



UNDERSTANDING THE GENDER-RELATED IMPACT OF THE CRISIS IN THE GAZA STRIP AND THE WEST BANK FOR AN INCLUSIVE RESPONSE

Briefing note on the Occupied Palestinian Territory

INTRODUCTION

The Gaza Strip has experienced a protracted humanitarian and food security crisis, exacerbated by successive conflicts. Since 2007, Israel has imposed a restrictive blockade on the Gaza Strip,¹ which was subject to a series of escalations of conflict, with the two most significant in 2008–2009 and in the summer of 2014. Other rounds of fighting were smaller, such as those that occurred in November 2012, May 2021, and August 2022. The escalation of hostilities between Hamas and Israel, which erupted on 7 October 2023, has led to an unparalleled humanitarian crisis with unimaginable suffering. UN Experts have consistently noted that women, girls and children are among those most exposed to danger in this conflict.² The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) recently reported that the situation in the Gaza Strip is catastrophic, with a high and sustained risk of famine across the entire Strip.³ Under these conditions, women and girls are highly affected by the lack of access to safe water, latrines, washrooms or sanitary pads, leading to inhumane living conditions and the spread of life-threatening diseases.⁴

As of 8 August 2024, according to OCHA's latest flash update, at least 39 699 Palestinians were killed,⁵ approximately 70 percent of whom were women and children.⁶ Among the killed women, it is estimated that 6000 left 19 000 orphan children behind.⁴ About 91 722 people have been injured,⁵ with many injuries likely to result in long-term disabilities. UN Women reports that every hour, 2 mothers are killed in the Gaza Strip.⁷ This marks an unprecedented dramatic impact, as no other 21st-century conflict has caused such devastating consequences on a population in a short timeframe.⁸ Moreover, at least 287 aid workers,

including 205 UNRWA staff, have been killed in the Gaza Strip since October 2023,⁵ more than three times as many humanitarian aid workers killed in any single conflict recorded in a single year.⁹ The situation remains critical also in the West Bank, where 587 Palestinians have been killed, including in East Jerusalem.¹⁰

Over 1.9 million people in the Gaza Strip are internally displaced, half of them are children,¹¹ many of whom are unaccompanied or separated.¹² Official numbers do not account for children missing under the rubble. According to recent UN assessments, displaced individuals have been forced to move nine to ten times, especially after armed invasion started in Rafah on 6 May 2024. This has caused people to move to other parts of the Gaza Strip, mostly into Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah governorates.^{13, 3} These ongoing waves of displacement forced people to restart their lives repeatedly without their belongings or any hope of finding safety or reliable access to essential and survival goods and services.¹⁴ Recent reports highlight the deep suffering and suicidal thoughts affecting many women as they struggle to protect their children. Many children have sustained third-degree burns, and they often die slowly and painfully. Those who survive will likely face lifelong disabilities.¹⁵ UNICEF is calling the Gaza Strip the “most dangerous place to be a child”.¹⁶

Prior to the current humanitarian crisis, the Gaza Strip already faced a dire economic situation characterized by high unemployment, food insecurity, electricity shortages, and health and sanitation crises.¹⁷ According to the World Bank, during the first half of

2023, the Gaza Strip's economy contracted by 2.6 percent largely due to a decline in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector, which shrank by almost 30 percent following the restrictions imposed by Israel on the sale of fish from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank since August 2022.¹⁸

Before 7 October 2023, more than 1.5 million Palestinians already required essential food security and livelihood assistance. This represented 53 percent of the population in the Gaza Strip and 11 percent in the West Bank.¹⁹ Moreover, according to FAO, up to 2021, 28.1 percent of the population was already moderately or severely food insecure, and 4 percent was severely food insecure, with 30.2 percent of women experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity, compared to 26 percent of men.²⁰

This situation is compounded by the alarming state of water resources, with over 97 percent of water from the coastal aquifer in the Gaza Strip reported unfit for human and animal consumption, as per UNICEF's 2021 findings.²¹ Currently, water production is less than a quarter of what was produced prior to the recent intensification of hostilities.²² According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the water supply in the Gaza Strip has been reduced by 95 percent following the recent escalations.²³ And only one of the three water pipelines from Israel into the Gaza Strip in the south is functioning.²⁴ This situation is forcing the population to use unsafe water and sanitation facilities, increasing the incidence of disease and exacerbating public health risks.²⁰ For example, people in the Gaza Strip are using agricultural wells that are 30 times saltier than freshwater. This increases the risk of immediate health consequences, particularly for infants, pregnant women, and people with kidney diseases.⁴

To overcome the significant gender-related risks and impacts, it is crucial to address the specific needs, vulnerabilities and coping strategies of different groups of men and women, girls and boys, including those further impacted by other social factors such as their disability status, in order to ensure an appropriate and accountable response that alleviates the suffering of the population.

