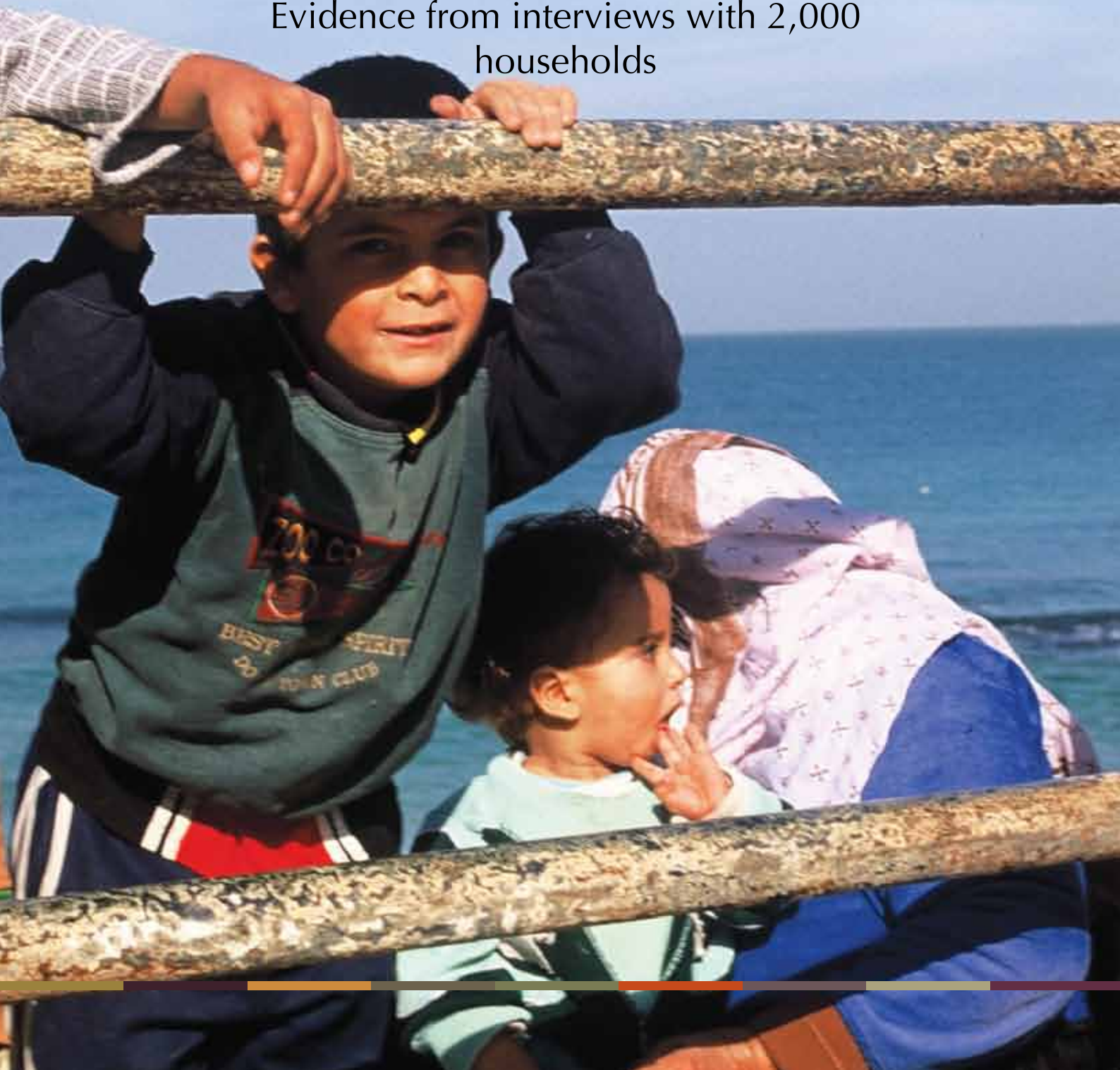


# Living conditions *in the* Gaza Strip

during and after Israel's military campaign in  
the winter of 2008/2009

Evidence from interviews with 2,000  
households



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**United Nations Population Fund**

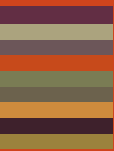
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## Preface

The report was prepared by Fafo. Its main author is Åge A. Tiltnes, who received support from colleagues Huafeng Zhang (statistical analysis, sampling, and tabulation report), Kristin Dalen (tabulation report) and Liv Elin Torheim (psychological health, food security). He would like to express his thanks to Fafo's research director Jon Pedersen and UNFPA's Sana Asi who gave valuable feedback on a first draft of the report. Fieldwork was managed magnificently by Fafo's Hani Eldada under highly difficult circumstances. Thanks are also due to all members of the field team, and not least to all the Gaza households that so generously spent time with the interviewers while providing information about their living conditions and sharing some of their thoughts and concerns.



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# 6

## Living conditions *in the* Gaza Strip

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# Summary

The Fafo-UNFPA survey was implemented in the Gaza Strip from 3 to 12 March 2009. The sample was a three-stage stratified cluster sample. Interviews were implemented at 132 fieldwork points, which ensured the proper representation of Gaza's population. Altogether 2,020 households, representing 95.6 percent of the original sample, were successfully interviewed. This section summarizes key findings.

### **Damages and dislocation**

Seven in ten households stayed behind and remained in their dwellings during the entire Israeli attack, while three in ten households left their homes and went to live elsewhere for a shorter or longer period of time.

The vast majority moved temporarily and returned home, while three percent of the households that fled (one percent of *all* households in the Gaza Strip) had not gone back some six weeks after the cessation of hostilities.

The majority of those who moved during the war went to live with close family (59 percent) or other relatives (26 percent). Others stayed with neighbours (two percent) and friends (three percent) or sought shelter in private or collective places of residence such as UNRWA schools (ten percent).

Seven percent of the temporarily abandoned homes were looted.

Twenty-seven percent of Gaza's dwellings suffered minor damages during Israel's military campaign, while 23 percent had graver damages that could be fixed and one percent suffered damages beyond repair.

Approximately four in five damaged dwellings (84 percent; 42.5 percent of *all* households in the Gaza Strip) had shattered windows, 13 and 12 percent of

the houses, respectively, had destroyed roofs and walls, in nine percent of the dwellings the water pipes were not functioning well, in two percent of the dwellings the sewage system was out of order, in four percent of the dwellings electricity was not provided any longer, and one in four households reported other damages to their living quarters than those just listed.

Twenty percent of all private dwellings are in need of repair worth 1,000-5,000 NIS, while it would cost more than 5,000 NIS to renovate, or rebuild, 22 percent of the homes.

Out of all households with dwellings in need of repair, one in ten had started to renovate their homes at the time of the survey.

Six in ten Gaza households reside in a *hara* with destroyed housing, two in five households had destroyed schools in their neighbourhood, and one in ten reported a damaged health facility nearby while nearly three in ten households had a shattered mosque in their vicinity.

### **Housing standards at the time of the interview**

Except very few (one percent), the vast majority of households in Gaza rely on electricity to be delivered through the public grid. The day preceding the interview, people received two hours and 12 minutes of electricity through the network, on average.

Six in ten households were unable to keep the dwelling sufficiently warm at night. This is not surprising since the windows in half the dwellings had been broken during the war, and that repair had often not started. Shortage of fuel further prevented many from adequately heating their living quarters.

Three in ten households reported inadequate water supply.

The sewage system was working appropriately in a majority of dwellings (87 percent). In six percent of the dwellings, there were problems while the sewage system was totally defunct in seven percent of all houses.

Domestic waste was collected from nine in ten households the week preceding the interview.

### **Employment**

Three in four individuals aged 15 years and above have never held a job. Twenty-two percent had been employed prior to Israel's June 2007 blockade of the Gaza Strip, 19 percent had been working at the onset of Israel's war on Gaza while a similar proportion of people was employed the week preceding the interview. Whereas 40 percent of men had been employed before the blockade, that figure had fallen to 33 percent since. Five percent of women had been employed at the three points in time. Ninety-four percent of Gaza's women had never held a job.

Access to gainful employment is strongly associated with education level, and the employment rate of people with a post-secondary degree is two to four times higher than for people with a different educational background. Higher education is crucial to bring women into paid work. Among the eight percent of women with higher education in Gaza, the employment rate is at roughly the same level as for men without higher education.

The employment rate for Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip is slightly higher than the rate for non-refugees (20 *versus* 16 percent), which at least partly can be explained by the higher prevalence of post-secondary education among refugees. A second explanation is that refugees have access to work with UNRWA.



The overall employment level two months after Israel's attack on Gaza was similar to what it had been before. Neither had the composition of employers been significantly altered. The major shift in that regard occurred with the Israel closure policies of 2007 after which the relative importance of UNRWA and particularly Hamas grew substantially. While UNRWA is a significant employer of women, the Hamas government has a high share of young adults on its pay-roll.

### **Income sources and income level**

When asked to identify their most important source of income the week preceding the interview, 55 percent of all households reported income from employment. Nearly one in five households referred to various sources of assistance as their most crucial income. Virtually a quarter of all households claimed they had neither employment nor assistance income.

The household economy of two thirds of the households had worsened compared to six months before, and it had remained stable for a third while a meagre two percent reported improvement. Only three in ten households thought they would be able to secure their basic needs in the coming three months.

### **Food insecurity during the war**

Forty-three percent of the households had reduced the food intake every day or often during the war, 36 percent had lacked a hot meal every day or often due to the lack of food, one in three households had adults who reduced their food intake to ensure that children had enough to eat every day or often, and one in ten households had fasted involuntarily for a whole day repeatedly due to the lack of food.

Three in four households had experienced at least one of the above-mentioned four situations at least sometimes during the assault on Gaza, and thus could be characterized as somewhat food insecure.

Being most vulnerable to food shortage was associated with living in rural areas, residing in a household with children below 15 years of age, large household size, having no income or support, owning few household amenities, having a household head with low education, having a middle-aged household head and residing in a male-headed household.

### **Assistance**

Seven in ten households had received some form of institutional assistance during 2008 and before Israel's assault on Gaza. Nearly half the households received institutional assistance during the war. Four in five had received such support in the weeks since the war ended. Only 17 percent of all households said they had not received institutional assistance in any form since the beginning of 2008.

Those households that received assistance during the war reported the following types of support: free health care (27 percent), food aid (24 percent), free health insurance (20 percent), and cash aid (two percent).

After the war, this was the situation: food aid (67 percent), free health care (41 percent), health insurance (24 percent), cash support (17 percent), and employment through job-creation schemes (one percent).

Food and cash aid had a much wider outreach after Israel's campaign than it had before and during the campaign.

The interviewed households had received support from the following institutions after the war: UNRWA (mentioned by 63 percent of all households), the PA (17 percent), the Hamas government (ten percent), Islamic charities (eight percent), other Palestinian NGO (ten percent), international NGO (three percent), and then follows local authorities (two percent), Hamas (two percent), Fatah (one percent) and other institution (three percent).

### **Needs**

The survey asked the households to identify their four most pressing needs, and the following issues received the highest score as top priority: money (39 percent), cooking gas (20 percent), house repair (16 percent) and food (12 percent).

### **Health and the use of health services during the war**

Two in three chronically ill persons were in need of medical care during Israel's assault on Gaza. Of those, 53 percent received adequate care, 27 percent received care that was inadequate, while 20 percent did not receive any help at all. Children more frequently experienced inadequate care (36 percent) or did not receive any assistance (31 percent). With regard to reasons for receiving inadequate or no medical care, nearly half said they could not afford it while a third provided war-related explanations.

Two to three percent of Gaza's population suffered from acute illness during the war period, they were injured by the warfare, or they experienced severe distress and other psychological symptoms triggered by the war. Two thirds of them sought medical care. About half of those who said that treatment and care was needed, was prevented from receiving it by the war situation. Approximately 15 percent of those in need of health care did not seek such care for economic reasons.

Nine in ten women who had children in the three months prior to the survey, gave birth at a public or private hospital, less than one percent were home deliveries, while the remaining births occurred at a health centre. Doctors supervised 84 percent of all deliveries while midwives and nurses assisted 14 percent of them. Having no professional support occurred rarely, in less than one percent of all cases.

Four in ten women that had wanted pre- or postnatal care during the war were prevented by the security situation. Seven percent did not receive such follow-up for economic reasons.

### **Psychological health**

A considerable proportion of the Gaza population reported symptoms of war-related distress weeks after the withdrawal of Israel's troops and the discontinuation of its massive shelling. For example, 13 percent suffered from sleeping problems the week preceding the interview and for ten percent the onset of the problem was during or after the war.

The level of involuntary urination while asleep was elevated in children aged five to 14 as nearly 23 percent of them had a bedwetting problem the week prior to the interview: seven percent reported bedwetting that had lasted for a long time and 15 percent had acquired the problem with the Israeli military campaign.

One in four children had problems with their concentration in the week before the interview. For four in five children with concentration difficulties (i.e. 21 percent of all children), the problem had started with the warfare.

Symptoms of distress in adults were widespread, and as many as 58 percent reported that they experienced at least one of the nine symptoms included in the survey often during the two weeks preceding the interview and 37 percent reported experiencing at least one of the five severe distress symptoms often during that period. The most commonly reported symptom was having the feeling of war action as if it still lasted (32 percent). In terms of severe distress, 23 percent said they often felt so depressed that nothing could cheer them up, and 24 percent often felt so deeply hopeless that they thought things would not improve in the future. The prevalence of distress symptoms varied across population groups. In general, refugees, people outside the labor force, those with no or short education and low income reported distress symptoms of more often than other people.

### Worries and concerns

People were most worried about the political and economic situation followed by security and employment. Health and family issues were of somewhat less, but still considerable, concern.

The survey enquired who people would see if they felt a need to talk to someone about their problems and worries. Multiple answers were allowed. These are the results:

- No need to talk to anyone: six percent
- Prefer not to talk to anyone: 18 percent
- Family member: 59 percent
- Friend: 22 percent
- Professional: one percent

Men were prone to turn to friends more often than women (28 *versus* 16 percent), while women more frequently than men said they would raise their worries with a family member (65 *versus* 52 percent).

## ملخص

تم تنفيذ مسح فافو وصندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان في قطاع غزة في الفترة من 3 إلى 12 آذار/مارس 2009. أُجري المسح على عينة عنقودية طباقية من ثلاث مراحل. ونفذت المقابلات في 132 نقطة ميدانية ما كفل وجود تمثيل مناسب لسكان غزة. تم بالإجمال إجراء مقابلات مع 2020 أسرة تمثل 95,6 بالمائة من العينة الأصلية. وسيتم استعراض تلخيص للنتائج الرئيسية في هذا الجزء.

## الأضرار والتهجير

بقيت سبع من بين كل عشر أسر في مساكنها خلال العملية العسكرية الإسرائيلية بأكملها، فيما غادرت ثلاث من بين كل عشر أسر منازلها وذهبت لكي تقيم في مكان آخر لفترة من الزمن طال أو قصرت.

انتقلت الغالبية العظمى من مساكنها بشكل مؤقت ثم عادت إليها، فيما أن ثلاثة بالمائة من الأسر التي نزحت (واحد بالمائة من كافة الأسر في قطاع غزة) لم ترجع إلى منازلها خلال ما يقارب ستة أسابيع بعد توقف القتال.

بالنسبة للذين غادروا منازلهم أثناء الحرب، انتقلت غالبيتهم للإقامة لدى عائلاتهم المقربة (59 بالمائة) أو أقرباء آخرين (26 بالمائة). وبقي آخرون لدى جيران (اثنان بالمائة) وأصدقاء لهم (ثلاثة بالمائة) أو بحثوا عن ملجأ في أماكن إيواء خاصة أو جماعية مثل مدارس الأونروا (عشرة بالمائة).

وقد تعرضت سبعة بالمائة من المنازل التي هجرها أصحابها مؤقتاً للسلب.

عانت سبعة وعشرين بالمائة من مساكن غزة من أضرار بسيطة أثناء الحملة العسكرية الإسرائيلية، فيما أصيبت بقية المنازل بأضرار أشد أمكن إصلاحها (23 بالمائة) أو كانت غير قابلة للإصلاح (واحد بالمائة).

حوالي أربعة من بين كل خمسة منازل متضررة (84 بالمائة، أو 42,5 بالمائة من كافة الأسر في قطاع غزة) تهيئت نوافذها، و13 بالمائة من المنازل تهدم سقفها، و12 بالمائة تهدمت جدرانها. وفي تسعة بالمائة من المساكن لم تعد أنابيب المياه تعمل جيداً، وفي اثنين بالمائة من المساكن تعطل نظام المجاري، وفي أربعة بالمائة منها لم تعد تتوفر الكهرباء، فيما أفادت ربع الأسر بوقوع أضرار أخرى لأماكن سكنها بخلاف ما تم تعدادها أعلاه.

