and Ali Abdel-Wahab. This additional work was designed to ensure that inclusive reconstruction is embedded across the report, rather than treated as a separate social add-on.

Israel's war in Gaza has been prosecuted through acts and methods that amount to genocide. These include the mass killing of civilians, including women and children; the destruction of homes and other civilian infrastructure at a massive scale; mass forced displacement; and imposed starvation and aid deprivation through access restrictions and closure of crossings.² In February 2024, rights groups assessed that Israel was failing to comply with the ICJ's provisional measures aimed at preventing genocide in Gaza, with subsequent developments providing no basis to reasonably conclude that such compliance has improved.

In October 2025, the ICJ issued an advisory opinion determining that Israel, as occupying power, must ensure the provision of essential supplies to the Palestinian population and must agree to and facilitate humanitarian relief schemes, including those undertaken by the UN and UNRWA, rather than obstruct them.³ It also found that Israel must not impede the Palestinian people's right to self-determination by blocking basic services, humanitarian assistance or development assistance, and that its restrictions on UN/UNRWA operations were not justified on the evidence before the Court.

Furthermore, the war in Gaza cannot be understood in isolation from Israel's prolonged occupation and systematic policy of ethnic cleansing of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In a 2024 advisory opinion, the ICJ determined that Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) is itself unlawful while also entailing a multitude of separate violations of international law, including violation of Article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which prohibits acts of racial segregation and apartheid.⁴ UN experts have warned that Israeli violence in Gaza forms part of a deliberate campaign of destruction of the Palestinian people and carries a serious risk of expanding to the West Bank, amid escalating settler violence, forced displacement, and systemic denial of rights.⁵

The study is thus situated at the intersection of several urgent imperatives. **First, the unprecedented scale of destruction in Gaza requires a correspondingly unprecedented response**, one that is commensurate with the magnitude of the devastation, grounded in evidence, and guided by a coherent strategic vision.

Second, the proliferation of externally generated reconstruction plans, some of which carry implications incompatible with Palestinian sovereignty and rights, **demand a credible Palestinian alternative vision** that can serve as a key reference point for engagement by the international community, especially recalling the Paris Aid Effectiveness principles.⁶

Third, reconstruction must be inclusive in substance. Palestinian ownership cannot be meaningful if women, persons with disabilities (PWD), caregivers, older persons, Women's Rights Organisations (WROs), Women-led Organisations (WLOs), Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), and affected communities are included only as beneficiaries or consultees after decisions have already been made. Inclusive reconstruction requires their knowledge, priorities, and institutional roles to shape planning, governance, financing, implementation, and accountability from the outset.

Fourth, the rapidly evolving political landscape—including the ceasefire agreement, the establishment of the BoP and the NCAG as the vehicles to implement UNSCR 2803, and the PLO plans for constitutional transformation of Palestinian self-governance structures from the PA to the SoP—**creates both opportunities and risks** that must be navigated by all concerned stakeholders with clarity of purpose, compassion and analytical rigour.

The methodology of this study draws on multiple sources of evidence and analysis. Its primary foundation is a body of Palestinian research published in recent years (referenced throughout this Report). These studies and the numerous documents they rely on, provide the empirical base and analytical framework upon which this synthesis is constructed (a comprehensive matrix assessment of spatial and reconstruction plans is included in the Annexes). The study also relies on the RDNA of April 2026, as the only comprehensive international assessment of damages and losses, with a timebound framework for addressing reconstruction needs in Gaza.

Critically, the study incorporates the perspectives and priorities of Palestinian stakeholders in Gaza on their economic future, as articulated through focus group consultations with sixty-five experts and representatives from the private sector, civil society organisations, and independent expert community consultations by Paltrade and MAS (listed in the Annexes). Furthermore, a position paper of the Palestinian Private Sector Coordinating Council of November 2025 provided key inputs for the study (private sector institutional matrix in Annexes). These voices of the people who will live with the consequences of reconstruction decisions are central to the analysis and inform its recommendations at every stage.

The later-stage gender, disability and inclusion analysis adds a complementary layer of evidence and interpretation to this foundation. It includes a targeted review of Arabic and English literature on gender, disability and Gaza since October 2023, gap mapping against the structure of the reconstruction paper, and semi-structured interviews with experts and representatives of WROs, WLOs, OPDs, feminist economist and financial inclusion experts (List of focus group participants and interviewees provided in Annex 3).