GENDER-RELATED IMPACTS

Food insecurity

According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report of June 2024, 96 percent of the population in the Gaza Strip (2.15M people) will face high levels of acute food insecurity in the period May to September 2024. The whole territory is classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), and over 495 000 people (22 percent of the population) reaching catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 5), where households experience the extreme lack of food, starvation, and exhaustion of coping capacities. The speed of deterioration observed in previous months, compounded by increased vulnerability of the population after over nine months of inadequate dietary intake, WASH, and health conditions, will increase the likelihood that famine could occur in the period May-September 2024.²⁵

The IPC report also highlights alarming trends in food utilization due to severe clean water shortages, making it difficult to cook and prepare food safely. The ongoing conflict, constant displacement and lack of basic needs disrupt cultural norms and caregiving practices, affecting food distribution to vulnerable groups like the elderly, women, and persons with disabilities. Consequently, even households with access to food face significant challenges in utilizing it properly.²⁵

The dietary diversity among children aged 6-23 months and pregnant and breastfeeding women remains a deep concern.²⁵ All children under five – an estimated 335 000 children – are at high risk of severe malnutrition and preventable death.²⁶ In the north, 1 out of 3 children under 2 are acutely malnourished. At least 23 children in the North of the Gaza Strip have reportedly died from malnutrition and dehydration in recent weeks, adding to the mounting toll of children killed in the Strip.²⁷

The latest data shows that, to buy food, more than half of the households had to exchange their clothes for money and one third resorted to picking up trash to sell. More than half also reported that, often, they do not have any food to eat in the house, and over 20 percent go several days without eating.²⁵ In April 2024, UN Women data found that more than 8 out of 10 women rely on food assistance as primary source of food.²⁸

The recent escalation has caused massive damage to the agriculture sector, which previously supplied 20-30 percent of the strip's daily food consumption.^{29,30}

Severe electricity shortages in the Gaza Strip, with the sole power plant shutting down on 11 October due to lack of fuel and electricity supplies, has significantly disrupted agricultural activities, fishing, food processing, distribution and water infrastructure.^{31, 32} Continuous airstrikes and ground operations have resulted in dwindling food stocks and widespread food scarcity. By end of May, 57 percent of agricultural land had been destroyed or severely damaged, limiting the food system's functionality.²⁵ Of these damaged lands, approximately 61 percent are orchards, 19 percent are vegetables and 20 percent are cereals.³⁰ Consequently, the agriculture sector's functionality has been severely compromised, leaving those dependent on it without reliable sources of nutrition and income.³³

Farmers and women-led agribusinesses, particularly small-scale breeders, face dramatic challenges due to their displacement, lack of access to fodder, damage from airstrikes and disruptions in telecommunication. Many farmers (both men and women) report substantial losses, particularly in the poultry sector, damages in food processing facilities and crop losses in agricultural lands.³⁴ According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), one month into the crisis, 44 percent of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have lost their sources of local agricultural production for household consumption.³⁵

The repercussions of food shortages on food prices have been felt primarily in the Gaza Strip, where the acute scarcity of essential commodities has led to a substantial increase in food prices. The PCBS reports a 65.7 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) since the conflict's onset. The CPI for food has risen by 104.6 percent.³⁶ Moreover, the recent closure of the Rafah crossing in May 2024 has severely impacted food accessibility and deteriorated humanitarian services, especially in the middle and southern governorates as a direct consequence of the Rafah offensive.³ Consequently, the Gaza Strip is currently facing significant shortages of crucial food items.³⁷

Women, especially female heads of households, older women and women with disabilities, face serious security threats when accessing food distribution. As security concerns rise, men and boys are increasingly responsible for seeking and securing food and water for families.¹³ The growing hunger crisis has led people to intercept humanitarian trucks to obtain aid before it reaches its intended destination. Consequently, it has become more challenging to deliver aid to UN shelters and warehouses.³⁸ In this context, female-headed households, elderly people and persons with disabilities face additional obstacles if there are no family members

to receive the aid on their behalf. As of June, seven out of ten women interviewed by UN women reported weight loss in the last 30 days, and more than half have experienced frequent dizziness.³⁹

A coping strategy of affected families, including displaced persons, has been to reduce the number of daily meals from three to one. Children and women, especially pregnant and lactating women, are therefore at higher risk of undernutrition or malnutrition, making them more susceptible to contracting maternal nutrition-related illnesses. During the current crisis, the limited access to infant formula and fortified foods in overburdened hospitals can reduce the survival rates of newborns, who are already at high risk, due to the compounding negative effects of the blockade.