إن 20 بالمائة من المساكن الخاصة بحاجة إلى إصلاح تتراوح قيمته بين 5000-1000 شيكل، فيما أن 22 بالمائة من المنازل ستزيد تكلفة ترميمها أو إعادة بنائها عن 5000 شيكل.

من بين كافة الأسر التي تحتاج مساكنها إلى إصلاح، كان عشرة بالمائة منهم قد بدؤوا بترميم منازلهم في وقت إجراء هذا المسح.

تعيش ست أسر من بين كل عشر أسر من غزة في حارة تعرضت مساكنها للتدمير، وتفيد أسرتان من بين كل خمس أسر بأن المدارس في أحيائهم تعرضت للتدمير، وأفادت أسرة من بين كل عشر أسر بتضرر المرفق الصحي المجاور، فيما أن حوالي ثلاث من بين كل عشر أسر أفادت بتحطم المسجد الذي في جوارهم.

## معايير السكن في وقت إجراء المقابلة

تعتمد غالبية الأسر في غزة، باستثناء عدد قليل جداً (واحد بالمائة)، على الكهرباء التي تصلها من خلال الشبكة العامة. وفي اليوم السابق للمقابلات، حصل السكان على الكهرباء من الشبكة لمدة ساعتين و12 دقيقة في المتوسط.

وكانت ست من بين كل عشر أسر غير قادرة على تدفئة المسكن أثناء الليل. إن هذا الأمر لا يشكل مفاجأة بالنظر إلى أن النوافذ في نصف المساكن قد حطمت أثناء الحرب وأن الإصلاحات لم تكن قد بدأت في أغلب الأحيان. كما أن نقص الوقود قد ساهم في حرمان العديدين من تدفئة مساكنهم بالشكل الكافي.

كما أفادت ثلاث من بين كل عشر أسر بوجود نقص في إمدادات المياه.

وكان نظام المجاري يعمل جيداً في غالبية المساكن (87 بالمائة)، فيما كانت توجد مشكلات في ستة بالمائة من المساكن، وكان نظام المجاري غير فاعل كلياً في سبعة بالمائة من كافة المنازل.

وقد تم جمع النفايات المنزلية من تسع من بين كل عشر أسر خلال الأسبوع السابق للمقابلات.

## التشغيل

لم يكن ثلاثة أرباع الأفراد في عمر 15 سنة فأكثر يعملون أبداً. وكان 23 بالمائة يعملون قبل أن تفرض إسرائيل الحصار على قطاع غزة في حزيران/يونيو 2007. وكان 19 بالمائة يعملون عشية الحرب الإسرائيلية على غزة. بينما كانت تتوفر فرصة عمل لدى نسبة ماثلة من السكان في الأسبوع السابق للمقابلات. وفيما كان 40 بالمائة من الرجال يعملون قبل الحصار، انخفضت هذه النسبة إلى 33 بالمائة منذ ذلك الحين. وكانت نسبة النساء العاملات خمسة بالمائة في النقاط الزمنية الثلاث. إذ أن 94% من النساء في غزة لم يسبق لهن أن عملن من قبل.

إن الوصول إلى عمل ذي عائد يرتبط بقوة بمستوى التعليم. فقد كان معدل التشغيل للحاصلين على شهادة دراسية بعد المرحلة الثانوية أعلى مرتين إلى أربع مرات بالمقارنة مع ما هو لدى الفئات التي لديها تحصيل تعليمي آخر. ويكتسب التعليم العالي أهمية حاسمة في التحاق النساء بالعمل بأجر. فمعدل التشغيل لدى النساء الحاصلات على تعليم عالٍ في غزة (ونسبتهن 8 بالمائة من النساء) يكاد يكون على مستوى واحد مع معدل التشغيل بين الرجال غير الحاصلين على تعليم عالٍ.

يرتفع معدل التشغيل للاجئين الفلسطينيين في قطاع غزة قليلاً عن المعدل بين السكان غير اللاجئين (20 مقابل 16 بالمائة). مما يمكن تفسيره جزئياً على الأقل بوجود معدل أعلى للتعليم ما بعد المرحلة الثانوية في أوساط اللاجئين. وهناك تفسير آخر هو أن لدى اللاجئين القدرة على الحصول على عمل لدى الأونروا.

كان مستوى التشغيل الإجمالي بعد شهرين من الحرب الإسرائيلية على غزة ماثلاً لما كان عليه قبل الحرب. كما لم يطرأ تغيير ملموس على تركيبة أرباب العمل. وحدث التغيير الرئيسي في هذا الخصوص مع سياسات الإغلاق الإسرائيلية للعام 2007. إذ ارتفعت بعدها وبشكل ملموس الأهمية النسبية للأونروا. ولحماس على الأخص. ففيما تعتبر الأونروا مكان عمل بارز بالنسبة للنساء، تضم قائمة الموظفين في حكومة حماس حصة عالية من البالغين الشباب.

## مصادر الدخل ومستوى الدخل

عندما طلب من الباحثين أن يحددوا أهم مصادر دخلهم في الأسبوع السابق للمقابلات، أفاد 55 بالمائة من مجموع الأسر بأنه الدخل الذي يحصلونه من العمل. وأشار حوالي خمس الأسر إلى مصادر متنوعة من المساعدات باعتبارها أهم مصدر للدخل بالنسبة لهم. وفي الواقع، صرحت نسبة تصل إلى ربع الأسر بأنه لا يتوفر لهم دخل لا من العمل ولا من المساعدات.

لقد طرأ تراجع على اقتصاد ثلثي الأسر بالقياس إلى الأشهر الستة السابقة. وبقي الوضع مستقرًا بالنسبة لثلث الأسر. فيما أفادت نسبة ضئيلة لا تتعدى اثنين بالمائة بأن وضعهم الاقتصادي قد تحسن. واعتقدت ثلاث أسر فقط من بين كل عشر أسر بأنه سيكون مستطاعهم أن يؤمنوا احتياجاتهم الأساسية في الأشهر الثلاثة القادمة.

## انعدام الأمن الغذائي أثناء الحرب

خفضت نسبة 43% من الأسر مدخولها من الطعام بشكل يومي أو في أحيان كثيرة أثناء الحرب. ولم تتوفر وجبات ساخنة لدى 36 بالمائة من الأسر بشكل يومي أو في أحيان كثيرة بسبب نقص الطعام. وأفادت ثلث الأسر بأن أفرادها البالغين خفضوا كمية الطعام التي يتناولونها بشكل يومي أو في أحيان كثيرة للتأكد من حصول الأطفال على كفايتهم منه. واضطرت أسرة واحدة من بين كل عشر أسر للقيام دون إرادتهم ليوم كامل وبشكل متكرر بسبب نقص الطعام.

عانت ثلاثة أرباع الأسر من واحد أو أكثر من الأوضاع الأربعة المذكورة أعلاه لبعض الوقت على الأقل أثناء الهجوم الإسرائيلي على غزة. وبالتالي يمكن وصفهم بأنهم افتقروا إلى الأمن الغذائي إلى حد ما.

وكانت أعلى درجة من المعاناة من نقص الطعام ترتبط مع السكن في المناطق الريفية. والعيش في أسرة تضم أطفالاً دون عمر 15 سنة. والأسر الكبيرة الحجم. وعدم توفر الدخل أو الدعم. وامتلاك القليل من المقتنيات المنزلية. وانخفاض مستوى التعليم لدى رب الأسرة. وكون رب الأسرة في متوسط العمر. والعيش في أسرة يرأسها ذكر.

## المساعدات

تلقت سبع أسر من بين كل عشر أسر شكلاً ما من المساعدات المؤسسية خلال سنة 2008 وقبل الحرب الإسرائيلية على غزة. وتلقت حوالي نصف الأسر مساعدات مؤسسية أثناء الحرب. وحصل أربعة أخماس الأسر على مثل هذا الدعم في الأسابيع التي تلت نهاية الحرب. وقالت نسبة 17 بالمائة فقط من مجموع الأسر أنها لم تحصل على مساعدات مؤسسية في أي شكل منذ بداية سنة 2008.

وقد أفادت الأسر التي تلقت مساعدات أثناء الحرب بأنواع الدعم التالية: رعاية صحية مجانية (27 بالمائة). ومعونات غذائية (24 بالمائة). وتأمين صحي مجاني (20 بالمائة). ومساعدات نقدية (اثنتان بالمائة).

أما بعد الحرب فكان الوضع على النحو الآتي: معونات غذائية (67 بالمائة)، ورعاية صحية مجانية (41 بالمائة)، وتأمين صحي (24 بالمائة)، ودعم نقدي (17 بالمائة)، وتشغيل من خلال برامج خلق فرص عمل (واحد بالمائة).

وكانت المعونات الغذائية والنقدية أكثر اتساعاً بعد الحملة العسكرية الإسرائيلية مما كانت عليه قبل الحملة وأثناءها.

وقد تلقت الأسر المبحوثة دعماً من المؤسسات التالية بعد الحرب: الأونروا (ذكرتها 63 بالمائة من مجموع الأسر)، والسلطة الفلسطينية (17 بالمائة)، وحكومة حماس (10 بالمائة)، وجمعيات خيرية إسلامية (8 بالمائة)، ومنظمات أهلية فلسطينية أخرى (10 بالمائة)، ومنظمات غير حكومية دولية (ثلاثة بالمائة)، تلا ذلك السلطات المحلية (اثنان بالمائة)، وحماس (اثنان بالمائة)، وفتح (واحد بالمائة)، ومؤسسات أخرى (ثلاثة بالمائة).

### الاحتياجات

طلب المسح من الأسر أن تحدد احتياجاتها الأربعة الأكثر إلحاحاً. ونالت القضايا التالية أعلى علامات وجاءت في قمة الأولويات: المال (39 بالمائة)، وغاز الطهي (20 بالمائة)، وإصلاح المنزل (16 بالمائة)، والطعام (12 بالمائة).

### الصحة والانتفاع من الخدمات الصحية أثناء الحرب

كان ثلثا الأشخاص المصابين بأمراض مزمنة في حاجة إلى الرعاية الطبية أثناء الاعتداء الإسرائيلي على غزة. ومن بين هؤلاء، نال 53 بالمائة الرعاية المناسبة، فيما تلقى 27 بالمائة رعاية غير كافية. ولم يحصل 20 بالمائة على أية مساعدة على الإطلاق. وعانى الأطفال بنسبة أكبر من النقص في الرعاية التي حصلوا عليها (36 بالمائة) أو لم يحصلوا على أية مساعدة (31 بالمائة). أما فيما يتعلق بأسباب تلقي رعاية طبية غير كافية أو عدم تلقيها على الإطلاق، قال حوالي النصف أنه لم يكن بمقدورهم دفع تكلفة الرعاية فيما أورد الثلث تفسيرات متعلقة بالحرب.

عانى ما بين 2-3 بالمائة من سكان غزة من مرض حاد أثناء فترة الحرب أو أصيبوا بسبب الحرب أو عانوا من ضائقة نفسية شديدة وأعراض نفسية أخرى سببتها الحرب. وقد سعى ثلثا هؤلاء في طلب الرعاية الطبية. وأشار حوالي نصف الذين قالوا أنهم كانوا بحاجة إلى علاج ورعاية إلى أنهم حرموا من تلقي هذه الرعاية بسبب أوضاع الحرب. وأفاد حوالي 15 بالمائة من الذين كانوا في حاجة للرعاية الصحية بأنهم لم يسعوا للحصول على مثل هذه الرعاية لأسباب اقتصادية.

أفادت تسع نساء من بين كل عشر نساء وضعن مواليدهن في الأشهر الثلاثة السابقة للمسح بأن ولادتهن جرت في مستشفى حكومي أو خاص. وجرى أقل من واحد بالمائة من الولادات في المنزل، فيما حدثت البقية الباقية في مركز صحي. وأشرف أطباء على 84 بالمائة من كافة الولادات، فيما تمت 14 بالمائة من الولادات بمساعدة من قابلة أو مرضة. وكانت حالات عدم توفر الإشراف المهني على الولادة نادرة، بنسبة تقل عن واحد بالمائة.

وقد منع الوضع الأمني أربع نساء من بين كل عشر نساء احتجن إلى رعاية أثناء الحمل أو بعد الولادة من الحصول على هذه الرعاية. ولم تتلق سبعة بالمائة هذه المتابعة الصحية لأسباب اقتصادية.

### الصحة النفسية

أفادت نسبة ملموسة من سكان غزة بأنهم عانوا من أعراض الضائقة النفسية المتعلقة بالحرب في الأسابيع التي تلت انسحاب القوات الإسرائيلية وتوقفها عن القصف المكثف. على سبيل المثال، عانى 13 بالمائة من مشكلات في النوم في الأسبوع السابق للمقابلات، وكانت هذه المشكلة قد بدأت لدى 10 بالمائة أثناء الحرب أو بعدها.

وارتفعت نسبة التبول اللاإرادي أثناء النوم لدى الأطفال في عمر 14-5 سنة، حيث عانى 23 بالمائة منهم من هذه المشكلة في الأسبوع السابق للمقابلات: فقد أفاد 7 بالمائة بوجود مشكلة التبول اللاإرادي منذ فترة طويلة، فيما بدأ 15 بالمائة يعانون من هذه المشكلة مع الحملة العسكرية الإسرائيلية.

ومن جانب آخر، عانى ربع الأطفال من مشكلات في التركيز في الأسبوع السابق للمقابلات. وبدأت مشكلة صعوبة التركيز لدى خمسة أرباع هؤلاء الأطفال (أي 21 بالمائة من كافة الأطفال) مع بدء الحرب.

وكانت أعراض الضائقة النفسية واسعة الانتشار بين البالغين أيضاً. فقد أفادت نسبة تصل إلى 58% بأنهم عانوا من واحد على الأقل من الأعراض التسعة التي شملها المسح في أحيان كثيرة خلال الأسبوعين السابقين للمقابلات، فيما أفادت نسبة 37 بالمائة بأنهم عانوا من واحد على الأقل من الأعراض الخمسة للضائقة النفسية الشديدة في أحيان كثيرة خلال الفترة ذاتها. وكان العرض الأكثر ذكراً يتمثل في الشعور بأن الحرب لا تزال مستمرة (32 بالمائة). وفيما يتعلق بالضائقة النفسية الشديدة، قال 23 بالمائة أنهم كثيراً

ما كانوا يشعرون بأنهم مكتئبون إلى درجة أن لا شيء يمكنه أن يروح عنهم، فيما شعر 24 بالمائة في كثير من الأحيان بأنهم يائسين بعمق لدرجة الاعتقاد أن الأمور لن تحسن في المستقبل. وقد تباين معدل انتشار أعراض الضائقة النفسية من فئة سكانية إلى أخرى. وعلى العموم، أفاد اللاجئون وغير الملحقين بالقوى العاملة وغير الحاصلين على التعليم أو ذوو المستوى التعليمي المنخفض وذوو الدخل المنخفض بأعراض الضائقة أكثر من سواهم.

### دواعي القلق والاهتمام

كان الناس أكثر قلقاً إزاء الوضع السياسي والاقتصادي. يلي ذلك قضية الأمن والتشغيل. وكانت القضايا الصحية والأسرية أقل مدعاة للاهتمام إلى حد ما. مع أن نسبتها كانت ملموسة.

سأل المسح المبحوثين عن الأشخاص الذين يمكن أن يتوجهوا إليهم إذا شعروا بالحاجة لأن يتحدثوا إلى أحد ما عن مشكلاتهم ودواعي قلقهم. وسمح بإعطاء إجابات متعددة. وكانت النتائج كالتالي:

- لا حاجة للتحدث إلى أحد: 6 بالمائة
- أفضل عدم التحدث إلى أحد: 18 بالمائة
- أحد أفراد الأسرة: 59 بالمائة
- أحد الأصدقاء: 22 بالمائة
- أحد المهنيين: واحد بالمائة

وكان الرجال يميلون للتوجه إلى الأصدقاء بتكرار أكبر من النساء (28 مقابل 16 بالمائة). فيما قالت النساء بتكرار أكبر من الرجال أنهن سيشاركن دواعي قلقهن مع أحد أفراد الأسرة (65 مقابل 52 بالمائة).

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## Living conditions *in the* Gaza Strip

during and after Israel's military campaign in  
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Evidence from interviews with 2,000  
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# Introduction

The present survey was designed primarily by Fafo Institute of International Studies (Fafo) with additional input from the UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund for the occupied Palestinian Territory, to provide a fairly rapid assessment of the situation in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of 'Operation Cast Lead' - Israel's 23-day military offensive which came to an end 17 January 2009. We wanted to examine how the already deprived population was further negatively affected by Israel's assault and the ensuing armed conflict. The aim was to capture the material as well non-material costs of the military campaign through generating reliable statistics. How had the Palestinians of Gaza tackled the war? What were the socio-economic and psycho-social circumstances soon after the cessation of hostilities?