This inclusive reconstruction analysis was organised around the following analytical gaps: intersectional analysis, protection, safety and GBV pathways; participation and WLO/OPD representation; inclusive infrastructure and universal design; data, evidence and accountability for inclusion; and the translation of principles into benchmarks.

These lenses were applied across the reconstruction framework, with particular attention to governance, economic recovery, financing, institutional arrangements and the implementation roadmap. The analysis examined who participates in decisions, who benefits, who is excluded, and what risks may be reproduced.

The study is structured around seven thematic chapters, each addressing a critical dimension of the reconstruction challenge. **Chapter 1** examines the socio-economic context and the anatomy of the destruction, including the gendered, disabling, reproductive and care-related effects of the war. **Chapter 2** develops the principles of a Palestinian ownership framework strengthened by an understanding of ownership as inclusive and participatory. **Chapter 3** addresses rights-based and reparations-oriented approaches to reconstruction. **Chapter 4** outlines an economic strategy for sovereignty covering trade, investment, and enterprise recovery, including the need for inclusive employment, care-sensitive recovery and disability accessible economic participation. **Chapter 5** proposes a governance and institutional coordination model. **Chapter 6** examines feasible financing and resource mobilisation tracks rooted in current realities, while **Chapter 7** concludes the Report with a *One Palestine* goal in mind. Together, these chapters constitute an integrated strategic framework that addresses the full spectrum of issues, from immediate relief through long-term development, while focusing on prioritising and sequencing to the extent feasible.

A note on terminology is warranted. Many of the participants in the Gaza consultations observed that the term reconstruction inadequately captures the scale of the challenge. Given the near-total destruction of the built environment, economy, and social fabric of Gaza, some suggest the term ‘building anew’ (إعمار) is more appropriate, signifying that what is required is not the repair or replacement of previously existing structures but the construction of something entirely new from the foundations. This study uses the conventional term reconstruction for consistency with international usage, while acknowledging the deeper significance of this terminological distinction. As will be stressed throughout, what is at stake is not the restoration of a pre-war status quo that was itself unjust and unsustainable, but the creation of a new reality that addresses the structural failures that led to the current catastrophe, while entitling Palestinians in Gaza to a future of hope for prosperity. From an inclusive reconstruction perspective, building anew also means refusing to reproduce pre-war inequalities in housing, services, mobility, employment, governance and access to rights.

This Report is intended as a foundational contribution from a Palestinian perspective to a common understanding with international development partners of the challenges ahead. But there are explicit limitations on dimensions of reconstruction for which it does not claim to have definitive answers:

- While a political economy analysis framework is offered, it claims neither to be definitive nor the only angle through which to understand the real-world limitations on the reconstruction process as a whole;

- The Report acknowledges the decisive role that Israeli policies have in shaping the outcomes of the war and its aftermath, but experience shows that the form and/or implementation of such policies can be unpredictable. Hence, the analysis assumes reconstruction will proceed within the framework of UNSCR 2803 which provides for demilitarisation of the Gaza Strip and its transitional administration under the NCAG, a complete Israeli withdrawal from the 60-70% of Gaza over which it retains full military control, and international security forces and guarantees;
- It also assumes that the ultimate outcome of the process should be the realisation of Palestinian national self-determination in the context of the two-state solution, while not ignoring the realities on the ground that are further from that internationally endorsed goal than they have been in 30 years. This entails not only working within current Palestinian political realities as they are, i.e., with political unity still not attained, with geographically and operationally divided governance facing an Israeli government bent on undermining it, and with PA/PLO reform processes still contested internationally and domestically. It also calls for fresh thinking about how Palestinians can best reconsolidate their national project and set the bases for sovereign statehood;
- The Report's focus on what Palestinian ownership and economic empowerment should look like is intended to express a credible professional Palestinian understanding of what the past years have meant and how the future might yet evolve. It is not meant to simply reaffirm what is already known and agreed internationally on Palestine, or on Israel, but to push that understanding closer to the minimum standards of the rights of peoples enjoyed under international law;
- The later gender, disability and inclusion analysis was conducted under a compressed timeframe and while it draws on targeted literature review, structured gap mapping and 13 expert interviews, the planned focus group discussion and validation workshop were not conducted. The inclusive reconstruction findings should therefore be read as targeted, evidence-based and consultation-informed analytical contributions. Further engagement with WROs, WLOs, OPDs, sector specialists, affected communities and Palestinians displaced outside Gaza remains necessary to refine phase-specific benchmarks, test feasibility and translate the analysis into detailed sectoral standards;
- The Report cannot delve into the details of all the issues covered, which may leave a need for further sectoral research and implementation planning by competent Palestinian bodies and their international partners. Hence, this research is intended as an analytical foundation and policy and advocacy tool for a reconstruction process that must be Palestinian-led, rights-based, inclusive, and oriented toward the long-term goal of Palestinian self-determination, economic growth, social justice and sovereignty.

