Humanitarian Bulletin
occupied Palestinian territory

DECEMBER 2018

OCHA



A women injured in a demonstration at the fence in Gaza.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- $190 million reduction in the 2019 humanitarian appeal to maximize the impact of limited funding in increasingly restrictive environment.
- Almost one quarter of INGOs surveyed in late 2018 reported deligitimization forcing them to change or halt programmes.
- Over 1,800 women and girls injured at the Gaza demonstrations can face more severe consequences than male counterparts.
- Eight Palestinians and two Israelis killed in serious escalation in violence in West Bank in December; related access restrictions in Ramallah area remain.

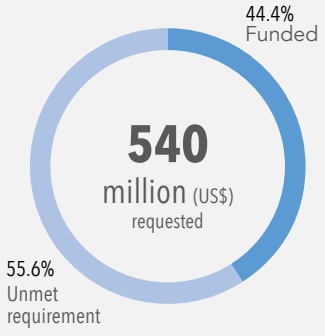
DECEMBER FIGURES

Palestinians killed (direct conflict)	14
Palestinians injured (direct conflict)	1184
Israelis killed (direct conflict)	2
Israelis injured (direct conflict)	20
Structures demolished in the West Bank	39
People displaced in the West Bank	56

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN 2018

540 million (US$)
Requested

44.4% funded



OVERVIEW

On 17 December 2018, the humanitarian community in the oPt launched the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2019, an appeal for $350 million to fund assistance and protection for 1.4 million Palestinians identified as the most vulnerable. This appeal is significantly smaller than the 2018 HRP (almost $540 million), despite the fact that the level of humanitarian need, particularly in the Gaza Strip, increased. As elaborated in this Bulletin, the reduction reflects an attempt to prioritize the most urgent needs in the face of record low funding levels during 2018 and ever greater challenges to the ability of humanitarian agencies to operate, along with a recognition that these constraints are not likely to improve in the foreseeable future.

The rise in attacks designed to delegitimize humanitarian action, one of the challenges facing humanitarian agencies, is the subject of another article in this month's Bulletin. It highlights a recent survey among international NGOs operating in the oPt, which reveals that most organizations have been subject to false accusations about violations of counter-terrorist legislation and conduct of political action against Israel, which have had a range of negative impacts on their activities. These include the need to allocate time and resources to address allegations, which would be otherwise allocated to the delivery of aid; the defunding of certain operations by some donors prioritizing risk avoidance; and reputational damage. The impact has been compounded by longstanding access restrictions imposed on humanitarian staff and operations by Israel and Hamas, new restrictive legislation, and attacks on human rights defenders.

The massive rise in Palestinian casualties has been one of the key factors behind the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in 2018. Overall, a total of 295 Palestinians were killed and over 29,000 injured by Israeli forces, the highest death toll in a single year since the 2014 conflict in Gaza, and the highest number of injuries recorded since OCHA began documenting casualties in the oPt in 2005. Over 60 per cent of the fatalities (180 people) and almost 80 per cent of the injuries (over 23,000) were in the context of Gaza's 'Great March of Return' (GMR) demonstrations, which began on 30 March 2018 and is still ongoing.

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The violence and casualties during these demonstrations have had a differentiated impact on men, women, boys and girls. The final article in this Bulletin details the impact of the GMR on Palestinian women and girls, as revealed by a rapid assessment carried out by UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund). Despite the relative low proportion of female casualties, the consequences of such an event are often more severe for women, due to various social and cultural norms. The enormous number of demonstrators injured, compounded by the shortage of electricity, drugs and equipment, has forced hospitals to prematurely release patients, putting additional pressure on female family members who are primarily responsible for the treatment of house-bound family members.

Although casualties in the West Bank declined during the year compared to 2017, in December, more Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank (8 people) than in the Gaza Strip (6 people); two Israeli soldiers were also killed by Palestinians and an Israeli baby delivered prematurely following the injury of his mother in an attack and died a few days later. The events included Palestinian shooting attacks, Israeli shooting of suspected perpetrators and other people in unclear circumstances, large scale arrest operations and related clashes. While the tension decreased towards the end of the month, two of the main entrances to Ramallah city remain closed, and Palestinian movement along other key traffic arteries across the West Bank is still controlled or restricted.

"Humanitarian interventions in Palestine do not replace and cannot replace a political solution. We need a political solution in Palestine, and we are pushing hard from the UN and other parts."

Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick

Launching the 2019 HRP, the Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick, stated: "Humanitarian interventions in Palestine do not replace and cannot replace a political solution. We need a political solution in Palestine, and we are pushing hard from the UN and other parts. The growing humanitarian needs are there, and we have to respond to them regardless of the political feelings. That's why we need total donor support for the $350 million plan."



© Photo by Journalist Mahmoud Illean.

Protests and clashes near DCO checkpoint in Ramallah. 13 Dec 2018.