Fafo has been implementing household surveys and opinion polls in the Palestinian Territories at regular intervals for many years, and had already planned one more such study for 2009 with funding from the Norwegian Government. When the conflict between the Hamas Government in Gaza and Israel intensified and Israel's military campaign started, Fafo received the backing of the Norwegian Government to speed up survey preparations and prepare for post-conflict implementation, provided the study be useful for humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation programs and interventions to alleviate the suffering once the hostilities ceased.

The cooperation with the UNFPA ensured coordination with UN agencies and Palestinian Authority (PA) institutions and improved the policy-relevance of the survey as 'local' data needs were inserted into the survey design process. A few other assessments and surveys have been implemented in the aftermath of Israel's military operation, and reports published by e.g. the WHO, UNDP, UNFPA and UNIFEM. While these reports contain very valuable information on a broad array of issues, due to its larger sample size, wider coverage, and



high response rates the Fafo-UNFPA survey provides the most solid survey statistics about the post-war situation in the Gaza Strip to date. The survey supplements the previous studies. In doing so, it strengthens some results while it corrects a few other findings. The survey, and as a consequence this report, puts more weight on some issues over others. For example, reflecting the concerns of the UNFPA and other agencies providing assistance to the Palestinian people, one area of particular concern is the psycho-social wellbeing of Gaza's population. The survey collected 'objective' statistics, but also, just like the UNDP and UNIFEM surveys collected 'subjective' or 'soft' data aimed at tapping into people's own assessments, views, perceptions and outlooks.

Survey results were released in the form of a comprehensive tabulation report one month after field work completion to ensure the most efficient and effective use of data.<sup>1</sup> This report concentrates on major findings from the Fafo-UNFPA survey and draws on a few other sources, first and foremost other studies about the situation in the Gaza Strip subsequent to Israel's gruesome bombardment and ground invasion, which left about 1,400 Palestinians dead, a majority of them civilians, and 5,400 injured.<sup>2</sup>

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1 The Tabulation report can be downloaded from <http://www.fafon.org/ais/mideast/opt/gazasrv09/index.htm>. A summary of findings and the questionnaire can be found there also.

2 The various sources on fatalities (e.g. OCHA, the Ministry of Health, and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights) provide slightly divergent figures.

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# Methodology

## The sample

Fafo carried out the household sample survey in the Gaza Strip from 3 to 12 March 2009, some six to eight weeks after Israel's military campaign in the Gaza Strip, which halted 17 January. The sample was a two-stage stratified sample of households, with an additional selection of a random individual in the household.

The interviews were implemented at 132 fieldwork points (clusters or enumeration areas) selected randomly for us by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), covering the entire Gaza Strip in such a way that all five governorates (*mohafazat*) would be represented in accordance with their population size. Furthermore, each governorate was split into three strata (urban, rural, and refugee camp). The sample frame of clusters used by the PCBS is derived from the 1997 Census. Before drawing the random selection of 16 households from each of the 132 clusters, we undertook a complete re-listing of all households in each cluster. This was necessary because of the considerable time lapse since the Census and the likely demographic changes since then due to population movement, the construction of new buildings, and destroyed houses caused by Israeli bombardments, particularly during the recent 23-day military campaign.

Table 1 Distribution of the sample and the frame

Stratum description	Population size 2006	Total number of households	Total number of enumeration areas	Sampled enumeration areas	Sampled households
North of Gaza, urban	174,604	24,251	101	15	240
North of Gaza, rural	10,122	1,581	9	1	16
North of Gaza, refugee camp	93,455	12,980	49	8	128
Gaza City, urban	409,680	58,526	290	36	576
Gaza City, rural	8,864	1,343	7	1	16
Gaza City, refugee camp	87,158	13,618	65	9	144
Deir al Balah, urban	65,234	9,060	40	6	96
Deir al Balah, rural	6,500	942	6	1	16
Deir al Balah, refugee camp	136,983	20,145	82	13	208
Khan Yunis, urban	199,336	28,889	138	18	288
Khan Yunis, rural	31,356	4,751	30	3	48
Khan Yunis, refugee camp	49,161	7,337	32	5	80
Rafah, urban	71,003	10,143	47	6	96
Rafah, rural	15,960	2,455	13	2	32
Rafah, refugee camp	84,400	12,232	55	8	128
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,443,816</b>	<b>208,253</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>2,112</b>

A total of 2,112 households were randomly sampled (Table 1). In each household a responsible adult, frequently the head of household or his/her spouse and sometimes assisted by additional household members, answered questions about the dwelling and the neighborhood, the household as an entity (e.g. movement during the armed conflict, income sources and economic situation, needs for assistance), and basic characteristics pertaining to each individual household member (e.g. gender and age, health condition, civil status, educational attainment and employment).

Next, in each household one household member aged 18 years or older was randomly selected to answer a number of questions pertaining to him or herself, which could not have been satisfactorily handled by a proxy respondent (e.g. life satisfaction, mental health, worries and concerns). This third step of the sampling process relied on a so-called Kish table.<sup>3</sup> Due to a variety of reasons such as non-existent and vacant dwellings, non-contact after two re-visits, mentally unstable respondents or respondents who were too old and weak or too sick to manage the interview, or refusals (a total of 85) etc., the number of households and randomly selected adult individuals actually interviewed was reduced. In one of the 132 fieldwork sites, all houses had been ruined by the war and so there was no household left to interview. Substitution was not permitted under any circumstance. Thus, altogether 2,020 households (95.6 percent of the original sample) were visited and successfully interviewed. A total of 1,852 adult persons representing 91.7 percent of the participating households were interviewed face to face.<sup>4</sup> The survey interviewed approximately as many women as men, and the random selection process ensured that also other characteristics of those interviewed mirror the overall adult population in the Gaza Strip well.

<sup>3</sup> The interviewer carried out the random selection in two steps: (i) She listed and sorted all eligible household members by sex and age, i.e. listed males first and then females, the older first and then the younger; (ii) She carried out the random selection from the pre-sorted list with the help of a random number table attached to the questionnaire following Kish (1965: 399).

<sup>4</sup> Additional details about the sample can be found in a sampling document available at <http://www.fafu.no/ais/middeast/opt/gazasrv09/index.htm>.

### Fieldwork organization

Fieldwork and data entry was managed by a Palestinian employed with Fafo for more than 15 years and with extensive experience from household surveys in Palestine, Jordan and Iraq. As mentioned, fieldwork was implemented from 3 to 12 March 2009. Just ahead of the fieldwork, the 60-person strong team<sup>5</sup> had been through a training course lasting for two days. Several team members had already participated in the re-listing of the clusters and were hence familiar with the interviewing areas. A considerable proportion of the fieldwork team had prior knowledge of and experience from household survey work with the PCBS, Fafo and other agencies. They were recruited partly from Fafo's own pool of experienced fieldworkers and partly from a few local NGOs and their networks.

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to the fieldwork manager, the team consisted of five supervisors, 46 interviewers (all female), four editors and five data entry staff. Altogether 25 people participated in the updating of the 132 enumeration areas.

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# Other studies

This section briefly presents other studies that have shed light on the situation in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of Israel's military campaign.

A month after the hostilities, the WHO published a report that summarized the health status of Gaza's population as well as presented statistics of relevance to people's health, including an outline of the health services (WHO 2009). The report draws on secondary sources and available data from the Ministry of Health and individual health institutions. It includes an analysis of the impact of the Israeli offensive on people's health and the provision of health services.

About the same time, the UNFPA issued a report on the crisis' consequence for reproductive health and mother and child health care (UNFPA 2009a). The report relied on secondary sources, information generated from register data and service records from hospitals and health clinics, and interviews with key informants in the health sector.

Later, the UNFPA also published a report on psycho-social consequences of Israel's violent operation in Gaza (UNFPA 2009b). The report, which was researched and written up by the Culture and Free Thought Association, a Gaza NGO, is based on focus group discussions and individual interviews with 'ordinary' people as well as interviews with medical professionals at UNRWA health centers carried out in two phases (27 January to 8 February, and 10 to 25 March).

The UN has funded two surveys after Israel's bombardments ended and its infantry withdrew, both implemented by Near East Consulting (NEC). The first was commissioned by the UNDP and data collection occurred between 25 January and 1 February (UNDP 2009). The survey had objectives similar to

those of the Fafo-UNFPA survey, namely to gauge the damages, living conditions and needs in the Gaza Strip subsequent to Israel's military operation, and specifically get people's own 'take' on the situation. Topics covered are employment and poverty, security, needs and assistance, war damages, and health and health care. NEC carried out landline telephone interviews with 1,815 households across the Gaza Strip, selecting them by way of random digit dialing. The sample size is large, but the sampling approach introduces biases in the results stemming from the fact that ordinary telephones are accessible to a minority of Gaza's households only (34 percent according to the Fafo-UNFPA survey), and that the possession of a landline is unevenly distributed across various population groups. For example, it is twice as common in urban centers and refugee camps as in rural locations. Furthermore, there is a systematic positive association between the educational level of the household head (an indicator of socio-economic standing) and having an ordinary telephone: 20 percent of households where the head has elementary schooling or less have a landline; 35 percent of households where the head holds a secondary degree have one; and 56 percent of households where the head has completed post-secondary education have a landline.<sup>6</sup> The survey's refusal rate is not reported.

The second survey was commissioned by UNIFEM and resulted in a UN report published by the UN Agency and prepared by a team under R. Hammami of Bir Zeit University (UNIFEM 2009). The survey itself was implemented by NEC, which sampled 44 areas in 20 localities and aimed at interviewing 25 households at each locality applying a variant of 'random walking' with the goal to reach a total sample of 1,100 households. Due to an initial refusal rate of nearly 18 percent, the team kept adding households until the target of 1,100 was reached. The survey report expands on the issues tackled by the UNDP report, for instance by including water and sanitation, education, and food and nutrition. Emphasis is put on highlighting gender variation in perceptions. This is highly commendable, but findings are sometimes presented according to e.g. the sex of the respondent without providing results for the entire Gaza population or all Gaza households taken together.

As compared with the studies and reports just mentioned, the Fafo-UNFPA survey contains a number of additional issues and questions thus expanding the scope and the comprehensiveness of indicators on which to assess the impact of Israel's military campaign against the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, the added value of this report lies in the accuracy of the statistics emanating from the survey's improved and enlarged sample.

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<sup>6</sup> Additional information on the ownership of ordinary telephones and other durable goods is provided in a separate subsection below.

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## Physical damages and displacement

A recent report by the World Bank considers that more than 100,000 people were displaced during Israel's military campaign against Gaza, and that over 15,000 homes were partially or totally destroyed (World Bank 2009). This section documents the impact of Israel's attack on people's housing conditions and the basic infrastructure, and describes the situation six to eight weeks after the cessation of hostilities. As will be demonstrated, the statistics reveal that the assault affected people almost indiscriminately. There are only minor differences between households across socio-economic standing and location. Furthermore, the destructive military campaign affected a higher proportion of the population than hitherto suggested.

### **Three in ten households fled their homes during the hostilities**

Seven in ten households (71 percent) stayed behind and remained in their dwellings during the entire Israeli attack, while three in ten households (29 percent) left their homes and went to live elsewhere for a shorter or longer period of time. The latter is a lower figure than the 40 percent suggested by a previous study (UNDP 2009) but implies that some 435,000 Gazans were displaced.<sup>7</sup>

Households in rural areas more often fled their homes during the war (53 percent) than urban households (29 percent) and those residing in refugee camps (25 percent). We observed minimal variation across socio-economic status, but households where the head have a post-secondary degree somewhat less often left their homes (25 percent) than other households. Households with children were displaced as often as other households.

<sup>7</sup> According to the PCBS, the yearly population increase in the Gaza Strip in 2007 was 3.3 percent (BBC, 15 Feb 2009). Based on results of the 2007 census, which puts the population in the Gaza Strip at 1,416,543 in December of that year (PCBS 2009: tables 12-16), the population 13 months later (during the war on Gaza) would have grown to 1,467,184. Our calculation of displaced persons assumes that the average household size of the displaced households does not differ radically from the average household size of all households in Gaza.

The vast majority (28 percent of all Gaza households) moved temporarily and returned home, while three percent of the households that fled from their homes during the war (one percent of *all* households in the Gaza Strip; around 15,000 people) had not gone back nearly two months after the cessation of hostilities. For the most part these dwellings had suffered severe damages or were completely destroyed.

The survey asked those who had left their homes during the war why they fled. Just about all (95 percent) stated that they moved because they felt the living area was unsafe, while a substantial number of households had moved because the dwelling had been partly or completely destroyed (17 and three percent respectively). A few households had changed residence because they sought to be nearer to a health facility (one percent, most likely because a household member had been injured), they wanted to be closer to relatives (two percent), or they were forced to move by soldiers (three percent).

The majority of those who moved during the war went to live with close family (59 percent) or other relatives (26 percent).<sup>8</sup> Others stayed with neighbours (two percent) and friends (three percent) or sought shelter in private or collective places of residence (including UNRWA schools) owned by strangers (ten percent).

A sad aspect of the displacement is the fact that seven percent of the households which abandoned their houses and apartments during the war experienced that their homes were looted in their absence.

### **Half of dwellings damaged by the hostilities**

Considering the condition of the current place of residence, i.e. the dwelling where the interviewed households resided at the time of the interview, one-half of them (49 percent) had been totally unaffected by the Israeli attack and was in the same condition as prior to the war. Twenty-seven percent of the dwellings had suffered minor damages, while the rest had graver damages that could be fixed (23 percent) or which was beyond repair (one percent). This would imply that approximately 61,300 homes suffered minor war damages, 52,200 homes had moderate damages and could be brought back to its previous condition, while 2,300 homes are forever gone and would have to be rebuilt.<sup>9</sup>

Approximately four in five damaged dwellings (84 percent; 42.5 percent of *all* households in the Gaza Strip) had shattered windows, 13 and 12 percent of the houses, respectively, had destroyed roofs and walls, in nine percent of the dwellings the water pipes were not functioning well, in two percent of the dwellings the sewage system was out of order, in four percent of the dwellings electricity was not provided any longer, and one in four households reported other damages to their living quarters than those just listed. These could be minor damages to the roof or walls, broken tiles on kitchen and bathroom walls, damages to garages, storage and other rooms in the courtyard or adjacent to the main building, etc.

### **One in five homes require repair worth more than 5,000 NIS**

The survey next enquired what it would cost to repair the damages incurred. As shown in figure 1, one-half of all interviewed households reported that no repair was necessary, one tenth said it would cost less than 1,000 NIS (shekel) to bring the dwelling back to its previous condition, a fifth assessed the damages to be worth 1,000-5,000 NIS, while a similar share

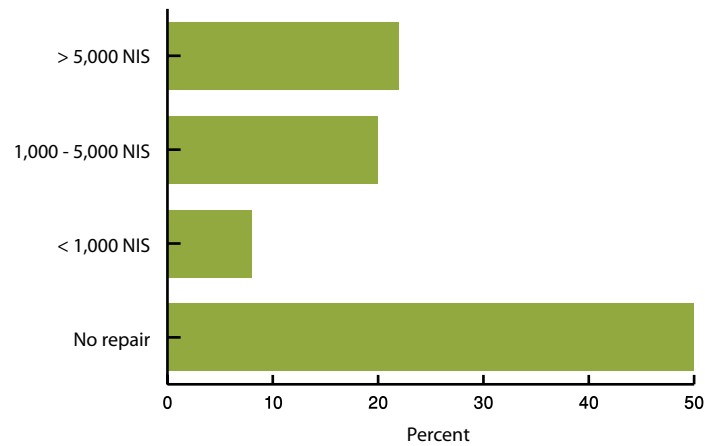
<sup>8</sup> In the survey, close family was defined as a parent, sibling or child of a person residing in the household.

<sup>9</sup> Given an annual population growth of 3.3 percent the total number of households in Gaza would have increased from 219,220 at the time of the PCBS census in December 2007 to 227,057 at the time of Israel's offensive. This is the basis for our calculation. See footnote 7 for more demographics and references.



of the households said they would need more than 5,000 NIS to renovate, or rebuild, their homes.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 1 Expected repair costs. Percentage of households by assessed cost to put the dwelling back in pre-war condition (n=2,019)**



Out of all households with dwellings in need of repair, one in ten had already started to renovate their homes, one in four (26 percent) revealed they had concrete repair plans, while two in three (64 percent) had no such plans. Among the latter, the lack of money (mentioned by 80 percent) and building materials (65 percent) were by far the most commonly stated reasons why people did not intend to repair their homes, at this time.