Livelihoods and employment

The recent escalation has caused a severe blow to the Gaza Strip's economy, leading to decreased household incomes due to injured or killed family members, damage to infrastructure, temporary or permanent loss of employment as local livelihood systems collapsed, and economic activities and food production have come to a near-complete standstill. Approximately 56 000 commerce, industry, and services establishments in the Gaza Strip, employing around 173 000 people, have been significantly affected. A World Bank assessment indicated that nearly 80 percent of these establishments have been damaged or destroyed, resulting in a US\$1.65 billion loss and driving a more than 50 percent rise in unemployment. The widespread destruction has halted economic activities, causing business closures, loss of livelihoods, and a decline in income levels, particularly affecting women.⁴⁰

A sharp increase in unemployment has been observed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) with unprecedented rates in the Gaza Strip. As of June 2024, ILO projects a total unemployment of 668 000 in 2024, representing an increase of 222 000 compared to 2023.⁴¹ The labor force participation rates for both men and women are projected to decline, accompanied by unprecedented spikes in unemployment, and the annual unemployment rate in the OPT could rise to 47.1 percent if the conflict continues until August 2024.⁴¹

Before 7 October 2023, women faced higher unemployment rates (41 percent) compared to men (20 percent) in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Unemployment in the Gaza Strip was significantly higher (46 percent) than in the West Bank (13 percent),⁴² with 67 percent of women in the Gaza Strip unemployed compared to 39 percent of men. Most unemployed

women are young (34 or younger) and highly educated (93 percent of them have completed 13 or more years of schooling).⁴³ According to the IMF, the difficulty of commuting to work in the West Bank poses a major obstacle for women and significantly influences their outcomes in the labor market, primarily because of Israeli checkpoints and associated restrictions. Consequently, women tend to look for employment options close to their homes or remote work, severely restricting their job opportunities.⁴⁴ Recently, the freeze of work permits in Israel and the destruction of physical assets, personal injuries, internal displacement, and the halt of economic activity have compounded the situation. Even in the best-case scenario, a considerable share of people in the Gaza Strip will be living in extreme poverty.⁸

The FAO's 2019 Country Gender Assessment reveals that the agriculture and rural sector in Palestine employed 6.7 percent of women and 5.9 percent of men. However, these statistics tend to underrepresent women's employment as they cover only the work devoted to producing for the market, while most of their work in agriculture is unpaid and/or focused on production for household consumption. Palestinian women provide 87 percent of the labor for livestock production and 54 percent for crop production. Additionally, they fulfill traditional gender roles in child-rearing and household management.¹

Even before recent events, rural women, producers and small business owners faced more challenges than men in accessing and using available resources and had limited rights to own land and move freely.¹ As a consequence of the conflict, ILO projections suggest a possible replacement of women by men in the agriculture sector, with a slight increase in the number of male workers and a decline of female workers in this sector. The rise in male unemployment may lead men to push women out of the agriculture sector, where women are often employed as subsistence workers.²³

Finally, economic distress disproportionately affects female-headed households, which make up 10 percent of all households in the Gaza Strip.²⁴ Before October 2023, female-headed households were highly vulnerable to impoverishment, and accounted for nearly 20 percent of households in extreme poverty.²⁴ In the wake of the ongoing crisis, UN Women estimates that at least 3 000 women may have become widows and heads of households due to the death of their male partners.³ These households are at higher risk of poverty and food insecurity, particularly when the new female head is unemployed or has never been part of the labor market.

Unpaid work burden

Before the latest humanitarian crisis, women were heavily involved in unpaid care work, including childcare, family farming and domestic chores. On average, Palestinian women spent about 35 hours/week on unpaid care work compared to only 5 hours for men – about seven times more.⁴⁵ The employment status adds another layer to gender differences in the allocation of time to paid and unpaid work and the current conflict has magnified the workload for women. Prolonged electricity cuts, water scarcity, and shortage of cooking gas have increased women's domestic burdens and strained their already overstretched coping mechanisms in the context of massive displacement of the population.