$350 MILLION REQUESTED TO RESPOND TO HUMANITARIAN NEEDS FOR 1.4 MILLION PALESTINIANS IN 2019

About 2.5 million Palestinians across the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), or approximately half of the population, are identified as in need of humanitarian assistance and protection according to the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). Of these, 1.4 million, identified as the most vulnerable, are to be targeted in 2019 by a range of interventions outlined in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) at a total cost of US$350 million. The 2019 HRP was launched jointly by Jamie McGoldrick, the Humanitarian Coordinator, with the Minister of Social Development of the State of Palestine, Dr. Ibrahim Al Shaer, in Ramallah on 17 December.

Rising needs amid a constrained operational environment

In the 2018 HRP, 1.9 million Palestinians were targeted for assistance at a total cost of $539.7 million. The reduction in the number of beneficiaries to be targeted and funding requested for 2019 does not reflect a lower level of humanitarian need. On the contrary, there has been a sharp deterioration in the humanitarian situation in 2018, particularly in the Gaza Strip: poverty, unemployment and food insecurity have increased and there has been an enormous rise in Palestinian casualties as a result of the "Great March of Return" (GMR) demonstrations. Economic growth is declining in the West Bank, where settlement expansion, settler violence, demolitions and evictions are intensifying the coercive environment on vulnerable Palestinian communities.

The reduction in the number of beneficiaries to be targeted and funding requested for 2019 does not reflect a lower level of humanitarian need, as there has been a sharp deterioration in the humanitarian situation in 2018, particularly in the Gaza Strip.

As the situation worsens, humanitarian and civil society organizations are facing an increasingly constrained operational environment. Access restrictions, political considerations by donors and a rise in attacks designed to delegitimize humanitarian action are placing greater challenges on the ability of humanitarian actors to provide protection and assistance (See next article in this Bulletin).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

The 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.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

$52 Million

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

The 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.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

$71 Million

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

The capacity of vulnerable Palestinians to cope with, and overcome, a protracted crisis, including from environmental threats, is supported, while solutions to violations and other root causes of threats and shocks are pursued.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

$227 Million

Funding for the oPt at an all-time low

Concurrent with increased needs and operational constraints, funding for humanitarian activities is declining; only 44.4 per cent of the $539.7 million requested for the 2018 HRP was secured, significantly lower than the global average of nearly 58 per cent. The shortfall is mainly attributable to the decline in contributions to UNRWA by the United States, the Agency's largest contributor, but reflects a trend of reduced funding for humanitarian agencies across the oPt. This situation is not expected to improve in 2019 as donors indicate that current funding levels will be maintained at best.

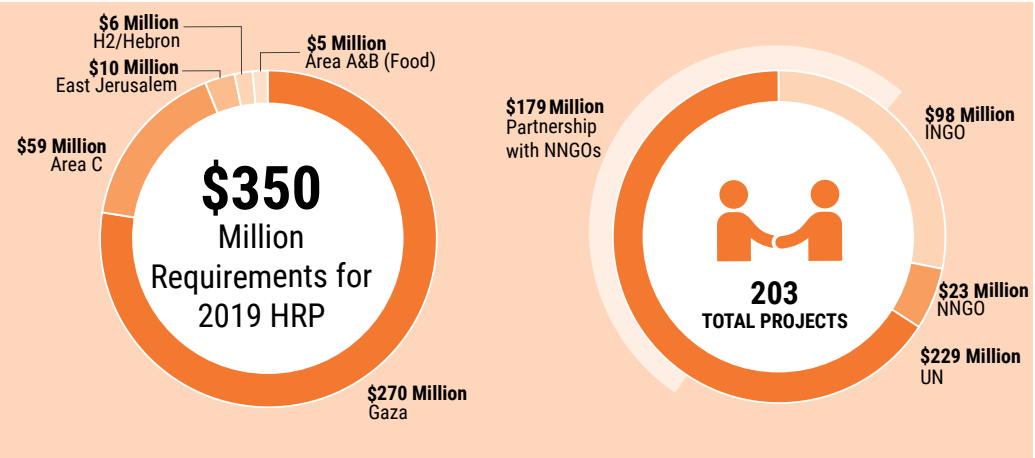
"In requesting $350 million we are asking for more than we actually received in 2018, but this is well below the real needs."

Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie Mc Goldrick

As no improvements are currently foreseeable in the humanitarian situation, in the resources required to meet rising needs or in the operating space for humanitarian activities, the 2019 HRP has been revised to identify what can be done with the existing political and resource climate. The target of 1.4 million beneficiaries is based on the maximum number of vulnerable people who can realistically be provided with basic food, healthcare, shelter, and water and sanitation in 2019, if the required funding is received. The $350 million requested to meet these needs is $190 million lower than the 2018 HRP and is designed to maximize the benefits of limited funding in a restrictive environment.

The funds actually needed to provide humanitarian assistance to all 2.5 million Palestinians in need is an estimated $800 million. Should more funding become available, humanitarian partners are ready to scale up their response to reach more people.

Launching the 2019 HRP, the Humanitarian Coordinator stated: "It is the most prioritized and focused it could possibly be. We have done this in consultation with donors so we expect a better donor response to this plan. In requesting $350 million we are asking for more than we actually received in 2018, but this is well below the real needs. We recognize that much more assistance is needed. We stand ready to do much more but to do so, we must be able to access communities without interference. We must be able to get our staff in and out, and between, all parts of the occupied Palestinian territory. We must be able to deliver goods and services to the people who need them. Palestinian and Israeli authorities need to facilitate our work rather than undermine it."