Chapter 1. Gaza Socio-Economic Context and Reconstruction Planning

The illegal Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip has been in place for almost two decades. The closure and total control of land, territorial waters and airspace by Israel amounts to collective punishment. This chapter stresses the monumental scale, scope and depth of the fallout from the war in the Gaza Strip, unprecedented in Palestinian history and in many comparable contexts, but as seen from Palestinian ground-zero. An understanding of the Palestinian perspective is intended to encourage a commensurate acknowledgement by international partners of the true scale of the devastation they were unable to prevent and the need for a new engagement of the international community with Palestine and its future. This chapter analyses the current disastrous context and urgent intervention priorities, which are further developed within an implementation timeframe (see Annex 4).

1.1 The Multiple Dimensions of Genocide in Gaza

Genocide is defined in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.⁷ In light of the acts and methods of warfare employed by Israel (described above), a growing range of actors, including states, UN mechanisms, genocide-prevention bodies, international legal organisations and scholars, have concluded that Israel's conduct—combined with the requisite intent which can be inferred from both the conduct itself and from repeated statements by Israeli officials⁸—in its prosecution of the war in Gaza amounts to genocide.⁹

Given the sheer scale of devastation wrought upon the enclave and documented in the RDNA for the period between October 2023 and October 2025,¹⁰ Israel's conduct also engages a wider field of analysis in genocide studies, development scholarship, urban studies and legal scholarship, where concepts such as domicide, sociocide, reprocide, scholasticide, spatiocide, and ecocide are used to describe interconnected forms, as presented and analysed further below. These terms are not standalone crimes under international law, nor do they replace the legal test for genocide. Rather, deploying such concepts here provides a coherent analytical framework to comprehend the war's impact. For example, they illuminate how the destruction of homes and infrastructure targets not only people's immediate survival and basic needs but also their collective future, social fabric, identity, knowledge transmission, spatial organisation and environmental sustainability – the very capacity to remain rooted as a people.

Different dimensions of destruction must also be read through their gendered, reproductive, care and disabling effects. The destruction of homes, neighbourhoods, hospitals, schools, water systems and social institutions has altered the conditions through which Palestinians

reproduce life, care for one another, recover from injury, maintain bodily dignity and remain socially connected. In Gaza, women experienced the war through the collapse of reproductive healthcare, menstrual dignity, safe childbirth, disability support, rehabilitation, assistive devices, family care, community-based protection and the organisations that sustain daily survival. This has made everyday life increasingly inaccessible for persons with disabilities, older people, pregnant women, children, injured people and care givers.

As of June 2026 some 73,000 Palestinians have been killed by direct violence in Gaza,¹¹ with independent epidemiological research suggesting the true toll may be significantly higher.¹² Women and children constitute around 42.5% of those killed.¹³ This scale of death has altered Gaza's household structures, care arrangements, income sources, legal claims, and social protection needs. The targeting of Palestinian men has also contributed to a sharp rise in women-headed households, with approximately 58,600 households in Gaza now headed by women.¹⁴

More than 173,000 Palestinians have been injured, with tens of thousands requiring complex reconstructive surgery that Gaza's decimated health system is unable to provide.¹⁵ A conservative estimate by WHO indicates that around 24% of injured people have life-changing injuries requiring long-term rehabilitation, of which 25% are children.¹⁶ The pattern of bombardment, attacks on residential buildings and destruction of health and rehabilitation systems has produced mass gendered disabling effects with 70% of injuries concentrated among women and children.¹⁷ Gaza also has the highest number of child amputees per capita in the world.¹⁸ Between 1.7–1.9 million people, nearly Gaza's entire population, remain displaced and more than 60% have totally lost their homes. Furthermore, missing persons and those still under the rubble also create legal, psychological, inheritance, compensation, guardianship and family unification needs that must be reflected in recovery and reconstruction planning.