Those households that had already started to renovate their homes, or that said they had concrete plans for repair activities, were asked about how they would cover the expenses. Two out of five households said they would draw on savings and one in five (21 percent) would rely on support from relatives. A slightly higher share of the households (24 percent) expected assistance from UNRWA while one in ten (12 percent) reported support from an Islamic charity. Somewhat fewer households claimed assistance from international and local NGOs (seven and six percent, respectively) or said they would benefit from a savings club (*jamiyyah*) or borrow money (three and four percent). Four percent mentioned other sources of funding.<sup>11</sup>

### Six in ten households live in a *hara* with destroyed residential buildings

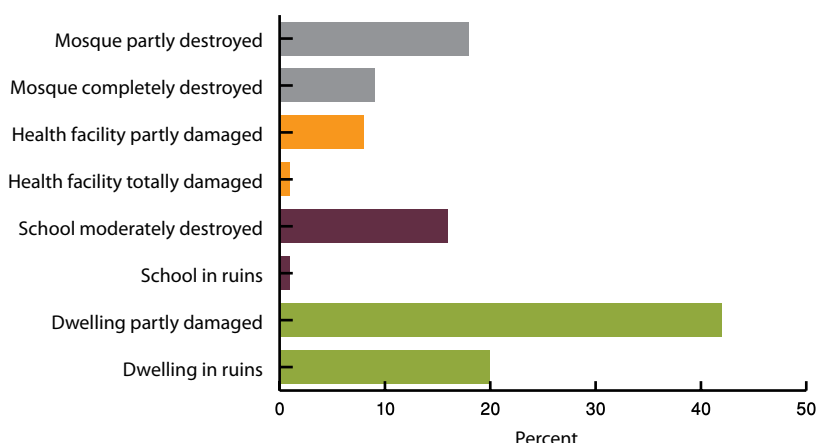
The survey attempted to collect information about the magnitude of the destructions resulting from the Israeli assault by posing questions not only about the residence of the interviewed household but also to include questions about the physical conditions of people's immediate surroundings and neighbourhoods (*hara*). Some of the results are shown in figure 2. One in five informed us that their living area contained residential buildings in ruins and two in five (42 percent) reported that houses in their area had been partly damaged. Merely two out of five households (38 percent) covered by the survey lived in neighbourhoods where residential housing was essentially unharmed by the war. Nearly two in five households had moderately or totally destroyed schools in their neighbourhood, one in ten reported a partly or totally damaged health facility nearby while nearly three in ten households had a partly or completely destroyed mosque in their *hara*.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> When the hostilities ended, 1 US Dollar (USD) was worth 3.85 New Israeli Shekel (NIS). Thus, 1,000 NIS would equal approximately 260 USD.

<sup>11</sup> More than one source was allowed so the sum is higher than 100 percent.

<sup>12</sup> When considering these numbers one should note that 29 percent of the households do not have a neighbourhood school that could be destroyed, 36 percent reported no health facility in their *hara*, and seven percent lack a mosque nearby.

**Figure 2 Percentage of households residing in a hara where private dwellings (n=1,988), schools (n=1,1983), health facilities (n=1,994) and mosques (n=2,001) where damaged by the war**



While these figures cannot serve as a basis for assessing the overall damages at a community level, they are indicative of the share magnitude of the destructions that the Israeli war machine inflicted on Gaza’s population during three weeks of bombardment and, later, land invasion. Few, if any, Palestinians in Gaza were spared the atrocities.

**Two hours of electricity daily; many homes cold at night**

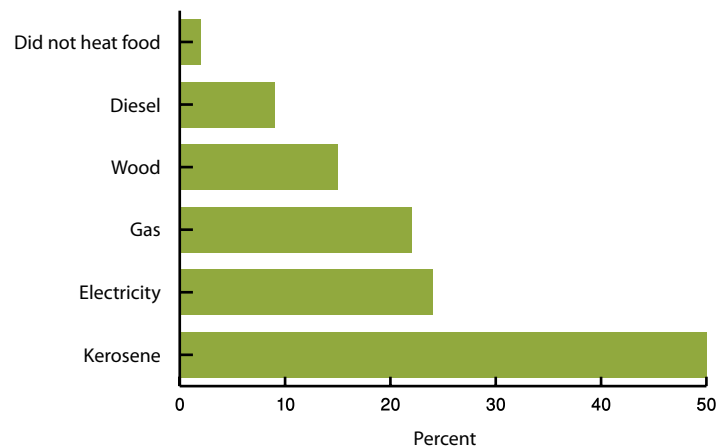
As we have seen above, some households reported damages to water pipes, the sewage system, the electricity network, etc. due to the warfare. The survey further enquired about the status of some of these services at the time of the interview (early March). Below are some results.

Except very few (one percent), the vast majority of households in Gaza rely on electricity to be delivered through the public grid. The day preceding the interview, people (those connected to the network) reported receiving two hours and 12 minutes of electricity through the network, on average.

The survey examined the sorts of energy people had used for cooking the day preceding the interview. As shown by figure 3, one-half had used kerosene, while one fourth had used electricity and nearly as many mentioned gas. Fifteen percent of Gaza’s households had used wood for cooking purposes and nearly one in ten had benefitted from diesel. A few households (two percent) said they had not heated food the day in question.<sup>13</sup>

13 More than one source was mentioned by some households. Consequently, the sum is higher than 100 percent.

**Figure 3 Sources of energy used to prepare food the day preceding the interview; multiple answers allowed (n=2,015)**



Six in ten households informed the survey team that they were unable to keep the dwelling sufficiently warm at night. This is far from surprising given the fact that one or more windows in half the dwellings had been broken during the war, and that repair had often not started. Not only could many households not afford new windows, at the time of fieldwork window glass was a rare commodity in Gaza due to the Israeli blockade in effect since the summer of 2007. Obviously, poverty and the lack of fuel also prevented many households from adequately heating their living quarters.

With regard to water, one in four of Gaza's households rely solely on delivery through the network. Another 62 percent are connected to the water network, but combine this source with additional sources of water. These other sources of water are tanker trucks, reported by 11 percent of all households, and private and public wells, reported by five and four percent, respectively. A few households (two percent) said they received water from other households, while nearly two out of every three households (62 percent) reported that they supplemented water from these various sources with bottled water (small bottles of drinking water or larger quantities of water, typically 20 litres) bought at the nearby store. Seven in ten households (72 percent) were of the opinion that the water supply was adequate for the household.

We investigated how long time every day that people received piped water. The result is as follows: 13 percent of all households did not have piped water, 19 percent did not know how many hours a day they received piped water, 25 percent had water continuously, 15 percent told us they received water more than 12 hours a day, ten percent had water from six to 11 hours whereas 18 percent received piped water five hours or less daily.

The sewage system was working appropriately in a large majority of dwellings (87 percent). In six percent of the dwellings, there were problems while the sewage system was totally defunct in seven percent of all houses.

Domestic waste was collected from nine in ten households (88 percent) the week preceding the interview.

# 27

## Household economy and needs

The economy of Gaza, as that of the West Bank, was previously well integrated into the Israeli economy. A considerable proportion of Gaza's labour force worked there, Israel was the key market for farm produce, and consumer goods were imported from Israel, and so forth. In fact Gaza's economy was so deeply dependent on Israel's that the Israeli closure policies which started in the early 1990s during the 'Oslo' era over time have destroyed it. This continuing 'de-development' of Gaza has led to levels of joblessness, poverty and deprivation not previously observed in the post-Oslo Palestinian Territories (Roy 2007, see also Farsakh 2008). People of Gaza are still very dependent, but nowadays the dependency is on foreign aid (Le More 2008, World Bank 2009). Only more porous borders, i.e. the free movement of people and goods in and out of the Gaza Strip can trigger economic growth and, eventually, lead to an economy able to sustain the welfare provisions and other functions of a modern state, and ensure people employment, a stable income and decent living standards. Yet even an optimistic scenario with substantial relaxation of Israeli movement restrictions and closures will yield a real income per capita in 2011 for the total Palestinian economy which is significantly below its level in 2000 (World Bank 2009).

The current imprisonment of the Palestinians in Gaza leaves them with limited control over own lives, and that of own children and other dependants, a situation which tends to cause despair, frustration, anger, depression, insecurity, distress, etc. Such psychological consequences of occupation, which undoubtedly were aggravated further by Israel's 23-day military operation, will be tackled later. In this section we present statistics on employment and income as seen through the lenses of this survey. In doing so, we describe the situation both before and after the armed conflict. We further examine how the population's overall deprived economic condition and the circumstances of the war affected their food intake. Next we present

information regarding the extent to which households rely on assistance of various sorts, and what they consider their principal needs. Finally, this section provides statistics on the availability of different durable goods in Gaza households.

### **Thirty-three percent of men, five percent of women employed**

Perhaps needless to say but holding a paid job or generating adequate income through self-employment of sorts is paramount to securing a decent living standard in the Gaza Strip, as elsewhere in the world. Work-related income, however, is scarce in Gaza, and has been so for several years as a consequence of the Israeli security regime, and specifically its blockade and isolation of the area. The total destruction of large parts of the private sector has rendered public employment more crucial, yet there is a limit to how many people the public sector can absorb given the meagre resources at the disposal of the PA and the Hamas Government in Gaza. This is so notwithstanding the vast sums of foreign assistance being pumped into the two authorities (UNDP 2008; World Bank 2009).

This subsection will describe people's connection to the labour market in Gaza in March 2009. Employment was simply captured by asking people if they held 'income-generating work'. Any employment of this kind would qualify, even if for one hour weekly, as long as it resulted in income in cash or kind. The survey did not examine whether a person was a job-seeker and thus according to ILO's framework for labour force surveys should be coded as 'unemployed' and be included as a 'member of the workforce'. However, we know from other sources that unemployment stands at extremely high levels, and grew from 30 percent in 2007 to a stunning 40 percent in 2008 (UNDP 2008; World Bank 2009). The survey's main objective was to gauge how the employment situation had been affected by the Israeli armed assault on the Gaza Strip, and our simple measure served that purpose.

Table 2 provides the broad picture. Just over one fifth of all adults, 22 percent, had been employed prior to the June 2007 blockade of the Gaza Strip, 19 percent had been working at the onset of Israel's war on Gaza while a similar proportion of people was employed the week before the interview. Whereas 40 percent of men had been employed before the blockade, that figure had fallen to 33 percent since. Approximately five percent of women at the age of 15 and older had been employed at the three points in time. Statistically speaking, the overall employment level two months after Israel's attack on Gaza was similar to what it had been before. However, as we shall see below, the composition of employers had been altered somewhat.

**Table 2 Employment status of adults aged 15 and over; in percent (n=7,538)**

		Employed before the blockade (June 2007)	Employed before the Gaza war	Employed past week	Sample size
All		22	19	19	7,538
Age	15-19	2	2	2	1,790
	20-24	13	13	14	1,366
	25-29	32	28	26	909
	30-39	40	36	36	1,331
	40-49	38	30	31	1,042
	50-59	34	22	22	574
	60+	12	7	6	526
Gender	Male	40	33	33	3,779
	Female	5	5	5	3,759
Refugee	Yes	23	20	20	5,086
	No	21	17	16	2,447
Highest completed education	Not completed any level	14	9	9	864
	Elementary	23	16	15	913
	Basic	13	11	11	2,387
	Secondary	21	17	17	2,182
	Higher education	48	47	47	1,177

As can be seen from the Table, people’s access to gainful employment is strongly associated with education level. The employment rate of people with higher education is two to four times higher than for people with a different educational background. For example, nearly half of them (47 percent) were employed in the week prior to the interview as compared with 11 percent of those with basic schooling and 17 percent of people with a certificate from secondary education. The robust effect of education on employment is visualized in figure 4, which demonstrates how crucial higher education is to bring women into work life and paid employment. Among the eight percent of women with higher education in Gaza, the employment rate is at roughly the same level (26 percent) as for men without higher education. Among the 92 percent of Gaza’s women with maximum a secondary degree, just one to two percent are employed. Nearly two in three of the ten percent of men in the highest education category are gainfully employed.

The employment rate for Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip is slightly higher than the rate for non-refugees (20 *versus* 16 percent). This could at least partly be explained by the higher prevalence of post-secondary education among the refugees as compared with non-refugees than (9.9 *versus* 7.7 percent). A second explanation is that refugees, as opposed to non-refugees, and as will be demonstrated below, have access to work with UNRWA.

**Figure 4 Labour force participation past week; adults aged 15 and over by gender and educational attainment (n=7,538)**

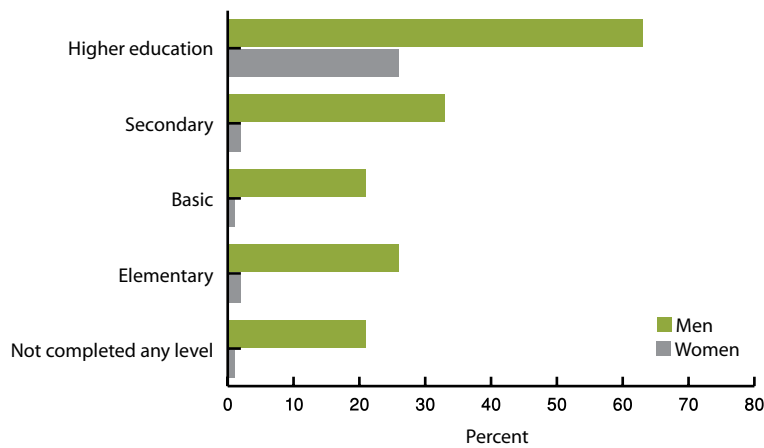
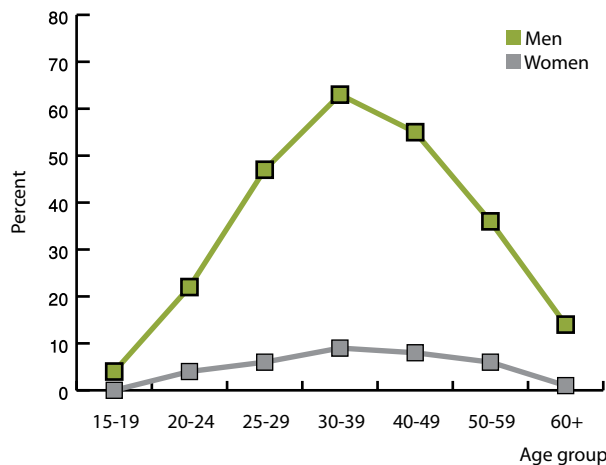


Figure 5 shows how male and female employment varies across age groups. It is very uncommon before the age of twenty and peaks at the 30-39 year age group for both women and men, albeit at a much lower level for women.

**Figure 5 Employment past week; adults aged 15 and over by gender and age (n=7,538)**



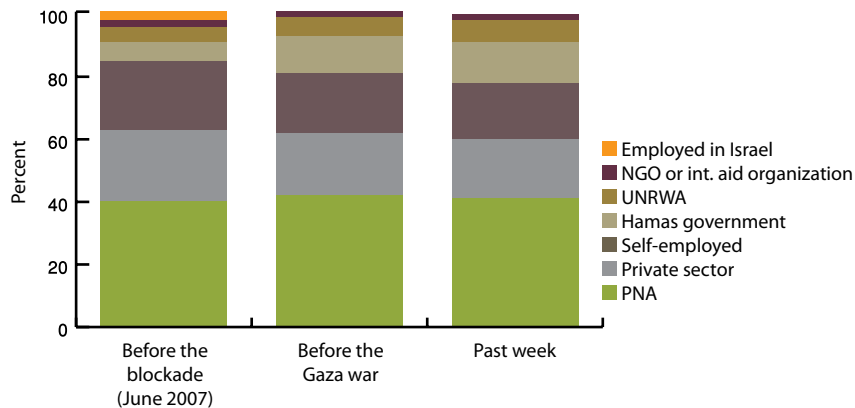
**The relative importance of the Hamas government as an employer doubled since June 2007; UNRWA a significant employer of women**

Figure 6 shows how the members of Gaza's work force are distributed across types of employers and sector of work at three points in time. It illustrates well how the relative importance of public employment has increased while the private sector's relative significance has contracted since Israel toughened its closure policies on the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2007. If anything, this trend developed further with the recent military offensive against Gaza.

Before the 2007 blockade, the PA was the largest employer with 40 percent of all the employed on its payroll. Twenty-three percent held a job in the private sector and as many, 22 percent of the labour force, earned their income from self-employment. The self-employed consist of people with very mixed backgrounds and professions, ranging from street peddlers to farmers and medical doctors running their own private sector businesses. At the time, the Hamas government employed six percent and five percent worked with UNRWA while four percent received their earnings from employment in Israel. A few worked for NGOs and international aid organizations.