This report was prepared by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in collaboration with humanitarian partners.

What is the Humanitarian Response Plan?

The HRP represents a collective plan by the international community to respond to the most urgent humanitarian needs identified by partners across the oPt. The 2019 HRP forms part of a multi-year plan for the period 2018-2020 and is guided by the same strategic objectives as last year:

- To protect the rights of Palestinians living under occupation in accordance with international law, while duty-bearers are increasingly held to account;
- To ensure that the basic needs of vulnerable Palestinians are met through the provision of quality basic services and improved access to resources;
- To ensure that the capacity of vulnerable Palestinians to cope with the situation is supported, while solutions to violations and other root causes of threats and shocks are pursued.

The situation in the oPt continues to be characterized as a protracted protection crisis, largely attributable to Israel's ongoing occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip, the continuing internal Palestinian divide and violations of international law. Accordingly, the centrality of protection has been maintained as a shared system-wide responsibility throughout the 2019 HRP, with approximately 10 per cent ($36 million) of the total funding requested targeting ongoing protection needs

Food, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects have undergone stricter prioritization this year in response to the restrictive funding environment. As in previous years, the majority (approximately 59 per cent or $206 million) of the funding requested is to provide food assistance to the 1.7 million Palestinians who are moderately to severely food insecure. Exceptionally, requirements for the health sector has increased (nine per cent, $30 million) as conditions in Gaza have deteriorated due to the surge in casualties from the GMR demonstrations. The remaining 22 per cent requested ($22 million) will address a range of projects in WASH, coordination, education and shelter.

The 2019 HRP encompasses 203 projects to be implemented by 88 organizations, including 38 national and 37 international NGOs, and 13 UN agencies. About 77 per cent of the funds requested target Gaza, while the other 23 per cent focus on Area C, the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron city (H2) and East Jerusalem in the West Bank.

As in previous years, the humanitarian community's ability to implement the 2019 HRP, and associated projects and activities, is fully reliant on receiving the requested $350 million via voluntary donor contributions.

Food, shelter, and WASH projects have undergone stricter prioritization. Exceptionally, requirements for the health sector has increased as conditions in Gaza have deteriorated due to the surge in casualties.

HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS UNDERMINED BY DELEGITIMIZATION, ACCESS RESTRICTIONS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONSTRAINTS

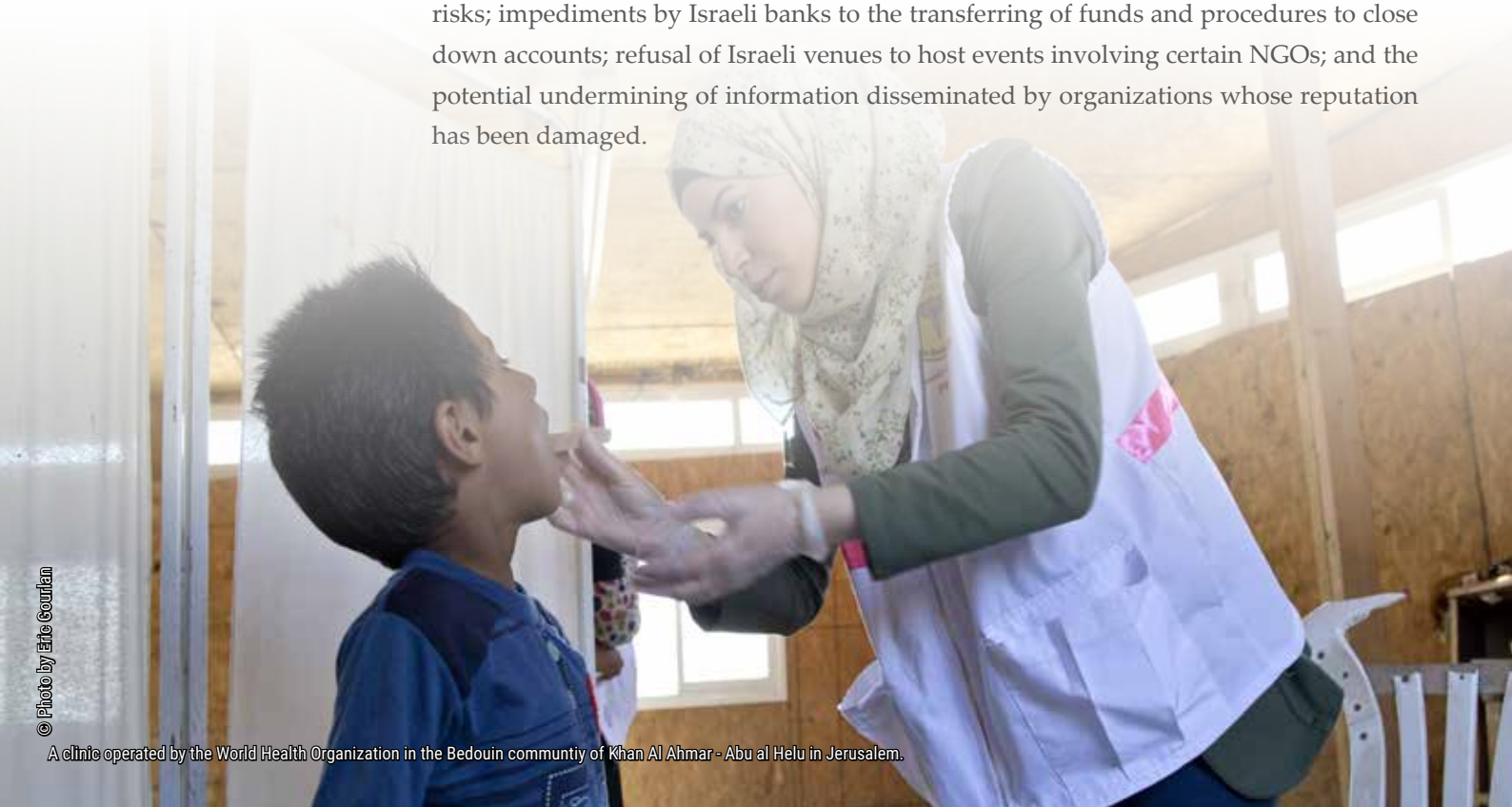
Attempts to delegitimize humanitarian and human rights organizations operating in the oPt, particularly NGOs, have been on the rise in recent years. This has a negative impact on the ability of these organisations to deliver assistance and advocate on behalf of Palestinian rights. The situation is further compounded by longstanding access restrictions imposed on humanitarian staff and operations, restrictive legislation and attacks on human rights defenders. The shrinking of the operational space available for humanitarian work as a result of these pressures has contributed to the reduction of the 2019 humanitarian appeal for the oPt (see previous article).