To comprehend the challenge of reconstruction, it is necessary to move beyond aggregate damage figures, as staggering as they are, and to understand the qualitative nature of the destruction. What has been lost is not simply a collection of buildings and infrastructure systems that can be replaced through engineering and financing; it is an entire social and economic ecosystem built over decades of investment, innovation, and resilience by the people of Gaza.

Reconstruction that addresses only the physical dimension, without reconnecting the social, cultural, environmental, and institutional fabric, will fail to restore the conditions for a functioning society and economy and perpetuate deprivation, inequality and desperation. The same is true of any process that restores infrastructure while leaving unaddressed the gendered and disability-related systems through which people survive. The participants in the Gaza consultations were unanimous in stressing that what is needed is not merely reconstruction but a building process that addresses the totality of what has been lost and creates the conditions for a viable future.

1.1.1. The Destruction of Home and Shelter

Scholars and UN experts have used the term domicide to describe the destruction of homes not only as the destruction of a physical structure, but as the destruction of a place of safety, belonging, memory and social life.¹⁹ This section adopts the concept as an analytical lens, as do the following sections covering the obliteration of societal structures, educational capacity spaces, and the environment. These help to focus attention on how the widespread destruction of homes and shelter in Gaza affects displacement, family life, community continuity and the possibility of return, indeed together providing the granular evidence of genocide.

The housing sector has suffered the most extensive damage of any single sector, with estimated damages of \$18 billion, representing 51% of all physical destruction.²⁰ Over 371,888 housing units have been destroyed or damaged. The systematic targeting of residential areas represents a deliberate destruction of home as an environment, a repository of memory and a foundation of social existence. Entire neighbourhoods have been erased, with complete urban blocks reduced to rubble fields devoid of any recognisable structure. The destruction extends beyond individual buildings to encompass entire residential districts, with their shops, clinics, schools, mosques, and public spaces obliterated.

The significance of domicide extends beyond the material loss of shelter. As in any society, the Palestinian home is the primary locus of family life, social reproduction, and intergenerational transmission of culture and identity. The accumulated investment in a home, not merely its financial cost but the emotional, social, and cultural meanings it embodies, cannot be captured by replacement cost estimates. This domicide represents a devastating blow to the sense of permanence, safety and security that home provides.

In Gaza, domicide also destroys the private and adapted spaces through which care, bodily dignity and disability-related autonomy are organised. Destruction of the home forces intimate and care-related functions into overcrowded shelters, tents, schools, public, open and unsafe spaces.²¹ Shelters designed for 2,000 people were, in some cases, hosting around 20,000 people, with approximately 650 people sharing one toilet.²² Previously self-sufficient elderly people in equipped homes are now entirely dependent on caregivers while displaced, while women and girls face a severe lack of sanitary pads and are forced to use unsafe alternatives.

For persons with disabilities, home loss also means loss of adapted routines, familiar layout, nearby support networks, assistive devices, accessible bathing and toilet arrangements, and safe access to services. An estimated 83% of persons with disabilities in Gaza were forced to abandon their assistive devices, leaving them trapped in their tents.²³ Consequently, they became fully reliant on family members, primarily women, to navigate their daily survival, amidst fear from their caregivers of further deterioration of their conditions in un-adapted shelters. The challenge of housing reconstruction is therefore multidimensional, with each dimension requiring specific interventions, institutional arrangements, and financing mechanisms that are largely anticipated in available Palestinian and international plans (see Chapter 6).