As shown, things changed with the onset of the blockade. In relative terms, the significance of private sector jobs and self-employment dropped somewhat and employment with the Hamas government doubled. In December 2008, before the Israeli attack on Gaza, 12 percent of the employed held jobs with the local authorities. The Israeli labour market was completely out of reach. After the war, the relative significance of the Hamas government as an employer had increased even further as 13 percent of the employed now worked there. PA's importance as an employer remained stable, while UNRWA at the time of the survey had seven percent of the labour force on its pay-roll.

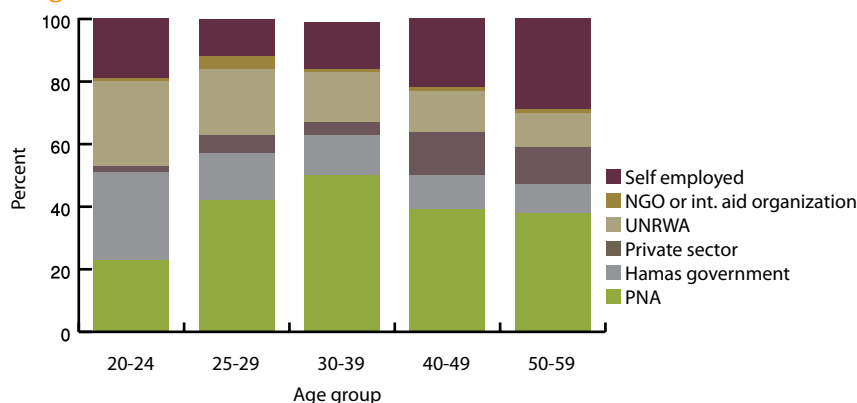
**Figure 6 Type of employer/ sector of employment at three points in time: June 2007 (n=1,684), just before the war on Gaza (n=1,429), and the week preceding the fieldwork (n=1,409)**



UNRWA is a very significant employer of women. At the time of the survey, the UN agency had 21 percent of employed women on their pay-roll as compared with five percent of working men. Not surprisingly UNRWA also predominantly employs refugees, and only very few non-refugees work there. More surprising, perhaps, is the fact that refugees more often than non-refugees take their salaries from the PA and the Hamas government (42 and 16 percent *versus* 34 and nine percent, respectively), while non-refugees more frequently have jobs or are self-employed in the private sector (23 and 31 percent *versus* 16 and 15 percent). Presumably, the main explanation for the higher relative concentration of refugees in the public sphere is their overall better education, which makes them better equipped for bureaucratic responsibilities as well as for positions in the large education and health sectors.

The youngest adults more often work for the Hamas government and have paid jobs in the private sector than others, and less frequently work for the PA and are self-employed figure 7. For example, in the 20-24 year age group (13 percent of all employed at the time of the survey) nearly six in ten received salaries from the local government or private sector jobs, while in the 30-39 years age group (33 percent of all employed) only half that many did.

**Figure 7 Type of employer/ sector of employment for the employed aged 20-59 by age groups; the week preceding the interview (n=1,340)**

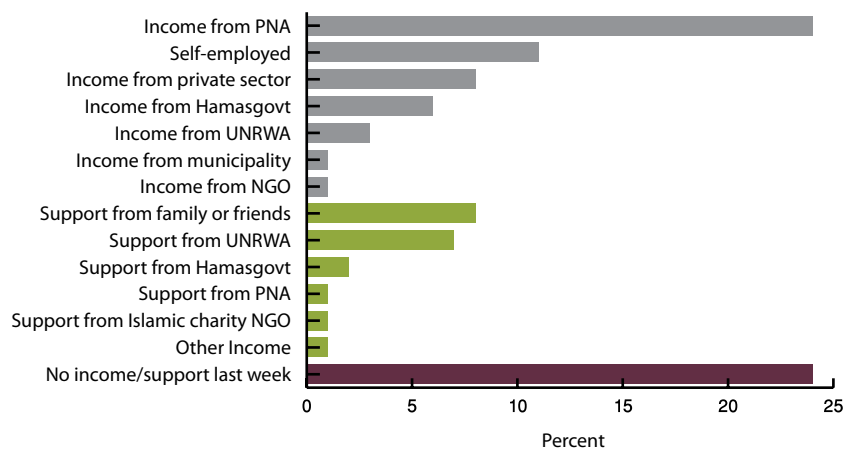




### Employment income most important income source for just over half the households; one in five report assistance as their key income

In keeping with the distribution of employment, when asked to identify their most important source of income the week preceding the interview, just above half the households (55 percent) reported income from employment. The most commonly mentioned source was salary from the PA (nearly a fourth of all households), followed by self-employment, income from employment in the private sector and wage from the Hamas government (Figure 8). Instead of work-related incomes, a substantial proportion of the households, nearly one in five, referred to various sources of assistance as their most crucial income. Support from family and friends, and UNRWA top the list. Virtually a quarter of all households claimed they had neither employment income nor income in the form of assistance the week before the interview, a lucid illustration of the harsh conditions under which the people of Gaza live.

**Figure 8 Main household income source the week before the interview (n=2,014)**



The desperate economic situation in Gaza continued to deteriorate with the recent war. Indeed according to the survey, the household economy of nearly two thirds of the households (63 percent) had worsened compared to six months before. As indicated by this self-assessment measure, the economy of a third of the households (35 percent) had remained stable while it had improved for a tiny minority only (two percent). Refugee camp households seem to have fared slightly better than many other households as ‘only’ 57 percent reported a deterioration of their economic conditions. Furthermore, households where the head held a post-secondary degree were somewhat better off than other households, as ‘only’ 56 percent reported a poorer economic situation than half a year earlier.

### Seven in ten households unable to secure their basic needs

The grim economic circumstances in Gaza is also reflected in the fact that only three in ten households (32 percent) thought they would be able to secure their basic needs the coming three months. Rural households less frequently than other households reported they would manage to secure their basic needs (15 percent), as did those households that reported no employment income the past week (18 percent). Households with heads lacking education beyond elementary school were also more vulnerable according to this measure, as only one in five households claimed they could cover the household’s basic needs the three next months.

The survey posed the following hypothetical question: If your household had a sudden need for 1,000 NIS, would you be able to raise the money in a week, and if yes, how? Six in ten households answered that this would be impossible while another seven percent doubted they would manage it. This suggests a deterioration of the income situation as compared with 12 months before when in a comparative survey 52 percent said it would be impossible to

raise 1,000 NIS (Fafo 2008: Table 4.9). One in ten households (11 percent) said they would use savings and two in ten households said they would raise 1,000 NIS with help from family and friends. In last year's survey, 27 percent thought they might manage to scrape together the specified amount with the support of private networks (Fafo 2008: Table 4.9), an indication that people's coping strategies are about to be depleted. A few other households (two percent) reported that they would get the sum through other networks or savings clubs. As with other indicators on economic standing, households where the head has higher education and had employment income the week preceding the survey was slightly better off, on average. Rural households faced the largest difficulties.

The majority that thought they would not manage to come up with 1,000 NIS if an unexpected need should arise were asked how long their circumstances had been so difficult. While a few (four percent) answered that the situation was not that difficult, 17 percent said it had been hard a long time or always, 28 percent stated it had been like that since the eruption of the 2<sup>nd</sup> intifada, nearly one-half of the households (48 percent) thought their circumstances had been difficult since the June 2007 blockade, whereas only three percent attributed their economic misfortune to the recent war. Even among those households that had their dwelling completely destroyed, very few blamed the hostilities for their economic problems. The hardship had simply set in before.

To conclude on household economy: although some groups manage somewhat better than others, the general trend is one of gradual deterioration. The incidence of poverty has grown and has deepened over time, and while poverty rates vary between publications due to disparity in methodologies and data sources, rates as high as 70 and 80 percent have been reported (UNDP 2007, 2009; OCHA 2008; UNRWA 2009; World Bank 2009).

### **Widespread reduction of food intake during Israel's military campaign**

The survey investigated how people's dire strait in general, and the circumstances of the war specifically had affected their food intake. Food security is defined as a state in which 'all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life' (FAO 1998). Because this is a complex, multidimensional concept, measuring food security, or insecurity, is a challenge both to researchers and practitioners. In recent years, simple indicators based on the household's own perception of adequate access of food have been developed and tested, and these have proven to be as valid as more complex, data-intensive indicators such as dietary intake and income (Coates et al. 2007).

The questions on household food insecurity used in this survey were inspired by the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) developed by USAID's Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (Coates et al. 2007). The original questions were adapted to the situation at hand in that mainly questions on insufficient food intake were included. We asked if the interviewed household had experienced a list of conditions during Israel's military operations, and if yes, whether the condition had occurred every day, often, sometimes, rarely or never.

Forty-three percent of the households declared that they had reduced the food intake every day or often during the war, 36 percent had lacked a hot meal every day or often due to the lack of food, one in three households (33 percent) had adults who reduced their food intake to ensure that children had enough to eat every day or often (15 and 17 percent, respectively), and one in ten households (nine percent) admitted having fasted involuntarily for a whole day repeatedly due to the lack of food – an indicator of severe lack of foodstuff.

Due to exceptional circumstances many childless households shared meals with households with children below 15 years of age. This explains why adults in 16 percent of households without children said they reduced the food intake to help ensure that children received enough food every day or often. Some also cut back on own consumption to share with children of relatives and friends although they did not actually eat together. According to UNIFEM (2009: 39-41) boys were sometimes given priority over girls when scarce food resources were allocated, while elderly men appeared the most vulnerable in the intra-household food distribution process.

More than three in four households (76 percent) had experienced at least one of the above four situations (reduced food intake; reduced food intake to ensure that children had enough to eat, lacked hot meals, involuntarily fasted) at least sometimes during the assault on Gaza, and thus could be characterized as somewhat food insecure.

A simple food insecurity index was created by adding the responses the households had given to each of the four insufficiency questions. The value 0 signified rarely/never, 1 signified sometimes and the value 2 was given if the situation had occurred often/every day. Thus, the values for the four questions summed up would give a maximum score of 8, implying that the household had answered “often/every day” to all questions. Results are shown in figure 9. Just about ten percent of the households had a score of 7 or 8.

**Figure 9 Household food insecurity index. The higher the score the more problems ensuring that the household and its members had enough to eat during Israel's military campaign against Gaza (n=2,017)**

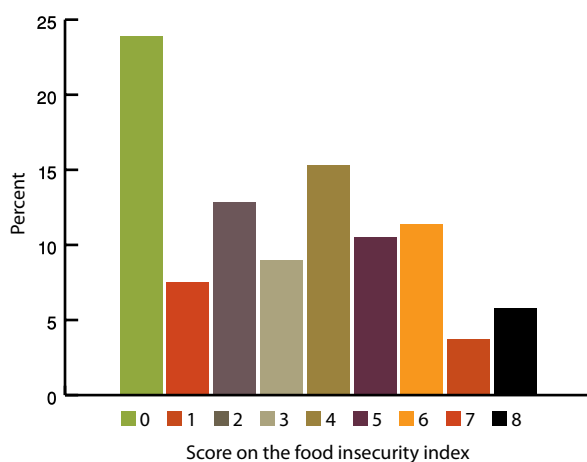


Table 3 presents variation across the food insecurity index according to different background factors. It shows that being among the 21 percent of the households with a food insecurity score of 6-8, i.e. being most vulnerable to food shortage was associated with living in rural areas compared with living in urban area, whereas people residing in refugee camps experienced less vulnerability. More exposure to food scarcity was further associated with households containing children below 15 years of age, large household size, having no income or support, owning few household amenities (low score on the asset index<sup>14</sup>), having a household head with low education, having a middle-aged household head and residing in a male-headed household.

14 See separate subsection on durables and footnote 18 for details about the construction of the asset index.

**Table 3 Score on the food insecurity index by asset index, income, household type and size, type of living area, and gender, age and education of household head (n=7,538); in percent**

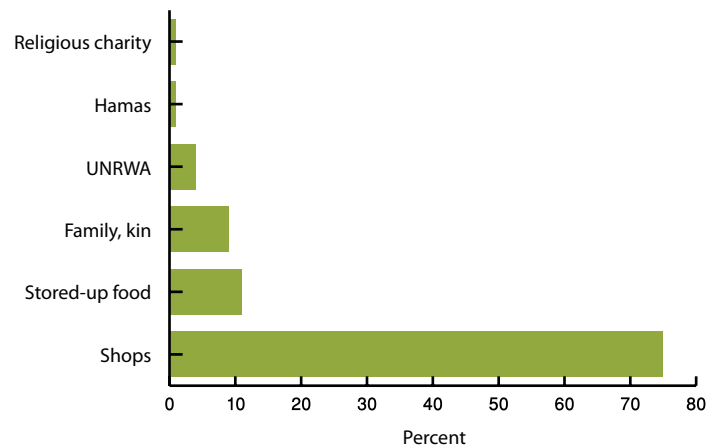
		0 (Not vulnerable)	1-3 (Low vulner- ability)	4-5 (Medium vulner- ability)	6-8 (High vulner- ability)	Total	Sample size
Asset index	Lowest	12	19	29	40	100	438
	Lowest	17	24	33	26	100	445
	Medium	21	31	30	18	100	341
	High	29	39	19	13	100	417
	Highest	40	34	19	7	100	374
Income last week	Income	29	34	22	15	100	1,106
	No income, support of any sort	17	23	31	29	100	905
Household type	Household with child<15	22	29	26	23	100	1,629
	Household without child<15	33	32	23	12	100	386
Household size	1-3	35	33	23	9	100	351
	4-6	25	29	26	20	100	664
	7-9	21	29	25	25	100	689
	10+	15	26	31	29	100	311
Area	Urban	22	30	25	23	100	1,245
	Rural	9	26	30	35	100	121
	Refugee camp	30	29	26	16	100	649
Type of area	Camp	30	29	26	16	100	649
	Non-camp	21	30	26	24	100	1,366
Gender of household head	Male	23	29	26	21	100	1,864
	Female	29	29	27	16	100	151
Age of household head	<29	25	31	26	18	100	313
	30-39	21	32	24	23	100	613
	40-49	22	27	27	25	100	549
	50-59	23	29	30	18	100	306
	60+	32	28	23	16	100	233
Education of household head	Not completed any level	17	23	29	30	100	267
	Elementary	18	23	31	28	100	312
	Basic	19	31	26	24	100	416
	Secondary	25	31	26	18	100	509
	Higher education	34	33	20	13	100	506
All		24	29	26	21	100	2,015

Exactly how the above findings regarding food insecurity translates into the situation weeks after the armed conflict is uncertain as these questions were merely asked for the war period. However, while the level of food insecurity may be different, it is not unlikely that those hardest hit are households in the same groups.

### **One in ten households rely on relatives for crucial food staples**

The survey inquired from where the households received their most important food staples the week preceding the interview figure 10. Three quarters bought their groceries in shops; one in ten households mainly used food they had stored up while a similar share of households relied on close family or other kin. The occasional household was dependent on food distribution by UNRWA, Hamas or a religious organization. Yet as we shall see later, a much higher percentage of Gaza households benefit from food aid, which for many makes up a significant *supplementary* source of foodstuff.

**Figure 10 Origin of most important foodstuff used past week (n=2,009)**

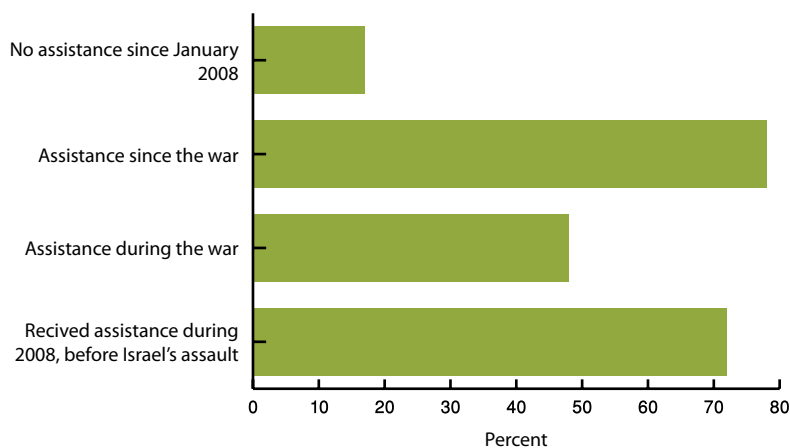


In addition to the food security questions above concentrating on shortage of food, the survey informs us that more than one-half of the households (55 percent) had to skip hot meals daily or often during Israel's assault due to the lack of cooking gas. As will be shown below, this was not a problem that was particular to the three-week war, but was one of the key challenges to people's welfare six to eight weeks later and which is a direct consequence of the Israeli economic embargo on the Gaza Strip.