Targeted defamation and smear campaigns allege violations of counter-terrorism legislation and international law, or political action against Israel.

The bulk of the delegitimization attempts have been advanced by a network of Israeli civil society groups and some associated organizations elsewhere, with the apparent support of the Israeli government. Targeted defamation and smear campaigns allege violations of counter-terrorism legislation and international law, or political action against Israel.

Most of these allegations are baseless or misrepresent and distort critical factual or legal elements. Humanitarian organizations operating in the oPt adhere strictly to the principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity, and implement rigorous UN, donor and internal standards to ensure compliance with these principles, and all relevant bodies of law. Donor governments additionally impose guidelines that reflect political sensitivities in the oPt context.

Accusations being made against humanitarian organizations operating in the oPt have resulted in a range of negative impacts. These include the allocation of time and resources to address allegations; some donors defunding certain activities to avoid risks; impediments by Israeli banks to the transferring of funds and procedures to close down accounts; refusal of Israeli venues to host events involving certain NGOs; and the potential undermining of information disseminated by organizations whose reputation has been damaged.



© Photo by Eyad Gourlan

A clinic operated by the World Health Organization in the Bedouin communtiy of Khan Al Ahmar - Abu al Helu in Jerusalem.

As stated by Jamie McGoldrick, the oPt Humanitarian Coordinator, on the occasion of the launching of the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan: "We don't mind as humanitarians any type of scrutiny, but it has to be evidence-based. Any scrutiny or auditing is meant to improve performance but in this case it is meant to block our performance, […] When reputable organizations with proven records of delivering critical humanitarian assistance in line with international humanitarian principles, and in line with donor scrutiny, are attacked, the authorities and donors must assist us in pushing back to ensure that the space is there to deliver the assistance".

Severe impact on international NGOs

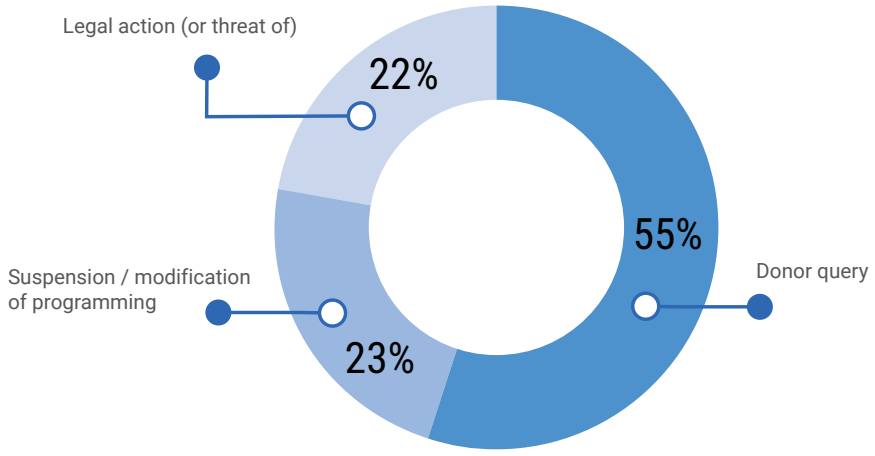
Between October and November 2018, the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA), which represents the majority of international NGO and non-profit organizations operating in the oPt, conducted a survey among its member organizations to assess the impact of delegitimization. Just over half of AIDA's members (41 of 80) responded to the survey.