- Before being able to build anew, the immediate need must be addressed for temporary shelter for up to 1.9 million displaced persons in conditions that respect human dignity and provide adequate protection and community spaces. Temporary shelter communities must include safe and accessible water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), privacy for women and girls, lighting, protection, referral information, disability-accessible routes, adapted toilets and bathing facilities, space for breast-feeding and childcare, safe access for older persons and injured people and mechanisms to identify and support women-headed households, persons with disabilities, caregivers and households that lost documents and assistive devices.²⁴ Such arrangements must remain temporary, voluntary and rights-based, and must not become a mechanism for containment, further displacement, or a substitute for return, recovery and reconstruction;
- A short-term priority is rehabilitating partially damaged structures that can be made habitable more quickly and at lower cost than new construction. The rehabilitation of partially damaged homes should prioritise households with high protection, accessibility and care needs, including women-headed households, households with injured members, persons with disabilities, older persons, and families caring for children and adults with chronic illness;²⁵
- There is a medium-term task of large-scale housing construction to replace the hundreds of thousands of destroyed units. Large-scale housing construction should incorporate universal design from the outset, including accessible entrances, bathrooms, kitchens, circulation space, proximity to health and rehabilitation services, safe WASH, and layouts that allow care arrangements to function without isolating women, elderly or persons with disabilities;²⁶
- A long-term challenge is developing housing policies, financing mechanisms, and construction capacities that can sustain housing provision for a growing population. Long-term housing policies must also address gendered and disability related housing, land, and property risks, including lost documentation, women's inheritance and compensation claims, widows' access to assistance, renters' exclusion, risks of male relatives controlling compensation, and the need for legal aid and accessible grievance mechanisms.

Consultations with Gaza stakeholders emphasised that the rehabilitation of partially damaged buildings should be given priority as it represents the fastest route to restoring habitable space, and that the transition from emergency to transitional to permanent housing must be planned as a coherent sequence within an all-Gaza-all-Palestine spatial vision, rather than managed as disconnected interventions.

1.1.2. The Collapse of Social Fabric

The concept of sociocide, which has been used by some academics to understand the destruction of the social fabric of a society, captures the dismantling of the networks, institutions, and relationships that constitute community life.²⁷

In Gaza, sociocide has been accomplished through the repeated forced displacement of the entire population, the destruction of communal institutions, the killing of community leaders and professionals, the disruption of family and neighbourhood networks, and the creation of conditions of extreme deprivation that corrode social solidarity and trust.

The repeated displacement of as many as 1.9 million people has shattered the neighbourhood-based social structures that characterised the Gaza Strip.²⁸ Extended families that lived in proximity and provided mutual support have been scattered across displacement sites. Professional networks, trade associations, cultural groups, sports clubs and religious communities have been disrupted or destroyed. The destruction of mosques, churches, community centres, libraries, cultural institutions and recreational facilities has eliminated the physical spaces in which social life was conducted. The killing of journalists, academics, healthcare & humanitarian workers, engineers, lawyers, religious leaders, and other professionals deprives society of the leadership and expertise required for recovery, compounding the broader sociocide.

Sociocide also operates through the deliberate, systemic exhaustion of the people and the local organisations that reproduce social life under crisis. As the genocide systemically dismantled formal public systems, including schools, the judiciary, police and municipal networks, and the healthcare sector, the massive burden of these collapsed institutions was forcibly transferred onto households and local civil society. Women, caregivers, teachers, healthcare workers, WLOs/WROs, OPDs, and community responders have been forced to absorb these critical public functions.²⁹ For example, Oxfam's latest care research finds most women spend 8 to 12 hours a day – some up to 16 – on unpaid care: queuing from 5am to fill 20 litres of water, cooking single meals for hours over firewood or burning rubbish, and nursing the injured.³⁰

Furthermore, infrastructural violence made caring for children, the elderly, people with chronic illnesses, and persons with disabilities exponentially more difficult. This profound, engineered exhaustion erodes Palestinian community endurance, threatening its social solidarity and familial cohesion needed to sustain community life.

The social consequences will take generations to address. Post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and other psychological conditions affect the vast majority of the population, with children particularly vulnerable to long-term developmental impacts. The disruption of family structures, the loss of breadwinners and the creation of large numbers of orphans and unaccompanied minors have created hitherto unknown social challenges. The erosion of social trust, between individuals, between communities, and between citizens and institutions, undermines the collective action required for reconstruction.

The Gaza consultations participants emphasised that reconstruction must address the social dimension from the outset, not treat it as a secondary consequence that will resolve itself once physical infrastructure is rebuilt. The concept of social reconstruction and its operational dimensions must be further developed and placed at the centre of reconstruction programming, alongside and integrated with physical, economic, and institutional reconstruction. This should include resourcing those actors who have sustained community protection and care under conditions of collapse such as WROs/WLOs and OPDs and who continue to be fundamental social infrastructure actors despite being chronically underfunded.