**Assistance dropped during the hostilities but soared soon after**

Seven in ten households (72 percent) admitted having received some sort of institutional assistance (as opposed to help from relatives and friends) during 2008 and before Israel's assault on Gaza 27 December figure 11. Nearly half the households (48 percent) received institutional assistance during the war, a significant drop in recipient households as compared with the situation before the war. After cessation of hostilities, the number of households which received aid soared once more as 78 percent had received such support in the weeks since. Only 17 percent of all households said they had not received institutional assistance in any form since the beginning of 2008.

**Figure 11 Percentage of households that had received assistance since January 2008 by time period (n=2,017)**



Those households that received assistance during the war reported the following types of assistance: 27 percent mentioned having received free health care, 24 percent had received food<sup>15</sup>, and 20 percent mentioned free health insurance while two percent of the households

<sup>15</sup> This is significantly higher than reported previously: According to a telephone survey, less than 17 percent had received food aid during Israel's operations and the week after (UNDP 2009:39-43).

had received cash. The picture changed dramatically after the war, suggesting that it was very difficult for the service providers to operate during the military campaign. As mentioned above, nearly four in five households (78 percent) had received some sort of institutional help after the war. The following list specifies the kind of assistance they had received (comparison with *before* the war in parenthesis): food aid 67 percent (49 percent)<sup>16</sup>, free health care 41 percent (43 percent), health insurance 24 percent (31 percent), cash support 17 percent (11 percent), employment through job-creation schemes one percent (three percent). Such numbers are a testimony to the serious situation the Gaza population was facing, but also suggests that major efforts were made to help alleviate the sufferings of the people.

Apparently, food and cash aid had a much wider outreach after the war than it had before Israel's attack. However, the Fafo-UNFPA survey suggests that these forms of assistance may not have been as well targeted in the aftermath of the hostilities as before. Consider Table 4. While the relative significance of food and money assistance increased with falling socio-economic status (education of household head) before the war (in 2008), that tendency was less evident two months after the cessation of hostilities. Further, while households without income (past week) received food aid more frequently than those that reported income before the war, the difference was insignificant in March 2009. A similar conclusion can be drawn when considering the sex of the household head. As the Table shows, the gap in the provision of food and cash aid between female-headed households, which tend to be more vulnerable and poverty-prone than male-headed households, and male-headed households has been closed. On the other hand, the distribution of food and particularly cash aid benefitted children to a higher degree in March 2009 than in 2008, something that might reflect an intentional and planned, albeit perhaps temporary, shift in the targeting strategy of aid providers.

**Table 4 Percent of households that usually received food and cash aid in 2008 prior to Israel's military offensive against the Gaza Strip and those that had received it the week prior to the survey in 2009 (n=2,018)**

		Food aid		Cash aid		Sample size
		2008	2009	2008	2009	
All		49	67	11	17	2,018
Area	Urban	41	56	7	15	1,248
	Rural	60	84	15	20	121
	Refugee camp	63	85	16	20	649
Household type	Household with child<15	48	67	10	18	1,631
	Household without child<15	54	65	12	12	387
Gender of household head	Male	48	67	10	17	1,866
	Female	60	63	23	20	152
Education of household head	Not completed any level	64	68	18	18	269
	Elementary	59	74	15	24	311
	Basic	55	68	11	19	416
	Secondary	45	68	9	16	511
	Higher education	35	60	5	11	506
Income past week	Income	39	65	7	12	1,108
	No income	62	69	16	22	905

16 This is a slightly higher figure than reported by UNDP (2009:43), which found that by the first week of March 60 percent received some form of food assistance.

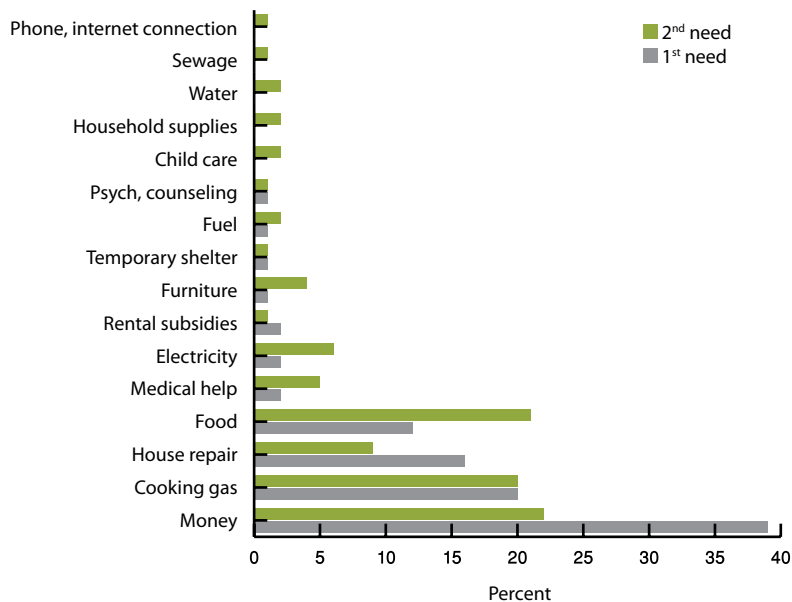
The interviewed households had received support from the following institutions after the war: UNRWA (mentioned by 63 percent of all households, up five percentage points compared with before the war), the PA (17 percent, down four percentage points), the Hamas government (ten percent, up five percentage points), Islamic charities (eight percent, up three percentage points), other Palestinian NGO (ten percent, unchanged), international NGO (three percent, up one percentage point), and then follows municipality or local authority (two percent), Hamas (two percent), Fatah (one percent) and other institution (three percent).<sup>17</sup>

When asked to consider all kinds of help, including from relatives, the household might have received since the cessation of the Israeli attack and to identify the most crucial provider, this became the picture: UNRWA, 53 percent; the PA, five percent; the Hamas government, four percent; relatives and friends, three percent; Islamic charity, three percent; other Palestinian NGO, two percent; Hamas, one percent; and other support, one percent.

### People's greatest needs: cash, cooking gas, house repair and food

The survey requested the households to identify their two most pressing needs at the time. With regards to the top priority, money received the highest score and was mentioned by 39 percent. Cooking gas came second, mentioned by 20 percent of the households, while house repair and food followed as topic three and four, mentioned by 16 and 12 percent, respectively (Figure 12). Other topics such as medical help, rental subsidies, electricity and so forth were mentioned by one to three percent of the households. The list for second priority is dominated by the same concerns but as shown by the graph, other needs, especially food, received a higher share of the 'votes'. Summing up the four key household needs identified by the survey, this becomes the picture: Money (mentioned by 61 percent of the households as their first or second priority), cooking gas (40 percent), food (33 percent) and house repair (25 percent).

**Figure 12 1st (n=1,989) and 2nd (n=1,959) most important need of the household**



There is only limited systematic variation in priorities between households according to their characteristics. Obviously, households whose dwellings were severely or completely damaged by the Israeli attack were more concerned with house repair and rental subsidies than other households, while households with little or no income tended to define their primary need

<sup>17</sup> Some households reported support from more than one source so the total adds up to over 100 percent (despite the fact that 22 percent reported no institutional assistance in the approximately six weeks that had passed since the conclusion of Israel's military offensive).

to be cash more often than other households (49 percent of households that reporting no income past week *versus* 31 percent of other households). Reflecting the fact that rural areas were harder hit by the war than urban centers, rural households more often mentioned house repair as their foremost need (26 percent). Cooking gas is a 'luxury' need more often defined a priority by households with income (27 percent, *versus* 11 percent of households with no income) and where the household head has higher education (32 percent, *versus* ten percent where the head has not completed even elementary level).

### **Durable goods unevenly distributed**

The Fafo-UNFPA survey enquired about the ownership of 25 durable goods. Partly it is of interest to learn about the prevalence of various items and their distribution across segments of the population. Besides, when collected over time, durables, perhaps in combination with various aspects of housing conditions, might serve as indicators of long-term income and wealth and contribute to the understanding of economic development. Furthermore, an indicator constructed from durable goods may serve as a proxy for socio-economic standing in the analysis of other phenomena. That might prove particularly useful when, such as in the case of Gaza, employment income is scarce, unstable and irregular, at least for scores of individuals and households, and income thus may be a weak indicator, for some purposes. We constructed a linear asset-based wealth index derived from the households' durable consumer goods and used it as a background variable in some tables and graphs.<sup>18</sup> Households were distributed in five approximately equally large groups according to their score on the index.

Durables are unevenly distributed in Gaza (Table 5). Households residing in rural areas systematically own less durable goods. As could be expected ownership of durables is positively associated with access to employment income and the educational level of the household head, often the main breadwinner. Domestic appliances like refrigerators and washing machines are found in four of five homes while nine in ten households own a TV and at least one mobile. A computer can be found in every third home, while one in five households has access to the Internet. Only one in ten households owns a car.

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<sup>18</sup> Information other than durables, e.g. on housing conditions, and water and sanitary facilities could also have been used. Principal components analysis (PCA) was applied to derive the weights for each asset indicator. Then all the weighted components were combined to calculate the asset index. The PCA method was used as it has been shown to provide a measure of economic status that has a higher predictive value than other proxies, with regard to for example education status and health outcomes (Filmer and Pritchett 2001, Houweling et al. 2003). In addition to the durables in Table 5, the following items were included in the survey and index construction: gas/electric stove, kerosene/diesel oven, dishwasher, sewing machine, freezer, satellite dish, video player, video camera, photo camera, air conditioner, and motorbike.



**Table 5 Ownership of durable goods (n=2,019); percent of households**

		Refrigerator	Gas or electric oven (heating)	Electric fan	Washing machine	Vacuum cleaner	Mixmaster	TV	DVD player	Ordinary phone	Mobile phone	PC	Internet	Car, truck	Sample size
All		80	32	64	81	13	50	88	4	34	88	33	18	10	2,019
Area	Urban	82	33	63	82	17	52	86	4	36	87	34	19	12	1,249
	Rural	62	19	28	66	5	39	77	1	16	88	14	2	6	121
	Refugee camp	79	31	72	82	7	49	93	3	33	90	35	19	7	649
Household type	Household with child<15	81	33	64	83	13	52	90	4	33	91	34	18	10	1,632
	Household without child<15	75	28	63	72	15	43	81	4	37	76	27	18	9	387
Gender of household head	Male	80	32	64	81	13	51	89	4	34	89	33	18	11	1,867
	Female	79	27	61	75	11	41	79	2	34	75	35	18	2	152
Education of household head	Not completed any level	70	13	46	67	3	29	76	0	18	67	8	4	3	269
	Elementary	76	24	59	79	7	39	86	3	21	84	16	6	7	312
	Basic	77	24	61	80	5	42	88	2	25	88	28	13	11	416
	Secondary	81	34	68	83	11	54	89	5	35	94	38	19	9	511
	Higher education	88	49	74	87	30	70	94	7	56	95	55	34	15	506
Income past week	Income	87	42	71	87	19	62	93	5	45	94	45	26	15	1,108
	No income	71	19	55	73	6	36	82	1	20	80	18	8	3	906

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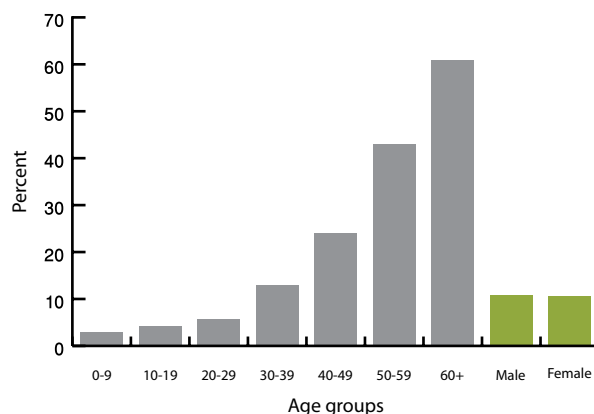
# Health

As we have seen above, in some neighbourhoods health facilities were destroyed during the war, and several households moved because they wanted to be closer to health services. In this section we describe people's health status and help-seeking behaviour during the war.

## Half of the chronically ill in need received inadequate care during the hostilities

According to the survey, approximately one in ten (11 percent) of the Gaza Strip's population suffer from some sort of chronic health failure. Naturally, the prevalence of longstanding health problems increases with age and is twenty times more common among people aged 60 years and above than among children younger than ten (Figure 13). The gender difference is insignificant.

**Figure 13 Prevalence of chronic illness by gender and age (n=13,228)**



Reportedly, two in three chronically ill persons (66 percent) were in need of medical care during Israel's assault on Gaza. Older persons with a permanent health problem wanted care somewhat more often than others (74 percent of

people aged 60 and over as compared with 55 percent of children under the age of 15). Of those who required help from the health care system, 53 percent received adequate care (as judged by the respondents), 27 percent received care that was inadequate, while 20 percent did not receive any help. The children more frequently than other people experienced inadequate care (36 percent) or did not receive any assistance (31 percent). The gender difference was minimal, with women reporting adequate medical care four percentage points more often than men.

The survey enquired what, in people's minds, were the principal reason for receiving inadequate or no medical care (although such care in their opinion was required). As can be seen below, nearly half claimed they were denied help because they could not meet the expenses, while a third cited war-related explanations (n=398):

- Could not afford consultancy or treatment: 46 percent
- Too dangerous to go to the hospital or clinic: 30 percent
- Health facility closed: four percent
- Health facility destroyed or so packed with war victims that it lacked capacity: three percent
- Lack of a nearby facility: five percent
- Self-treatment: one percent
- Other reason: 11 percent

### **Half of those in need of care after acute health failure during Israel's offensive were prevented due to the warfare**

Two to three percent of Gaza's population suffered from acute illness during the war period, they were injured by the warfare, or they experienced severe distress and other psychological symptoms triggered by the war. There were only marginal differences between population groups. Notably, individuals younger than 20 years of age, particularly those below ten, and those older than 60, suffered fewer injuries than other people. On the other hand, children and youth were more prone to experience problems caused by distress than others. The elderly somewhat more frequently than other people suffered from an acute somatic health failure during the three weeks or so the assault lasted.

Two in three (66 percent) of those who became abruptly ill or suffered from war injuries sought medical care. The survey explored the reasons why people did not receive medical examination or treatment following acute illness or injury, and these were the answers (n=106):

- Did not require treatment or care: 35 percent
- Too dangerous to reach hospital or clinic: 26 percent
- Facilities lacked capacity due to (more severe) war injuries: ten percent
- Could not afford care: ten percent
- Lack of a nearby facility: eight percent
- Self-treatment: four percent
- Other reasons: five percent

A third, or approximately half of those who said that treatment and care was needed, was prevented by the war situation. One in ten of all with a sudden illness, approximately 15 percent of those in need of health care, did not seek such care for economic reasons. Compared with the need of the chronically ill for health care and follow-up related to the permanent health problem, poverty was less of an impediment for health-seeking behaviour following injury and acute illness. The overall picture seems to be that health services are predominantly provided for free or at reasonable costs, so a vast majority of the population can access them. Yet, a considerable number of persons cannot afford medical care, a testimony to the difficult economic circumstances prevailing in the Gaza Strip.

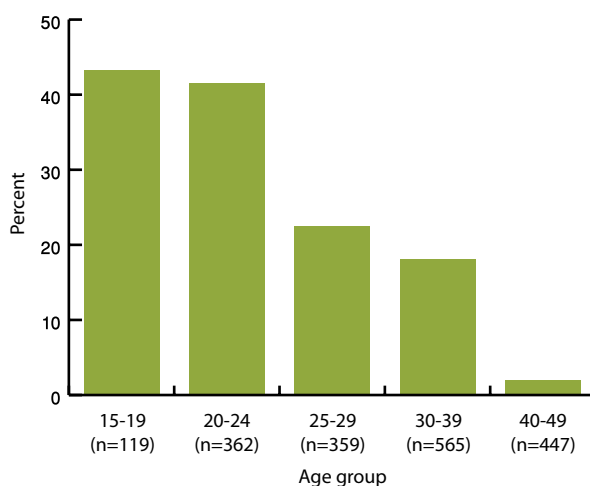
The vast majority of people with acute illness or injury, and who received care, were diagnosed and treated by a medical specialist (52 percent) or general practitioner (35 percent) while some people went straight to a pharmacist (ten percent). A few saw a nurse only (two percent), or consulted a traditional healer (also two percent), and a handful just consulted a non-professional relative.

The acutely ill turned to a public hospital or clinic (45 and 11 percent, respectively), they received care at a privately owned hospital or clinic (six and nine percent, respectively), or they visited a health facility run by UNRWA (14 percent). Six percent received consultation or treatment at home and ten percent saw the pharmacist at a pharmacy.