All of the organizations surveyed indicated that they had been affected in one way or another by the delegitimization campaign: 23 per cent reported that accusations had forced them to alter, suspend or terminate existing programmes, in part or in full; 22 per cent said they had faced threats of, or actual, legal or administrative actions against them; and 55 per cent reported that they had to answer additional donor queries about their programming. Overall, 43 per cent of the surveyed organizations indicated that the campaign had undermined their funding for certain types of activities.

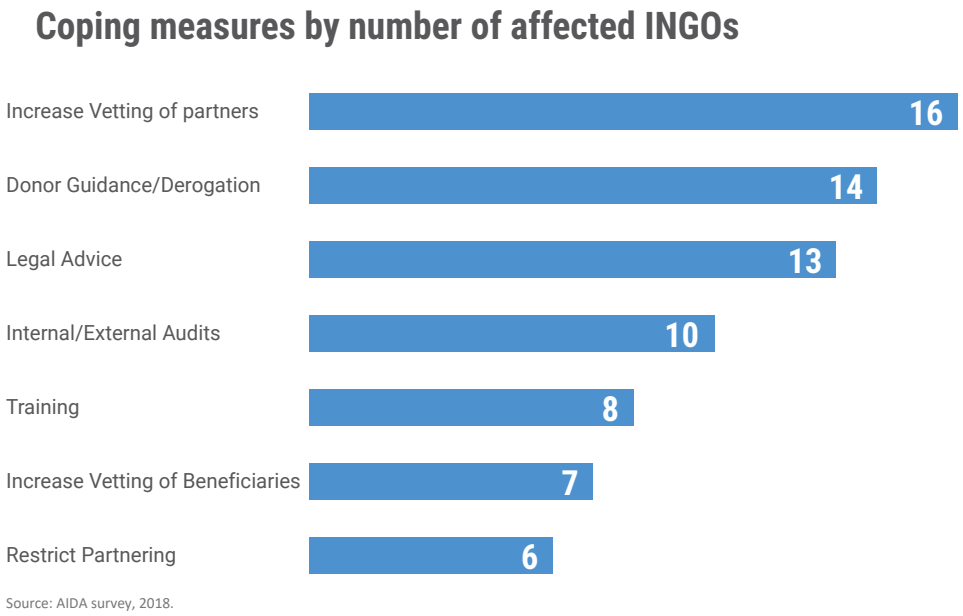
43 per cent of the INGOs surveyed indicated that the delegitimization campaign has undermined their funding for certain types of activities.

Coping strategies undertaken to confront these challenges include more stringent donor guidance and oversight, increased vetting of partners and beneficiaries, increased resorting to legal advice, additional staff training, as well as extra internal and external audits (see chart below). Half of the organizations surveyed by AIDA reported that they have appointed dedicated policy and advocacy staff, while 38 per cent have appointed staff dedicated to comply with additional donor requirements or risk management. Those strategies have diverted resources that would have been otherwise channeled to the provision of assistance.

Percentage of affected INGOs by type of impact



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With 37 participating agencies and projects accounting for almost 30 per cent of the total requested in the 2019 HRP, international NGOs are significant actors in the delivery of humanitarian aid and protection across the oPt. As leads or co-leads of national clusters (e.g shelter and education), some of these organizations also play a pivotal role in the coordination of operations on behalf of the entire humanitarian community.

Access in and out of Gaza, including areas near the perimeter fence, by humanitarian staff working with the UN or with NGOs is also impeded by demands made by the Hamas authorities.

Access restrictions undermining operational space

This campaign has further shrunk an operational space already constrained by a range of access restrictions. These include long standing restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities, citing security concerns, on the movement of national staff of humanitarian agencies within the oPt, especially to and from the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, along with lengthy interrogations of staff and instances of permit withdrawal.

Access in and out of Gaza, including areas near the perimeter fence, by humanitarian staff working with the UN or with NGOs is also impeded by demands made by the Hamas authorities. These include searches of UN vehicles, issuance of permits and security interviews of staff entering and exiting Gaza, prevention of humanitarian activities in certain geographical areas, and demands for information about staff and beneficiaries.

Humanitarian interventions in Gaza have also been affected by a range of import restrictions, particularly for goods Israel considers 'dual use' items. Entry of some such items, particularly those required for water and sanitation projects, has remained challenging despite facilitation efforts by Israel through the temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) introduced in 2014.[1]

In the West Bank, assistance to vulnerable communities in Area C and East Jerusalem is often destroyed or seized on the grounds of lack of a building permit.[2] Furthermore, access restrictions to areas where humanitarian interventions are needed, as well as

delays at checkpoints, hamper the access of humanitarian aid workers and materials to areas of need.