Displaced populations face heightened trauma risks, which manifest in two primary forms: conflict-induced and forced displacement trauma. The conflict-induced trauma involves higher exposure to violence, loss of loved ones, and displacement itself; while forced displacement trauma includes being uprooted, facing future uncertainties, loss of identity, and adapting to new environments. These factors, along with the persistent threat of harm and displacement-related stressors, significantly increase the mental health burden on displaced individuals.⁴⁶ Moreover, displacement has close links to acute hunger and food insecurity particularly when humanitarian access is, as in this case, constrained. If displacement becomes long term, it contributes to the further compromising of local food production, including agricultural and other economic activities.³²

The lack of protection for women and their families severely impacts their psychosocial health.⁶ A UN Women survey reveals that as of April 2024, 77 percent of respondents reported that the increased caregiving and domestic responsibilities, especially in tents and overcrowded households, have made it challenging for women to protect their children's physical and mental well-being.³⁹

A Rapid Gender Analysis conducted by UNRWA in October 2023 revealed that the pre-crisis household division of labor persists in emergency shelters.¹³ Although some men participate in care-related duties, such as looking after young children, women remain overwhelmingly responsible for care and unpaid work, including cleaning, cooking, and water collection. Most men continue to spend significant time with other men and search for a suitable place for their families to live.

With schools closed, traditional gender roles are further reinforced among the youth, with girls assisting their mothers in cleaning, food preparation, and water collection, while boys engage in maintenance work and accompany their fathers to markets. This division of tasks mirrors the gender dynamics existing within households before the recent crisis.

Access to health and protection services

The disruption of schooling, the collapse of the healthcare systems, and the destruction of physical infrastructure have severely limited the ability of the population in the Gaza Strip to access essential goods and services.

WHO has warned that the lethal combination of starvation and disease will lead to more deaths in the Gaza Strip.⁴⁷ According to the latest WHO assessment as of July 2024, the Gaza Strip has currently 16 (out of 36) partially functioning hospitals (of those, 11 are only partially accessible due to safety issues or physical barriers) and only 48 out of 107 primary health care facilities remain functional.⁴⁸ Many hospitals and health-care centers have shut down, either due to damage caused by Israeli bombardment or the lack of fuel as a result of the siege. Furthermore, due to the significant number of individuals injured and left with long-term disabilities as a result of the humanitarian crisis, there is a growing concern for the limited capacity to address the needs of people with disabilities, including both women and children.⁴⁹

The shortage of cooking gas has forced families to burn wood, plastic, and waste, endangering women and children in particular. This practice is likely to have significantly reduced the Gaza Strip's air quality, although no open-source air quality data is currently available.⁵⁰ Due to the deteriorating situation, on 16 July 2024, the Global Polio Laboratory Network (GPLN) reported the detection of six circulating variant poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) isolates in environmental samples from Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip. Out of seven samples collected, six tested positive for VDPV2.⁴⁸ Furthermore, a Hepatitis A outbreak, transmitted through contaminated water and food, was also detected. Women and girls face a heightened risk of exposure to Hepatitis A due to their traditional domestic responsibilities and roles in caring giving, including caring for sick family members.⁴

Of the Gaza Strip's population, over 540 000 people (about one in four) are women and girls of reproductive age.⁶ According to a recent UN interagency rapid

assessment, an estimated 155 000 pregnant and breastfeeding women in the Gaza Strip are facing critical challenges in accessing antenatal (ANC) and postnatal care (PNC).⁵¹ Over 183 women per day are giving birth without pain relief,² and 28 000 pregnant women are experiencing emergency and catastrophic food insecurity (IPC phase 4 and 5). Doctors report alarming trends such as increasing numbers of preterm and low-birth weight babies - common indicators of severe malnourishment exacerbated by stress, fear, and exhaustion that pregnant women are now experiencing.⁵¹ Some women are forced to give birth in shelters, homes, streets amidst rubble or in overcrowded healthcare facilities where sanitation is deteriorating. This situation increases the risk of infection and medical complications, adding to an already high-risk public health environment.