### Many women denied pregnancy care due to the hostilities

More than one fifth (21 percent) of all married women aged 15-49 had been pregnant (or gave birth) during the three months before the interview. Figure 14 shows prevalence by age.

**Figure 14 Prevalence of pregnancy among currently married women aged 15-49 by age groups (n=1,852)**



Nine in ten of those who had children in the reference period, 88 percent to be exact, gave birth at a public or private hospital (75 and 13 percent, respectively), less than one percent were home deliveries, while the remaining births occurred at a health centre of sorts, mostly private clinics (seven percent of all deliveries). This finding is in accordance with official statistics, which show that 99 percent of all deliveries in the Gaza Strip has occurred under safe conditions at health institutions since the year 2000 (PCBS 2008: Fig. 6) The youngest mothers (aged 15-24) more often than others gave birth at a private facility (11 percent). Doctors supervised 84 percent of all deliveries while midwives and nurses assisted 14 percent of them. Having no professional support occurred rarely, in less than one percent of all cases.

Nearly two thirds of the pregnant women and those that had given birth recently (62 percent) received pre- or post-natal care during the war, somewhat less frequently among women above the age of 34 (received by 52 percent). Four in ten of the women that did not receive such care wanted it but were prevented by warfare: travel was too dangerous (34 percent); the health facility had ceased operating (five percent); the health facility (within reach) was filled with war victims (two percent); or the facility was destroyed by shelling (one percent). Seven percent acknowledged not receiving pre- or post-natal follow-up due to economic reasons. UNRWA facilities (37 percent), public clinics (26 percent), private clinics (15 percent) and public hospitals (14 percent) provided most of the pregnancy care.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> For obvious reasons, notably the reference period, our data are not comparable to PCBS statistics showing that virtually all pregnant

Overall, the Fafo-UNFPA survey confirms earlier reports by the UNFPA (2009a) and WHO (2009) that although access to health care was generally hampered by security constraints, and that maternal and child health care services were disrupted, maternity assistance was highly prioritized and provided in most cases, despite the difficult environment and sometimes in improvised settings. This survey does not gauge the quality of care provided, however, but the assessment carried out by the United Nations Population Fund suggested that quality was significantly reduced as a consequence of the hostilities, resulting in e.g. increased infant mortality (UNFPA 2009a).

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## Living conditions *in the* Gaza Strip

during and after Israel's military campaign in  
the winter of 2008/2009

Evidence from interviews with 2,000  
households

# Psychosocial situation

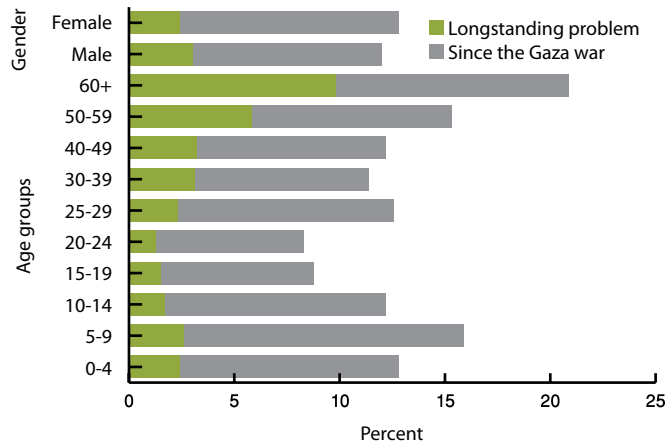
The Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip has paid damaging mental health consequences of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and occupation. Closures, home demolitions, shelling, 'targeted killing' etc. have scared and scarred the population, and particularly children. Symptoms of trauma are well documented by the Gaza Community Health Program (Qouta et al. 2003, Qouta and Sarraj 2004, Sarraj and Qouta 2005) and others (Abdeen et al. 2008). The 23-day Israeli military aggression added to the misery (Thabet et al. 2009).

According to the survey, just about one percent of the population suffered what the respondents themselves understood to be severe acute psychological distress caused by the war. Although the survey was not designed to measure people's psychological health or ill-health in great detail, it aimed to capture how the population in Gaza had been affected by Israel's bombardments and later land incursion, and the ensuing armed battle. The results are presented below. This section also describes people's major worries and concerns and suggests there are many activities that people would like to but cannot undertake.

### **One in ten persons experience sleeping difficulties that started with the hostilities**

As we shall see, a considerable proportion of Gazans reported symptoms of war-related distress several weeks after the withdrawal of Israeli troops and the massive shelling came to a close. For example, 13 percent of the population suffered from sleeping problems the week preceding the interview and for the bulk of them (ten percent of all individuals) the onset of the problem was during or after the war (Figure 15). Children aged 5-9 (especially girls) seem to have been somewhat more affected by this problem while youth aged 15-24 (particularly boys) were bothered slightly less than other age groups.

**Figure 15 Prevalence of sleeping problems past 7 days by gender and age (n=13,230)**



**Fifteen percent of children wet their beds due to the warfare**

A second symptom of distress that the survey investigated was that of involuntary urination while asleep, so-called nocturnal enuresis, in the age-group five to 14. While this phenomenon is far from uncommon in any given ‘normal’ population, the level identified by the Fafo-UNFPA survey was strongly elevated. It was reported that altogether nearly 23 percent of children in the five to 14 age group had a bedwetting problem the week prior to the interview:

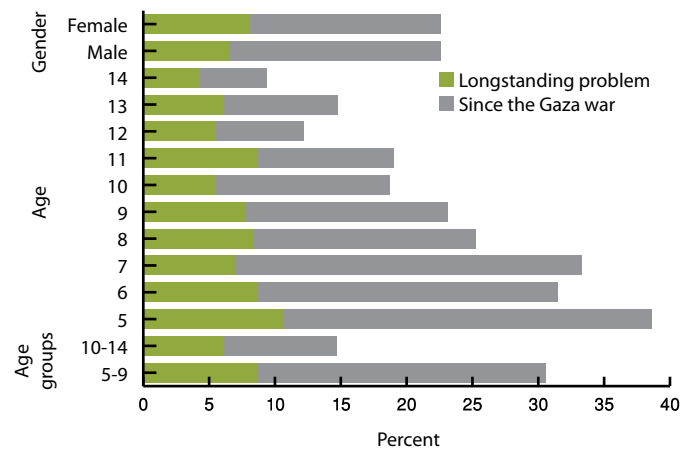
- Seven percent reported bedwetting that had lasted for a long time
- 15 percent of the children had acquired the problem with the Israeli military campaign

The prevalence of previous problems is on a par with that observed for ordinary situations in countries such as Jordan (Alrashed and Bataineh 2007), the United Arab Emirates (Eapen and Mabrouk 2003), Turkey (Serel et al. 1997) and Iran (Pashapour et al. 2008). However, as revealed by the figures just cited, the Israeli assault and the ensuing warfare had tripled the prevalence of unintentional night-time urination in children.

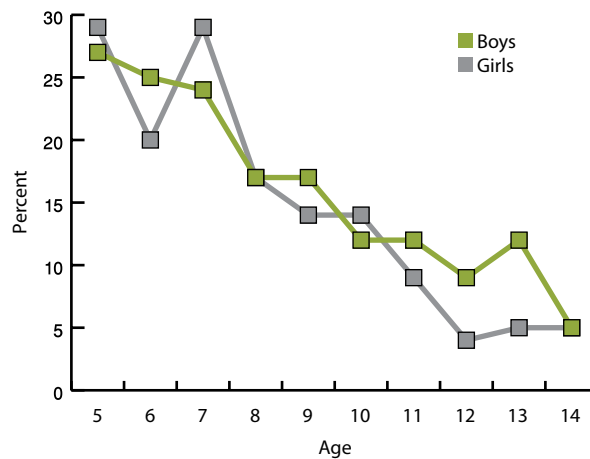
Bedwetting, particularly such problems that had started with the war, occurred much more frequently in younger than older children, but bedwetting caused by the hostilities was even reported for nine percent of children in the 10-14 age group (Figure 16). The survey suggests that girls were somewhat more prone to have bedwetting problems that had lasted for some time, a finding which contradicts that of most other studies which conclude that nocturnal enuresis is more prevalent in boys.

Boys, on the other hand, slightly more often than girls had acquired bedwetting problems during or as a consequence of the Israeli armed offensive (see also figure 17).

**Figure 16 Prevalence of bedwetting past 7 days among children aged 5-14, by gender, age and age groups (n=3,556)**



**Figure 17 Prevalence of bedwetting past 7 days among children aged 5-14 and where the problem was ascribed to the Israeli military campaign against the Gaza Strip, by gender and age (n=3,556)**

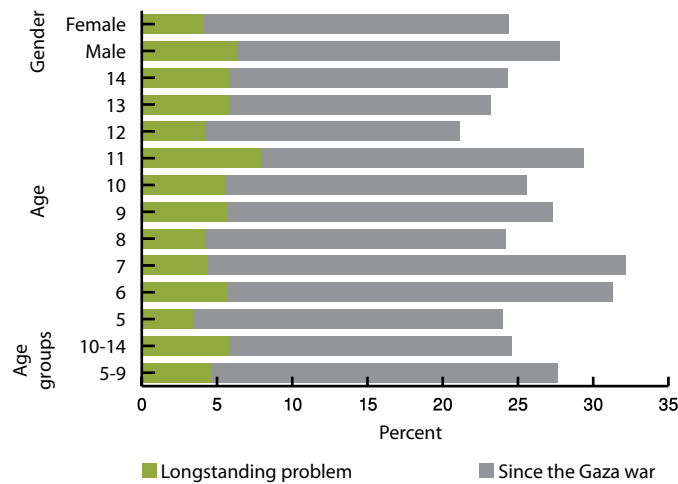


**One in five children have concentration problems due to the warfare**

More than one in four children (26 percent) had problems with their concentration during the seven days before the interview. For four in five children with concentration difficulties (i.e. 21 percent of all children), the problem had arrived with the warfare. Concentration problems, which had commenced with the war, were most widespread among children aged six and seven (with a prevalence of 26 and 28 percent, respectively). While there was no systematic gender difference concerning the overall spread of bedwetting, concentration difficulties were found to be slightly more common among boys than girls (28 versus 24 percent). For details, see figure 18.



**Figure 18 Prevalence of concentration problems past 7 days among children aged 5-14, by gender and age (n=3,546)**



**Symptoms of psychological distress widespread in the adult population**

The information presented in this section thus far is basically collected from proxy respondents (typically a mother or father about his or her children, and one adult about him or herself and other adults in the household). Some underreporting thus might have occurred, particularly, perhaps, concerning sleeping problems of (other) adults.

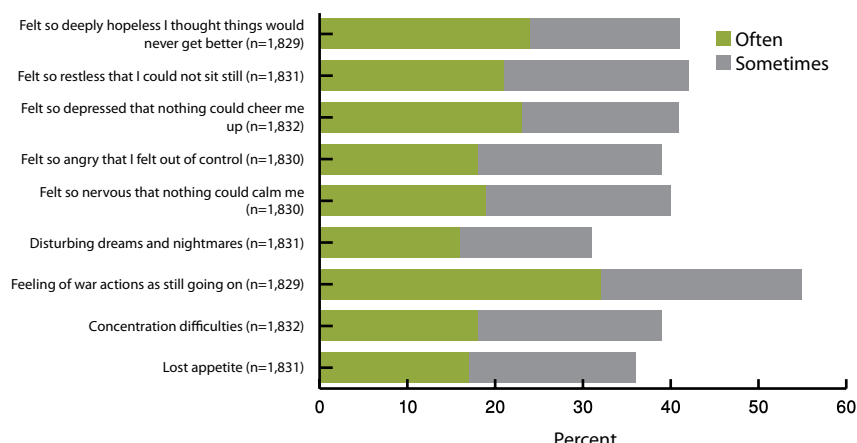
However, the survey also included a battery of questions meant to tap into people’s psychological wellbeing and that were posed directly to one randomly selected adult aged 18 and over in each household. The reference period was the past two weeks. Most of these questions on mental health were suggested by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in the World Health Organization as part of a draft WHO surveillance tool for humanitarian settings.<sup>20</sup> The main purpose was to identify those with severe psychological problems at the symptom level. Given that transient stress reactions are normative in humanitarian settings, standard mental health self-report needs assessment tools (SRQ, GHQ, K6 HSCL, etc) are unlikely useful unless they are revalidated for the disaster-affected context. It should be underscored that the survey results thus can only be analyzed at the symptom level. They do not necessarily give a proxy for disorders as the questions have not been validated for emergencies.

Overall, symptoms of distress were widespread, and as many as 58 percent reported that they experienced at least one of the nine symptoms often during the two weeks preceding the survey and 37 percent reported experiencing at least one of the five severe distress symptoms often during that period.<sup>21</sup> As shown by figure 19, the most prevalently reported symptom was having the feeling of war action as if it were still ongoing (32 percent experienced the feeling often). In terms of severe distress, 23 percent said they often felt so depressed that nothing could cheer them up, and 24 percent often felt so deeply hopeless that they thought things would not improve in the future.

20 Thanks to Dr M van Ommeren, WHO/MSD, who suggested and reviewed the questionnaire with inputs from D Silove, S Chatterji, and R Garfield. Questions MH05-MH09 were adapted from questions from K6/ K10 (Kessler et al. 2002) and WHODAS II (<http://www.who.int/icidh/whodas/>) and are designed to assess extreme distress. (These are the statements beginning with “Felt so ...” in 19.) Questions MH01-MH04 were suggested by local researchers.

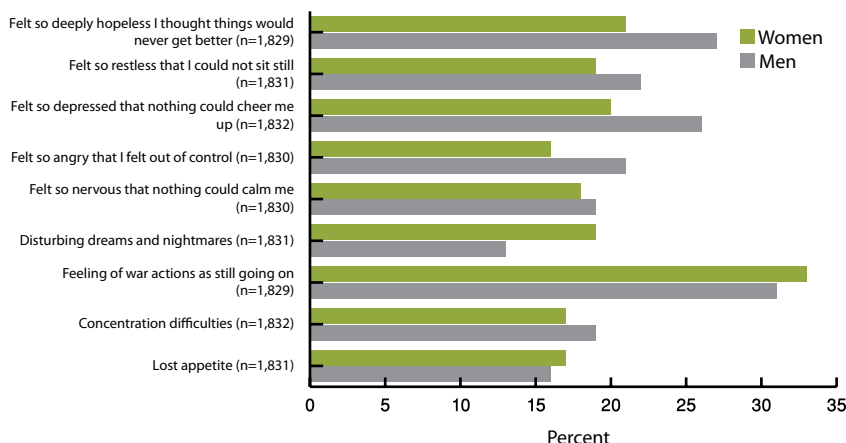
21 See previous footnote and figure 19 for identification of the five symptoms of severe distress.

**Figure 19 Symptoms of psychological distress experienced often or sometimes by the adult population the past two weeks. Respondents were one randomly selected person aged 18+ in each household**



The prevalence of distress symptoms varied somewhat between different population groups. In general, refugees, people outside the labor force, those with no or short education and low income reported to experience symptoms of distress more often than other people. However, among those with the highest income, there were also many who reported feeling depressed and deeply hopeless about the future. Figure 20 shows variation by gender. As is evident, women tended to report disturbing dreams/nightmares more often than men, whereas the latter more frequently expressed a feeling of anger, depression, and hopelessness about the future. The prevalence of most symptoms increased by age, albeit not consistently and systematically for all symptoms.

**Figure 20 Symptoms of psychological distress experienced often the past two weeks by gender. Respondents were one randomly selected person aged 18+ in each household**



Furthermore, the prevalence of symptoms of severe distress was slightly higher among men than women, and nine percent of men as compared with seven percent of women reported to experience often all five symptoms (Table 6). Signs of severe distress were found somewhat less frequently in youth and the youngest adults, and in the age group 18-24 years 'only' six percent reported having all five symptoms of severe distress often.

**Table 6 Prevalence of symptoms of severe psychological distress experienced often the past two weeks by gender; percent (n=1,821). Respondents were one randomly selected person aged 18+ in each household**

	Age					Gender		All
	18-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55+ yrs	Male	Female	
No symptom	62.8	56.0	59.9	56.0	61.2	56.5	62.0	59.3
1 symptom	15.7	17.0	14.0	16.4	6.6	14.9	14.7	14.8
2 symptoms	9.1	8.8	8.4	7.1	9.3	10.1	7.2	8.7
3 symptoms	3.1	5.9	5.1	5.3	6.4	4.4	5.5	4.9
4 symptoms	3.5	4.1	4.4	3.3	7.3	4.9	3.7	4.3
5 symptoms	5.8	8.2	8.3	11.9	9.2	9.2	6.9	8.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample size	495	571	394	188	173	922	899	1,821

Yet, it is essential to stress that many symptoms were common among youth and the youngest adults also. For example, those aged 18-24 revealed as much pessimism about the future as other Gazans. Furthermore, 34 percent of those aged 18-24 reported frequent loss of appetite (14 percent 'often'; 20 percent 'sometimes') and as many had concentration difficulties (16 percent 'often'; 18 percent 'sometimes'). Further, 27 percent of the youth reported nightmares (12 percent 'often'; 15 percent 'sometimes'), and 35 percent reported anger (14 percent 'often'; 21 percent 'sometimes'), signs of depression (18 percent 'often'; 17 percent 'sometimes'), and a deep sense of hopelessness (23 percent 'often'; 12 percent 'sometimes').