1.1.3. Targeting of Knowledge and Education

The systematic and deliberate erasure of educational infrastructure and capacity has been described by scholars as scholasticide.³¹ Nearly all schools in Gaza have been destroyed or damaged, and universities that served as centres of research and public life have been levelled.³² Thousands of teachers, professors, and researchers have been killed. Hundreds of thousands of students at every level, from pre-school to postgraduate, have had their education interrupted for three years, with profound consequences for their development and Palestinian human capital in general. This disruption has been particularly acute for children with disabilities enrolled in schools as they were stripped away from crucial adapted supports, and accessible physical environments. This eradicates daily routines, psychosocial safety, peer networks, school-based referral systems, and the vital care relief that schools provide for households.

When schools are destroyed, the monumental burdens of informal learning are pushed directly back into households. This invisible labour falls almost entirely onto women and girls and informal community initiatives. Mothers and sisters are thrust into the role of primary educators under impossible conditions, frequently inducing profound feelings of anxiety, inadequacy and guilt over their children's disrupted development and futures. Prolonged education disruption uniquely endangers girls, sharply increasing their risks of early and forced marriage³³ as families are forced to resort to negative coping mechanisms in the face of poverty, insecurity and GBV.³⁴ Historical data shows that when deprived of schooling, girls are frequently forced to assume unpaid caregiving roles for injured family members and assist with exhausting domestic care work.³⁵ This effectively entrenches traditional gender roles, reduces peer support networks and forecloses future economic participation and agency.

The destruction of educational infrastructure in which Gaza had heavily invested in past decades, represents a loss far greater than its replacement cost. Libraries containing rare collections, laboratories equipped for research, archives documenting institutional political and community history, and the accumulated institutional knowledge embedded in organisations and their personnel have been destroyed. The loss is intellectual and cultural, representing the erasure of a knowledge infrastructure built over decades. The obliteration of the education sector represents a massive loss of formal employment and economic independence for women, who previously constituted the majority of Gaza's teaching workforce. Without urgent investment, an entire demographic cohort (aged 5–20) risks being lost to educational deprivation, with consequences for economic productivity, social cohesion, civic participation and capacity for self-governance that will extend for decades.

The reconstruction of the education system must proceed on multiple tracks simultaneously and over time, as identified in stakeholder consultations:

- In the immediate term, temporary and mobile educational facilities must explicitly mandate universal design and physical accessibility standards from the outset. Furthermore, safe gender-segregated spaces are also essential to protect girls with disabilities from heightened risk of gender-based violence (GBV) and harassment they face in mixed-gender and inaccessible environments;

Water and sanitation infrastructure has been comprehensively destroyed, with damages estimated at billions of dollars.³⁹ The coastal aquifer, Gaza's primary source of fresh water, was already 95% depleted and heavily contaminated with nitrates and chlorides before the war.⁴⁰ The destruction of pumping stations, treatment plants, and distribution networks has further degraded water quality and availability, creating conditions for waterborne disease outbreaks that threaten the entire population. The consumption of high saline water poses immediate, life-threatening complications for pregnant women, infants, and individuals suffering from kidney diseases, precipitating severe urological and gastrointestinal failures. Sewage treatment facilities have been destroyed, resulting in the discharge of hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of untreated wastewater daily into the environment and the Mediterranean Sea, creating both a public health emergency and an ecological catastrophe with consequences extending well beyond Gaza's borders.⁴¹

The sewage contamination has led to the re-emergence of eradicated diseases such as Polio virus. Furthermore, lack of waste management resulted in proliferation of rodents and skin diseases. Women, as primary caregivers for the sick, are placed directly at the epicentre of this bio-hazard, while women and children accompanying patients constitute the vast majority of those contracting Hepatitis A.⁴²

Scarce and carefully cultivated agricultural land has been systematically destroyed, including orchards that took decades to establish, greenhouse complexes, irrigation systems and topsoil. The use of munitions in agricultural areas has contaminated soil with heavy metals and explosive residues, rendering much land unsuitable for cultivation without costly and time-consuming remediation. The destruction of Gaza's fishing fleet and port infrastructure has eliminated another vital source of food production and livelihoods for thousands of families, not to mention an essential part of every Gazan's usual nutrition.