New legislation and attacks on human rights defenders

Palestinian human rights organization have reported repeated threats and intimidation of their staff;[3] detention, summons and raids on their offices; confiscation of property/ equipment; and the denial of visa entries to the West Bank. [4]

Additionally, Israeli, Palestinian and international human rights organizations operating in the oPt have face several Israeli laws and administrative decisions targeting their right to freedom of expression, the right to access funding, and public funding eligibility.[5] An amendment to the Entry into Israel Law has expanded the discretion accorded to the Israeli Ministry of Interior to deny entry into Israel and the West Bank to any non-citizen/resident on political grounds.[6]

Palestinian human rights organizations have reported repeated threats and intimidation of their staff; arrests, summons, and raids; confiscation of property; and the denial of visas.

Palestinian NGOs have also been affected by a new law on cybercrime adopted by decree by the Palestinian Authority that, according to some NGOs, limits freedom of expression and is used to arbitrarily detain defenders and activists challenging human rights violations committed by the PA.[7]

As recently pointed out by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, "legislation, both adopted and proposed, singles out human rights organizations for increased restrictions. Administrative constraints are placed on their operations. Sources of funding are undermined through campaigns to delegitimize organizations working for the rights of Palestinians. Human rights defenders are arrested and threatened, and groups including Israeli organisations as well as foreign Jewish organizations are being targeted for standing up for Palestinians' human rights."



A school provided as a humanitarian assistance demolished on grounds of lack of permit in the Bedouin community of Abu Nuwar in Jerusalem. 4 Feb 2018.

© Photo by OCHA

THE IMPACT ON WOMEN OF THE GREAT MARCH OF RETURN

The impact of violence and casualties incurred during Gaza's Great March of Return (GMR) demonstrations differs by sex due to social norms.

Between May and June 2018, UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) carried out a rapid assessment to identify the specific impact of the GMR on Palestinian women and girls. It consisted of five focus discussions and ten in-depth structured interviews. Each focus group was composed of women who participated in or were directly affected by the demonstrations, along with female representatives of institutions providing social services to women.

Virtually all participants expressed a high level of support for the GMR and its underlying motives, namely to reaffirm the right of return for Palestine refugees, and to protest the longstanding Israeli blockade on Gaza with its adverse impact on the life and livelihoods of Gazans.

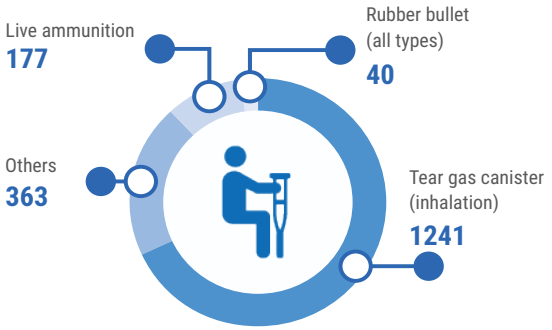
From the start of the GMR demonstrations on 30 March 2018 up to 30 November 2018, one woman and one girl were killed by Israeli forces, and over 1,800 other women and girls were injured

Most women indicated that consent for them to participate in the demonstrations had to be given by the male figure considered the head of the family: their husband or father. Despite the conservative social and cultural norms prevailing in Gaza, when such consent is given, women's participation does not generate fear of negative repercussions. According to the focus group participants, women attend demonstrations more frequently on days other than Friday, when women traditionally have home duties as it is the weekend and a day for family activities. There is also a perception that demonstrations on Fridays are more violent than during the rest of the week.

Women killed and injured

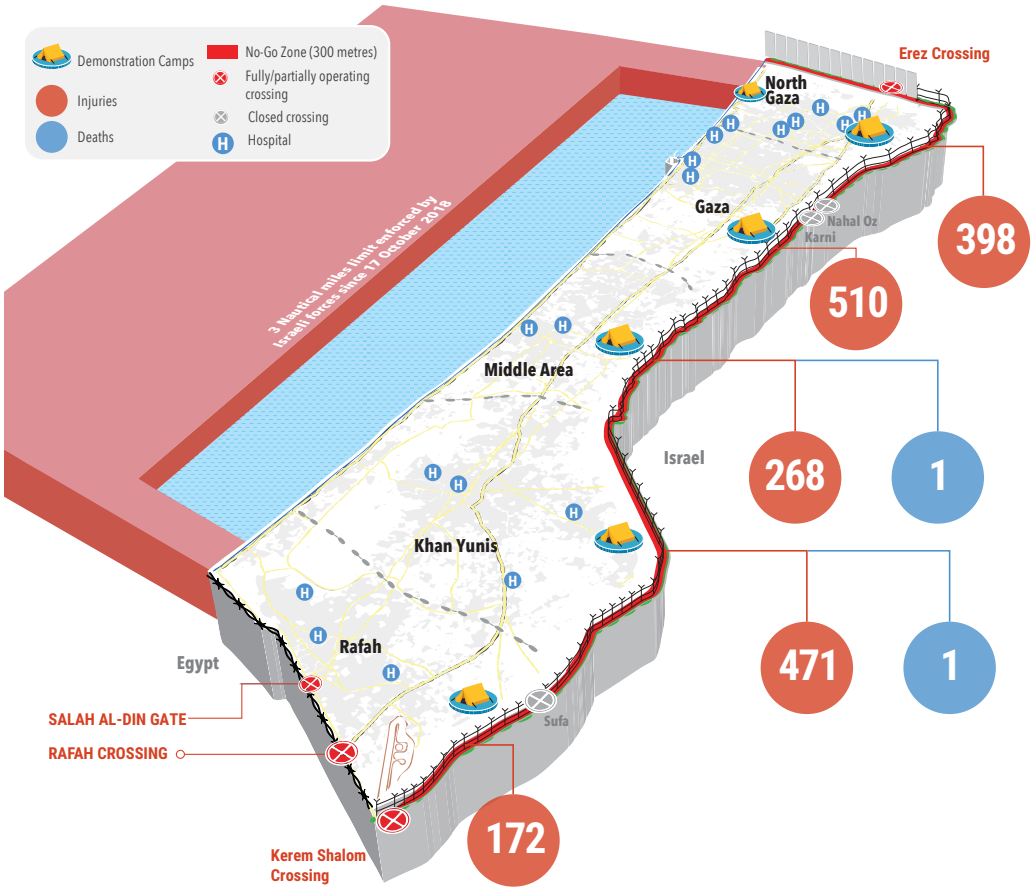
From the start of the GMR demonstrations on 30 March 2018 up to 30 November 2018, one woman and one girl were killed by Israeli forces, and over 1,800 other women and girls were injured. Women and girls account for about one per cent of all deaths and eight per cent of all injuries in this context. Of the female injuries, including those treated in the field, 68 per cent were due to tear gas inhalation and ten per cent to live fire.