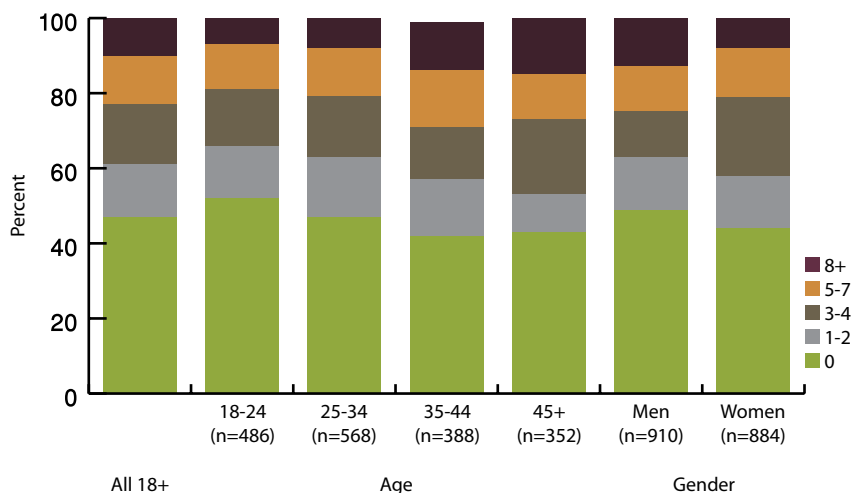
Thus, despite the above mention of variation across population groups, the general picture is one in which the psychological well-being of all population segments was harmed by the hostilities.

### Many adults unable to carry out everyday routine activities

Obviously, people's mental status impacts their social life, the way they behave towards family, friends and co-workers etc. If an individual is not feeling well, his or her psychological standing might affect the ability to perform well in daily life. The survey asked the randomly selected adults how many days they were totally unable to carry out normal activities such as getting dressed, washing, carrying out household chores, go to work, etc. in the past two weeks due to feelings such as those we had previously asked about (and for which we just presented the results).

The findings are shown in figure 21. Nearly half the respondents (47 percent) confirmed that they were fit to carry out ordinary, mundane activities every single day of the reference period. Nearly one fourth (23 percent), however, admitted that they were unable to function well in five days or more of the 14-day period. A higher proportion of men than women managed well, but a higher proportion of men than women had serious problems too. As the graph also shows, people's ability to perform their ordinary duties and live their lives 'as normal' deteriorated somewhat with age, thus reflecting the result above that (symptoms of) mental ill-health became more widespread with older age.

**Figure 21 Number of days unable to carry out any normal, every-day activity during the past two weeks; by gender and age (n=1,794)**

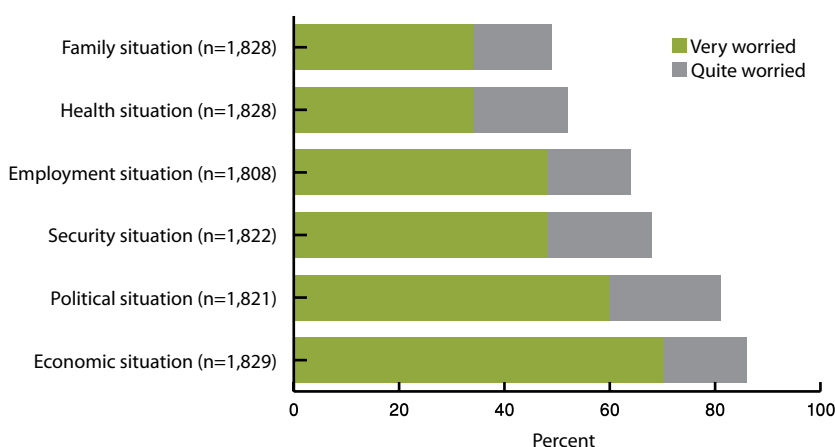


This indicator of psychosocial well-being further varied by socio-economic status in accordance with the (majority of the) mental health indicators reported above: Resourceful individuals with high education, a decent income, and being employed significantly more often functioned well in daily life as compared with individuals with poor education, reporting low income, and being outside the labour force.

**Economic, political and security situation of major concern**

The survey asked the randomly selected adults to identify their major worries and the intensity of their concerns. The opinions of some respondents may have been primarily influenced by the general circumstances in the Gaza Strip (and the West Bank), while for others the immediate conditions of the person and his or her family may have been decisive for their answers. The interviewers avoided telling respondents if ‘immediate’ or more ‘distant’ issues should ‘count the most’ when responding. The results are shown in figure 22. It seems people in the Gaza Strip at the time of the survey were most worried about the political and economic situation followed by security and employment. Health and family issues were of somewhat less, but still considerable, concern.

**Figure 22 Major worries. Percent of adults (18+) expressing they are very or quite worried about various issues**



Everyone does not worry about the same matters to the same extent. However, the variation across background characteristics of the respondents is generally modest (Table 7). A higher share of men than women said they were ‘very worried’ about the work situation, while women

somewhat more often expressed profound worry about family issues. Unease over the political situation were highest among individuals aged 35 and older, while people above the age of 45 more frequently than younger people said they were 'very worried' about the health and family situation. People with secondary or post-secondary education systematically expressed somewhat less anxiety than other people, whereas individuals who did not work and had low income more often reported to be 'very worried' about the employment and economic situation and more frequently voiced family and health concerns.

**Table 7 Main sources of worries (percentage of randomly selected adults that are 'very worried' with each topic) by gender, age, refugee status, educational attainment, employment status and monthly income (n=1,830)**

		Economic situation	Political situation	Security situation	Work situation	Family situation	Health situation	Total	Sample size
All		70	60	48	47	34	34	100	1,830
Gender	Male	71	62	48	52	31	32	100	928
	Female	69	58	48	42	36	36	100	902
Age	18-24	66	56	46	43	32	30	100	496
	25-34	73	57	49	45	32	30	100	577
	35-44	74	65	48	52	31	35	100	397
	45-54	74	66	53	60	39	43	100	188
	55+	63	65	44	45	40	45	100	172
Refugee	Yes	69	59	46	44	30	32	100	1,232
	No	72	62	51	54	41	38	100	596
Highest completed education	Not completed any level	72	67	55	48	37	45	100	193
	Elementary	74	58	50	53	37	32	100	216
	Basic	72	56	47	49	36	30	100	443
	Secondary	67	60	46	44	31	33	100	616
	Higher education	69	62	46	46	31	35	100	359
Employed	Yes	65	61	48	42	23	25	100	470
	No	71	60	48	49	36	37	100	1,360
Monthly income	No income	72	61	48	51	37	38	100	1,221
	< 1200 NIS	73	60	47	50	34	27	100	271
	1200-2000 NIS	62	58	49	28	18	21	100	189
	2000-3000 NIS	54	60	43	25	17	27	100	109
	> 3000 NIS	50	46	34	42	20	27	100	30

The survey further presented a list of ten topics and asked the respondent to rank them according to his or her degree of concern. If we add up the percentage of respondents that mentioned a topic as one of four concerns (a maximum of four concerns could be listed), the picture in table 8 materializes. Material concerns, here represented by economic security and employment, top the list. Next follows the security situation and then by falling importance family concerns, politics, education and health, all issues mentioned by more than one in three respondents. Marriage, migration and recreation are areas referred to by one in ten or fewer people.

**Table 8 People’s major concerns. Percentage of randomly selected adults that rated the ten listed topics as one of four main concerns by gender and age groups (n=1,819)**

		Economic security	Work	Security situation	Family	Politics	Education	Health	Marriage	Migration	Recreation	Sample size
All		86	60	59	45	43	39	35	10	10	5	1,819
Gen-der	Male	85	66	57	41	44	36	33	13	14	6	922
	Female	86	54	61	49	42	43	36	7	6	4	897
Age	18-24	82	61	55	41	42	48	25	19	13	5	495
	25-34	88	62	57	50	44	36	33	6	9	6	573
	35-44	86	62	60	44	48	42	33	4	9	3	397
	45-54	89	62	57	46	39	45	39	10	7	4	186
	55+	86	45	71	42	41	19	60	6	7	3	168

The Table highlights certain differences between population groups. Reflecting traditional gender roles, employment is an area listed more often by men than women, while the latter mentioned education and family issues more frequently than the opposite sex. Education was stressed primarily by the youngest women, listed among the four principal concerns by 55 percent. On the other hand, men twice as often as women answered that marriage and migration were a great concern to them. This view was held above all by men aged 18-24 (marriage being mentioned by 27 and migration by 21 percent). Health was listed by 71 percent of the older women (aged 55+), whereas politics seems to be a particular interest or concern of middle-aged men, mentioned by six in ten men aged 35-44. Variation according to socio-economic background was not systematic and dramatic. However, those with higher education appeared more often concerned with politics, and the respondents with the highest income mentioned migration more frequently than other respondents.

If we consider the concern which is ranked first only, the results are in keeping with the above. Economic security received the highest ‘score’ among women aged 45-54 (39 percent, *versus* the average of 28 percent for all respondents), 34 percent of women aged 18-24 held up education as the key issue (*versus* the average of 19 percent), a high 27 percent of women aged 55+ answered that health was their prime concern (*versus* the average of five percent), and 18 percent of women aged 25-34 said that the family was their most important concern (*versus* ten percent). Among men, 31 percent in the age-group 25-34 listed employment as their number one concern (as compared with an average of 20 percent), 11 percent of men aged 35-44 held up politics as their major concern (*versus* six percent), and eight percent of the youngest men (those aged 18-24) answered that migration was of paramount importance to them (mentioned by an average of three percent).

Concluding on ‘worries’ and ‘concerns’, it is evident that people’s prime attention is on economic issues: the general weak economic situation in the Gaza Strip as well as their immediate employment and income needs. However, living conditions and economic circumstances for the population of Gaza are directly tied to (domestic and international) politics and (internal and external) security, which is probably why these topics also figure high on people’s list of worries and concerns.

**Six in ten believe a religious leader might help with worries; four in ten think it might be useful to see a psychiatrist, or a health or social worker**

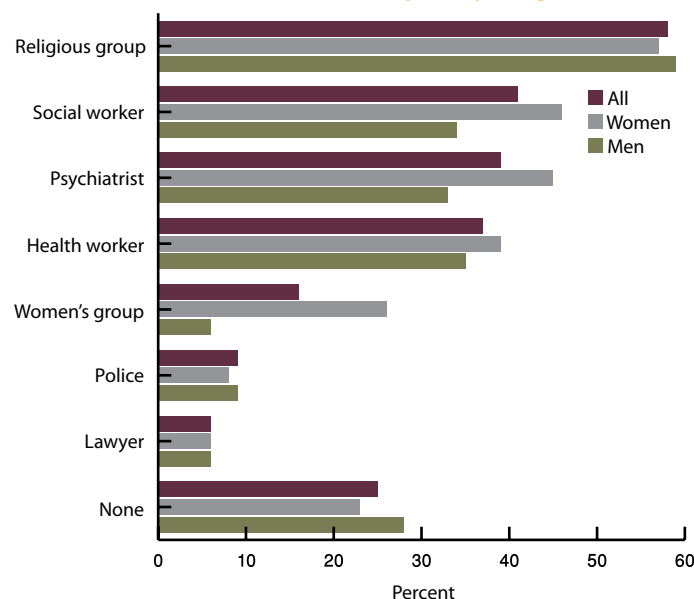
The survey also enquired who people aged 18 and above would see if they felt a need to talk to someone about their problems and worries. Multiple answers were allowed. These are the results:

- No need to talk to anyone: six percent
- Prefer not to talk to anyone: 18 percent
- Family member: 59 percent
- Friend: 22 percent
- Professional: one percent

Men were prone to turn to friends more often than women (28 *versus* 16 percent), while women more frequently than men said they would raise their worries with a family member (65 *versus* 52 percent). The wish to consult a friend was also higher among the youngest adults (28 percent in the 18-24 age group) and particularly among the youngest *men* (35 percent in the 18-24 age group, 29 percent in the 25-34 age group). It was primarily individuals with higher education that expressed they would have liked to bring their worries to a professional (two percent).

The survey next listed seven professionals or groups of people that could be of assistance to people with various problems and concerns. Did the respondent think the mentioned professionals could be of any help to him or her with his/ her current worries? One fourth answered 'no' to all (groups of) professionals listed. Men were slightly more unenthusiastic about receiving professional help than women. Figure 23 has ranked the (groups of) professionals according to the percentage of 'yes' answers received. Nearly six out of ten respondents believed religious groups, and presumably their religious leaders, could provide advice and assistance while approximately four in ten thought a social worker, psychiatrist and a health worker could provide help and support. Fewer people held the opinion that help could be found in women's groups, with the police or amongst lawyers. There is a certain gender difference in that particularly social workers, psychiatrists and women's groups had the trust of a significantly higher share of women than men.

**Figure 23 Professional service provider that the respondents believe can help with current worries. Percent of those that have worries and say they might seek help (n=1,362)**



### **Half of adults barred from social visits; leisure activities in great demand**

The survey examined whether there were any activities that people would have liked to do 'these days' but for various reasons were unable to do. Some of the hindrances were undoubtedly related to the recent military assault and warfare and the resulting destructions, while other obstacles were 'cultural' in character and could be sanctions anchored in traditions and religious or other beliefs, or people listed types of activities they could not afford. However, the survey did not investigate such explanations and cannot, therefore, relate explanations to outcomes. One in five respondents (21 percent) reported that there were no activities among those listed by the interviewers that they could not participate in or perform.

The main results are presented in table 9. Half the respondents felt they were thwarted from visiting family and friends as much as they wished and perhaps 'should' according to local customs. Apparently, a higher proportion of women than men considered this a problem. Approximately one third of the adults said that they were hindered from doing sports and a third stated that they could not practice other leisure activities. Four out of ten men would have liked to engage in sports but could not, while 24 percent of women found themselves in the same situation. The attraction of sports seemed higher among the young. Nearly half of the young men (aged 18-24) said they were prevented from doing sports, while nearly four in ten young women wanted to participate in sports but could not.

A considerable proportion of the adult population in Gaza were barred from going to the market (19 percent, a higher proportion of women than men). Many would have wanted to visit cafés and restaurants (17 percent, a higher proportion of men than women, and the youngest adults more so). Nearly one in five complained that there were domestic activities they could not do but would have liked to engage in. Reflecting the appalling situation in the labour market with substantial unemployment and underemployment, one in five men and nearly one in ten women would have liked to be gainfully employed outside of the home. Some missed cultivating their lands, while three percent, and women more than men, would have liked to get education, or expand on what they already had attained.



**Table 9 Activities that people are prevented from doing 'these days'. Percentage of randomly selected adults by gender and age groups (n=1,812)**

		Social visits to friends and family	Leisure other than sports	Sports	Going to the market	Going to restaurants and cafes	Domestic activities	Work outside of the home	Agricultural activities	School Attendance	Not prevented from doing listed activities	Sample size	
All		49	37	32	19	17	17	15	4	3	21	1,812	
Gender	Male	43	37	40	13	21	17	22	5	2	20	920	
	Female	56	37	24	24	14	18	8	3	4	22	892	
Age	18-24	43	44	39	16	22	17	12	3	4	20	488	
	25-34	52	41	35	19	21	20	18	4	3	18	569	
	35-44	57	38	28	23	21	22	16	5	2	21	399	
	45-54	47	30	27	14	6	11	20	3	1	23	185	
	55+	48	15	18	22	4	10	10	9	-	31	171	
Gender by age	Male	18-24	36	43	47	12	24	16	16	3	4	21	236
		25-34	43	38	47	13	25	18	23	5	1	17	281
		35-44	54	38	32	16	22	22	26	8	0	21	225
		45-54	32	32	27	11	8	14	30	2	-	28	103
		55+	51	23	24	15	5	8	23	13	-	17	75
	Female	18-24	49	45	31	20	19	18	9	2	4	19	252
		25-34	62	44	22	26	16	22	13	3	6	18	288
		35-44	60	38	23	30	19	22	5	2	4	21	174
		45-54	61	29	27	18	4	9	10	4	2	17	82
		55+	46	9	14	27	4	11	1	6	-	41	96

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