



Gaza's housing and building crisis

With one of the highest birth rates in the world and over 60 percent of its population under 18 years of age, Gaza is in constant need of new housing. But since 2006, Israel has blocked the importation of materials needed to construct homes, creating a housing and building crisis.

The crisis also impacts other sectors, notably education and health, since new schools and medical facilities cannot be built to meet growing needs.

The situation is compounded by the destruction caused by repeated Israeli military attacks on Gaza. During the 2014 attack on Gaza, over 17,800 homes

were severely damaged or destroyed to the point of being uninhabitable. As of August 2016, only 30 percent of these homes had been rebuilt, and over 65,000 people remained displaced. An additional 150,000 homes were damaged but remained uninhabitable. Two years after the attack, less than half of these homes had been repaired.

It isn't only homes that cannot be repaired and rebuilt. Schools, hospitals, businesses, and key infrastructure remain in ruins or unusable because of restrictions on the import of building materials under Israel's blockade.

Quick facts

Impacts of housing, land, and property issues

- Around 17,800 homes were damaged or destroyed by Israeli airstrikes in the 2014 assault on Gaza. Two years later, only 30 percent had been rebuilt.¹
- Two years after the end of the 2014 attacks, over 65,000 residents displaced by the war have still not been able to return home.²
- Prior to the 2014 attacks there was a shortage of at least 75,000 housing units in Gaza largely as a result of building stoppages caused by restricted imports.³
- Of the seven schools destroyed during 2014 only one had been rebuilt by August 2016.⁴ While damaged schools have been repaired, even prior to 2014 there was a shortage of over 200 schools in Gaza leading to

1 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Infographic: Gaza two years after the 2014 hostilities" (August 2016). <http://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-two-years-infographic>

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Report: Gaza two years after the 2014 hostilities" (August 2016) http://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/gaza_war_2_years_after_english.pdf

severe overcrowding in most Gaza schools, many of which function on a double shift basis—hosting one school in the morning and another in the afternoon.⁵

- Restrictions on the entry of key materials needed for the repair, upkeep, and building of key electrical, water, and sanitation infrastructure is one core cause of the electrical and water/sanitation crises in Gaza.
- Even when materials are allowed into Gaza, increased shipping, storage, and compensation costs raise prices and make construction unaffordable for many.

Additionally, blocked access to Gaza of staff and contractors needed for building and infrastructure projects delays or stops building.⁶

- Israel has compiled a list of items that are banned from entering Gaza, such as wooden planks, rebar, cement, pipes, and adhesives. That list does not comply with international standards for identifying dual use items, which could be used to produce weapons.⁷

5 Human Rights Watch “Gaza’s Education in Rubble” Sept. 12, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/09/12/gazas-education-rubble>

6 World Bank, “Economic Monitoring Report to the ad hoc Liaison Committee” Sept. 19, 2016 <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/474311473682340785/pdf/108205-V2-WP-PUBLIC-SEPT-14-2PM-September-2016-AHLC-World-Bank-Report.pdf>

7 “Gaza: List of Controlled Entry Items,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (04 July 2010)

What can you do?

Demand an immediate end to the blockade on Gaza

U.S. government policy officially supports Israel’s continued blockade on Gaza—and it is the blockade that has resulted in this crisis facing Gaza’s population. The blockade is illegal and immoral and must end.

Contact your government representatives, and demand that they call for an immediate change in U.S. government policy and support the complete end to Israel’s blockade on Gaza.

Take action: afsc.org/endtheblockade



**American Friends
Service Committee**

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the Quaker belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. Since 1948, AFSC has worked in the U.S., Israel, and the occupied Palestinian territory with Palestinians, Israelis, and other committed activists to support nonviolence, challenge oppression, and—since 1970—to end Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territory. This work is guided by our “Principles for a Just and Lasting Peace in Palestine and Israel.” These principles support the implementation of international human rights and humanitarian law and call for an end to Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territory, implementation of refugees’ right of return, equality, and justice for Palestinians and Israelis. More: afsc.org

LEARN MORE

The following organizations in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel address and challenge Israel’s policies on Gaza:

Al-Mezan
www.mezan.org/en

Palestinian Center for Human Rights
www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en

Gaza Community and Mental Health Program
www.gcmhp.net/en

B’Tselem
www.btselem.org

Gisha
www.gisha.org

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
www.ochaopt.org