The rubble itself presents an enormous environmental challenge. Most recent estimates are that over 66 million tonnes must be cleared before reconstruction can proceed.⁴³ For people with disability, rubble-induced environmental degradation means total confinement as they are unable to navigate the hostile topography. This debris is contaminated with unexploded ordnance, which poses lethal dangers to clearance workers and communities; with asbestos and other hazardous building materials that release toxic fibres when disturbed; with sewage, medical waste, and industrial chemicals; and, tragically, with the human remains of an estimated 8,000-11,000 Palestinians that must be recovered and treated with dignity.⁴⁴ The management of this debris, its clearance, sorting, decontamination, and disposal or recycling, is a prerequisite for reconstruction that will itself require years of work and significant resources.

Environmental rehabilitation must be integrated into reconstruction planning from the outset, not treated as a secondary concern, though effective interventions will take a long time to materialise given the range of more immediate life-threatening risks.⁴⁵ These include, as confirmed by research and stakeholder consultations:

- Rehabilitation of water and sanitation systems to higher standards, explicitly universal design, accessible, and gender-responsive, than existed before;
- Remediation of contaminated land;

- Restoration of agricultural capacity with attention to sustainable water management that also ensures female farmers and workers have equitable access to rehabilitated land, seeds, and sustainable irrigation;
- Development of waste management systems adequate for reconstruction and long-term needs;
- Incorporation of environmental sustainability principles into the design of all new infrastructure. For example, renewable energy directly reduces women's time poverty freeing their time for economic participation and recovery.

In the more immediate term, rubble removal entails consideration of several essential dimensions at once:

- Identifying the feasible/available sites for rubble collection around the Strip;
- Intensifying near-term rubble removal and recycling capacities and activities, including small and medium-scale projects;
- Ensuring that private and public property rights are respected and that the sites do not pose environmental hazards;
- Identifying possible local uses (construction, paving) of recycled rubble and making raw materials available cost free to local authorities or private contractors;
- Studying options for re-use of "cleaned" rubble for land reclamation/landfill projects along the coastal areas suitable for future construction, including a commercial port area and fishing port.

1.1.6. Reproductive Violence and Care Destruction

The above five dimensions need to be read alongside what may be termed "reprocide", the deliberate targeting of women's reproductive capacities to eliminate the Palestinian entity,⁴⁶ and destruction of care systems. In Gaza, the assault on the conditions of life has also taken place through the collapse of systems that allow pregnancy, birth, menstruation, breast-feeding, childcare, disability support, chronic care and recovery from injury to occur safely and with dignity.⁴⁷ The destruction of infrastructure also resulted in survival labour where women endure exhausting manual laundry and hazardous food preparation over toxic fires, resulting in severe physical and emotional burnout.⁴⁸

The reproductive dimension is visible in the destruction and degradation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, maternity care, neonatal care, menstrual health, fertility care and family planning. Shortly after Israel's military assault began, 180 births were occurring daily at a time when pregnant women faced severe challenges accessing safe delivery, postpartum care and essential medicines.⁴⁹

Annex 2. Private Sector Institutional Stakeholder Matrix

#	Stakeholder Name	Membership/Sectors/Priorities	Description/Strengths/Weaknesses	Role
1	Palestine Trade Center - PalTrade	Trade, exports, SMEs, market access, value chains, economic recovery	The Palestinian Trade Center “PalTrade” is a non-profit Palestinian institution that works to support and develop Palestinian trade, particularly exports, with the aim of promoting sustainable economic growth in Palestine.	Lead trade recovery interventions, export promotion, private sector coordination, market linkages
2	Palestinians federations for industries	Manufacturing, food, textiles, construction materials, pharmaceuticals, industrial recovery	The Palestinian Federation of Industries is the national body that represents the industrial sector in Palestine, with approximately 15–16 specialised federations within its structure representing various industrial sectors in Palestine.	Support industrial rehabilitation, strengthen production capacity, advocate industrial policy reforms
	Food Industries			
	Construction Industries			
	Stone & Marble Industries			
	Pharmaceuticals Industries			
	Chemical Industries			
	Metal & Engineering Industries			
	Textiles & Garment Industries			
	Leather Industries			
	Paper, Printing & Packaging			
	Handicrafts / Traditional Industries			
	Plastic & Rubber Industries			
	Wood & Furniture Industries			
	Precious Metals Industries			
	Renewable Energy Industries			
	Aluminium Industries			