According to UN Women survey data, more than 6 out of 10 women interviewed, who are either currently pregnant or have been pregnant since 7 October 2023, reported complications. Specifically, 95 percent had urinary tract infections, 80 percent experienced anemia, 30 percent faced pre-term labor, and 50 percent suffered from hypertensive disorders.⁵² Moreover, the inadequate availability of maternal, sexual, and reproductive health services exposes mothers, newborns, and their children to significant and life-threatening health risks. Even if women survive pregnancy and childbirth, they often face serious challenges during postpartum recovery, including difficulties with breastfeeding.⁵³

In the West Bank, pregnant women, especially those in marginalized and remote communities, face an elevated risk of giving birth at home or at checkpoints due to the constraints imposed by movement restrictions, closures, and general insecurity.⁵⁴

In the Gaza Strip, the continuous displacement has resulted in the adaptation and expansion of certain traditional gender roles, while others have become more entrenched. For many people, their roles have shifted multiple times depending on whether families were separated, living in extended family gatherings, or displaced to communal shelters. Women have increasingly taken on various responsibilities beyond traditional roles, such as contributing to family income and securing essential supplies, while those previously employed have shifted focus to domestic tasks. Men have also expanded their domestic roles, including cooking, laundry, and childcare, especially after losing their jobs. Despite these changes, some traditional roles persist, with men retaining control over key decisions like relocation and mobility, reinforcing longstanding

gender-based policies.⁵³

Data from previous conflicts in Palestine indicates that women, who have lost their husbands during armed conflicts, face significant threats. Beyond the emotional toll, these women are vulnerable to forced remarriage, frequently to a member of their deceased husband's family.³⁴ Moreover, households aiming to enhance protection for children and women may impose additional mobility restrictions beyond those dictated by the overall context, jeopardizing the rights and freedoms of women and girls, and further impacting their livelihoods.³⁴ For instance, girls may be expected to assume the role of caregivers for injured family members or assist with household activities that were previously performed by their mothers.⁵⁵ Child marriage may also increase as a coping mechanism for families struggling with limited resources, amidst school closures, and the absence of educational opportunities,⁶ or as a measure to protect young girls from the risks of sexual violence from strangers, which are particularly high in overcrowded shelters.¹³ In contrast, boys may be pressured to enter the workforce to compensate for family income loss or to take over the role of the lost male guardian.⁴

The widespread destruction of homes has forced families to seek refuge with host families, where possible. Combined with shortages of food, water, and privacy, this has increased the stress levels within families, leading to heightened tensions between parents and children, husbands and wives, and higher vulnerability of children to multiple risks and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). As seen with other conflicts, the breakdown of the rule of law and social structures during armed conflicts is associated with higher rates of GBV.¹³

Most collective shelter centers and sites are overcrowded and not equipped with the necessary infrastructure and services to maintain the dignity and privacy of female IDPs.¹² Past escalations of hostilities in the Gaza Strip have shown that such overcrowding can contribute to an increase in sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls. While accurate data on GBV trends is currently unavailable, UN Women has reported that the only two women's protection shelters previously operational in the Gaza Strip, are currently closed due to the conflict. Furthermore, telecommunication and electricity disruptions are significantly impeding the remote delivery of gender-based violence services, especially at a time when the risks are most pronounced.⁴ Furthermore, the loss of shelter has a negative impact on the dignity of men, who are frustrated by their inability to protect their

families. Female-headed households, already subject to significant levels of marginalization, further experience the adverse effects of overcrowding and insecurity.¹³

In the West Bank, meanwhile, unrest, clashes and violent incidents involving Palestinians, Israeli settlers and Israeli forces have raised significant concerns for the affected people. Entire herding communities have been forcibly displaced.⁵⁶ According to OCHA, between 7 October 2023 and 27 July 2024, 2 996 people, including 1 310 children, were displaced. Half of those displaced (1 541) had their homes destroyed by Israeli forces, particularly in Jenin and Tulkarm cities and surrounding refugee camps. About 43 per cent (1 282 people) were displaced due lack of building permits issued and demanded by Israeli authorities (which are almost impossible to obtain), while (173 individuals) were displaced as a result of punitive demolitions.⁵⁷

Clashes in the West Bank continue despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion regarding the legal consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem, concluding, inter alia, that "Israel's continued presence in the OPT is unlawful and must end as rapidly as possible."^{58, 10}

Demolitions and displacement have a gender-related impact, as homes are traditionally considered the "woman's sphere." This puts additional pressure on women to provide for the family's practical and emotional needs, including dealing with the trauma of displacement for children.²⁴

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

In line with repeated calls by United Nations Secretary General António Guterres for **the immediate implementation of a ceasefire by all sides and ensuring rapid, safe, and sustained humanitarian access**, the first necessary step is to secure peace and overcome the risk of famine for the affected people. Additionally, gender-responsive humanitarian and development aid interventions are essential to address the specific needs and priorities of vulnerable women, men, girls, and boys, based on sex- and age-disaggregated data and periodic rapid gender and vulnerability assessments.