Women and girls injured in Friday demonstrations between 30 Mar-30 Nov by type of weapon



This report was prepared by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in collaboration with humanitarian partners.

Female casualties in GMR demonstrations
30 Mar - 30 Nov 2018



Women reported that they refrained from receiving medical treatment following severe tear gas inhalation during a demonstration to avoid possible tension with their husbands.

Despite the relatively low proportion of injuries among females, the consequences of an injury are often harsher for women and for the rest of the family, particularly when the injured female is a mother. Some participants indicated that women are expected to continue fulfilling their home duties despite an injury. Others highlighted that injured women rely on other family members to access medical treatment because of the norm that women should not leave their homes unaccompanied. Some women also pointed out that a girl or young woman with a serious injury may find their chances of marrying impaired.

Several participants reported that they refrained from receiving medical treatment following severe tear gas inhalation during a demonstration to avoid possible tension with their husbands. One of the participants said: "My husband knows I am attending but is not happy about it. He told me I am free to go but I am responsible for whatever happens to me. I was affected by tear gas inhalation many times. Once I received first aid at the field hospital but asked not to register my details. If my husband knew about it he would prevent me from going next time."

This report was prepared by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in collaboration with humanitarian partners.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: A PRIORITY FOR HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING IN 2019

As reflected in the 2019 HRP, gender mainstreaming remains a priority for the oPt humanitarian community. Partners are committed to delivering a response that is sensitive and appropriate to the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of persons of different genders and ages. The full roll-out of a new and better Gender and Age Marker (GAM) in the 2019 planning cycle reaffirms the commitment to gender mainstreaming as a means to ensure the highest quality humanitarian programming in line with international standards. The GAM strengthens the previous tool by including age (in addition to gender) and, most significantly, by adding a monitoring component. In addition to measuring programme effectiveness, it is a valuable teaching and self-monitoring tool that allows organizations to learn by developing programmes that respond to all aspects of diversity. In 2019, the Humanitarian Gender Group, co-chaired by UN Women and OCHA, will continue to ensure gender and age mainstreaming in cluster-specific needs analysis, response planning, implementation and monitoring.

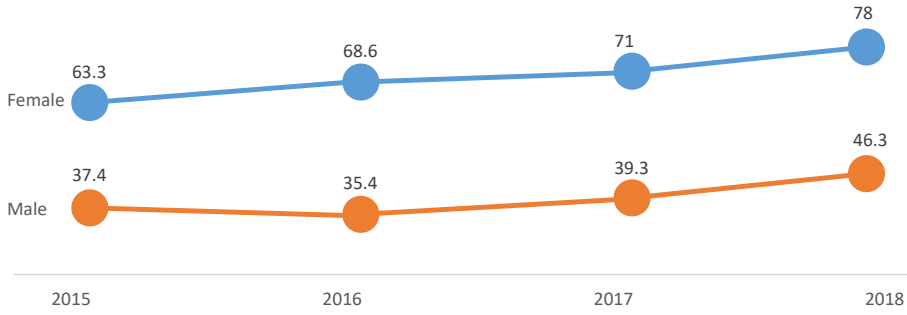
Customarily, the husband's family is the one entitled to the social benefits paid following his death, often exacerbating the widow's loss of control over her life and children.

The impact of casualties among other family members

All participants and interviewees agreed that the death of a primary breadwinner has a direct and immediate impact on the living conditions of the widow and children. Given the socio-economic situation in Gaza, the opportunities for women to fill the income gap are minimal. In the third quarter of 2018, less than 26 per cent of women in Gaza were participating in the labour force (i.e. working or looking for a job) and 78 per cent of those were unemployed (versus 46 per cent of men).