It is also necessary to protect all civilians, and ensure that responses to gender-related risks and

vulnerabilities are embedded into essential strategic planning documents, including the Humanitarian Flash Appeals,ⁱ and to the extent possible, channel resources to women's organizations.³ Furthermore, it is essential to safeguard infrastructure, including houses, agricultural land and health care facilities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, in accordance with the international humanitarian law.

Responses to the crisis could include efforts to:

- Strengthen collection, analysis, and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability status to continually update available information on the impact of the conflict on the food security and livelihoods of women and men of different age, residency status, and socio-economic conditions. The evidence generated should guide the planning of targeted gender-responsive interventions and strategies to better meet the specific needs of affected women, men, girls, and boys on short, medium, and long term. Periodic rapid gender analysis and gender-sensitive vulnerability assessments, including gender-sensitive indicators in monitoring and evaluation systems, should follow the gender-related impacts of agricultural development, food and nutrition security policies and investments in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.
- Conduct gender assessments to evaluate market conditions and support the distribution of agricultural products. This includes assessing farmers' ability to utilize agricultural lands and agribusiness units and identifying areas for intervention. Additionally, explore the potential for humanitarian response interventions, such as supporting home garden production, small-scale livestock farming, and fodder distribution.
- Ensure that the immediate needs of women and girls in the Gaza Strip are met through the provision of quality basic services and improved access to resources, services, fodder and other essential agricultural inputs and tools to support their early recovery and rehabilitation, taking into account their specific needs, constraints and existing capacities.
- Support efforts to restore the economic activities and functioning of markets in the Gaza Strip. Revitalization of the private sector is fundamental, as humanitarian aid alone is insufficient to meet the huge needs of the population. Without functioning markets, continued scarcity will lead to inflation.
- Scale up a broader array of social protection initiatives, once domestic markets are reactivated, including targeted cash transfers and vouchers, to provide immediate assistance to affected and vulnerable families. Tailored interventions are needed to address the loss of income experienced by female-headed and single-headed households and prioritize households with people with disabilities, recognizing their heightened vulnerability. Additionally, consider unconditional cash distributions to enhance women's roles in the recovery phase and to restore crop production capacity, alongside the direct distribution of agricultural materials to prepare for the coming seasons.
- Continue efforts undertaken to assess the immediate and long-term impacts of damage to infrastructure, loss of livestock, and disruption of agricultural activities on the livelihoods and productive capacities of men and women. As the situation permits, identify new or alternative income-generating and employment opportunities in the post-conflict period, focusing on women, youth and the most vulnerable people. Possible interventions include cash-for-work programmes to reconstruct damaged infrastructure, rehabilitate lands and irrigation systems.
- Support ongoing efforts by humanitarian actors to mitigate and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) during and after the conflict, based on periodic protection risk analyses conducted among affected and vulnerable people. Adopt special measures to ensure that interventions do not put people at risk of GBV, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and other forms of discrimination, following the "Do No Harm" principle. This includes targeting the most vulnerable women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities; addressing the underlying causes of discrimination and structural barriers; and re-establishing community-based protection networks to be involved in the

ⁱ UN women's assessment of the funding for the 2023 Flash Appeal revealed that less than 1 percent of funds directly reached national or local women's rights organizations in the Gaza Strip.

humanitarian response. Additional recommended actions include raising community awareness of GBV while engaging all community actors, building social peace among farmers and local communities, and establishing protection, feedback, and complaint mechanisms. Securing safe access to fuel and energy, productive inputs, and water will reduce tensions and competition for resources, thereby minimizing the risks of violence.

- Assist women-led and women's organizations to serve as early responders in conflict-affected areas in the West Bank, including but not limited to Area C, Hebron, Jenin camp and Nablus. It is also crucial to engage local women's groups and women leaders in anticipatory actions and peacebuilding processes in the Gaza Strip, by developing women-led risk mappings and involving women in hotlines addressing violence. In the long term, invest in formal and informal education and training of women and girls to strengthen their technical capacities and leadership and negotiation skills, and support female heads of households in overcoming recent shocks.

NOTES

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