Under current social norms, the parents or brothers of a male who is killed are expected to provide for the needs of the orphan children, particularly if the wife/mother does not have an income. Customarily, the husband's family (rather than that of the wife) is the one entitled to the social benefits paid by the authorities or civil society institutions following the death, often exacerbating the widow's loss of control over her life and children. Focus group participants indicated that most women suffer from lack of knowledge about their rights and are unaware of organizations that provide counselling and support.

Unemployment rates on third quarter of the year in Gaza, by gender



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

In the customary division of labor at home, the treatment of an injured family member is mainly the responsibility of the mother or wife. The huge number of people injured since the beginning of the GMR demonstrations, compounded by shortages of electricity, drugs and equipment, has forced hospitals to release patients prematurely and hand over treatment to the families. "This is extremely tiring and stressful, and it comes on top of our normal work at home", said one of the participants. Another woman added that due to the family's poor economic circumstances, she faces the embarrassment of begging for medicines for her son: "He was shot and injured during a demonstration and the doctors said his leg would have to be amputated. Despite that, we only received $200 and were sent back home. I've already spent all of this money on a special bed and mattress, and on medication. Nobody came to ask about us afterwards."

Gender-based violence (GBV)

In the context of already high levels of domestic violence, some participants reported that women are often victims of psychological and physical abuse by their husbands, who accuse them of responsibility for the injury of a son or daughter. One participant said: "My daughter was injured in a demonstration. Whenever my husband sees her bedridden or using crutches he tells me that it is my fault and that her future is ruined. This happens on a daily basis. My daughter and I are in a very bad psychological state."

women are often victims of psychological and physical abuse by their husbands, who accuse them of responsibility for the injury of a son or daughter.

A study published by UN Women in December 2017 indicated that the absence of economic opportunities for breadwinners and their households are central drivers of GBV in Gaza. Poverty is also linked to overcrowding, with women survivors often citing living in the extended family households of their spouses as compounding their abuse. Factors that enable situations of abuse to continue include the fact that perpetrators rarely (if ever) face legal, criminal or social penalties for their behaviour; violence against women in the context of marriage is not considered a crime in civil law and relevant family law in Gaza; and dominant social norms prioritize the preservation of a marriage regardless of the cost to victims.

FOUR PROJECTS ADDRESSING GBV IN GAZA SUPPORTED BY THE HUMANITARIAN FUND

During 2018, the oPt Humanitarian Fund (HF) funded four projects addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in the Gaza Strip. The projects, worth $1.02 million, are implemented by two national and two international NGOs for periods that range between seven and 11 months, starting from March 2018. The projects target more than 23,000 beneficiaries, of whom 61 per cent are women, 16 per cent girls, 16 per cent men and 7 per cent boys. Common to the four projects is the goal of promoting and strengthening protection mechanisms for vulnerable women and girls who are survivors of GBV or are otherwise affected by violence by providing appropriate responses for their psychosocial and health needs. The oPt HF is a pooled fund managed by OCHA on behalf of the Humanitarian Coordinator. In 2018 the HF allocated a total of $21.2 million from contributions made by ten member states to support 52 projects across the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

* Donate to the oPt Humanitarian Fund

* Learn more about the oPt Humanitarian Fund

ENDNOTES

1. The GRM is an agreement between Israel, Palestine and the UN to facilitate the entry of construction material into Gaza, primarily with the view to advance reconstruction and recovery of the damage incurred during the conflict. Since then, the GRM has facilitated the entry into Gaza of more than three million tons of construction materials, almost 600 large-scale projects have been completed and nearly 140,000 beneficiaries have been able to access material to repair, reconstruct or build new houses.

2. See for example, OCHA, West Bank demolitions and displacement, November 2018.

3. See "UN rights experts denounce Israel's growing constraints on human rights defenders", 3 March 2017. https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21279&LangID=E Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network, "Attacks on Palestinian civil society organizations in occupied East Jerusalem: A Matter of Illegal Annexation and of Repression of the Right to Self-determination", June 2018.

4. According to a 2018 survey conducted by Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) filled by 25 Palestinian NGOs operating in East Jerusalem, 20% of Organizations had travel bans for work abroad on their staff, and 12% were had a temporary ban or deportation from Jerusalem order. Due to Israel's denial of visa to supporters from abroad, 48% of organizations had difficulty recruiting/ keeping foreign staff and 24% were forced to cancel activities with visitors from abroad.

5. These include the so-called Nakba Law (2011), the Boycott Law (2011), the amendment to the Public Education Law (2018), and the Loyalty in Culture bill. Administrative decisions include the cancellation of leases or suspension of funding to institutions who perform, plan or host events or performances of which the authorities disapprove.

6. Amendment No. 28 to the Entry into Israel Law stipulates that the Minister of Interior will not issue an Israeli entry visa to anyone who is not a citizen or resident of the country and who has issued a public call to boycott Israel or has undertaken to participate in such a boycott, including a boycott of the settlements.

7. Position Paper on the Ongoing Campaign to Silence, Delegitimize, and De-fund Palestinian Civil Society Organizations and Human Rights Defenders, published by PHROC and PNGO, March 2018.

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