



Press Release

United Nations launches draft early recovery strategy for Gaza

Once conditions on the ground change and the parties to the conflict create an enabling environment, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners stand ready to scale up early recovery interventions.

Wednesday, 25 September 2024, Jerusalem – The United Nations has released a draft strategy¹ for scaling up early recovery interventions in Gaza, once certain conditions on the ground are met.

The draft strategy presents a joint, cross-pillar approach by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, fitting under the humanitarian planning cycle and the overall tripartite framework of the World Bank, European Union, and United Nations on recovery assessment and planning.

“While I remain resolutely focused on supporting the parties to reach a ceasefire and the release of hostages in Gaza, further scaling up humanitarian assistance and early recovery is essential,” noted UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland. “For early recovery to work, we must have a political and security framework in place that will provide some security and hope for Palestinians. A robust early recovery strategy cannot be rolled out amidst chaos like we have now. The UN and its partners will need a more secure environment within which to work and Palestinians institutions with which to relate.”

The World Bank, European Union, and UN are jointly leading a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA) process and formulating a Conflict Recovery Framework (CRF), to be implemented when conditions on the ground permit. Globally, these processes are led at the country level. As agreed with the Palestinian Authority, the RDNA and CRF will support the Palestinian Authority’s own planning for recovery and reconstruction in Gaza.

¹ The draft early recovery strategy is a living document that will be continuously refined as part of the upcoming humanitarian planning cycle and the Conflict Recovery Framework. It is intended to bridge and ensure coherence between the ongoing humanitarian response and the future recovery and reconstruction.

With their partnership activated since late 2023, the World Bank, European Union, and United Nations published the Gaza Interim Damage Assessment in April 2024, estimating some 20 billion USD in physical infrastructure damages alone over the first four months of the war, a sum that is expected to have increased significantly since the end of January.

“We will continue ramping up humanitarian delivery and early recovery interventions if conditions change, particularly in the areas of health, livelihoods, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene,” said Muhannad Hadi, the Deputy Special Coordinator, UN Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator. “The UNCT and HCT have been working on this strategy for many months, and its release is an important milestone in our planning. The paper will feed into the next humanitarian appeal and the Conflict Recovery Framework,” Mr. Hadi added.

Conditions for Scaling Up Early Recovery across Gaza

The draft strategy sets out a range of factors that will determine the speed, scale, and scope of early recovery interventions. The UNCT and HCT believe that the following elements are minimum necessary conditions for significantly scaling up early recovery activities across Gaza and then transitioning into a medium-term recovery phase:

1. Security, safety, freedom of movement, and the ability to access the population in Gaza.
2. A transitional political-security framework, that promotes Palestinian ownership and management of recovery, with the Palestinian Authority at its center.
3. Minimum levels of essential services, particularly water, electricity, sanitation, banking and financial services, and telecommunications, within a coherent governance framework.
4. At-scale and predictable entry of humanitarian, commercial, and reconstruction goods, materials, and equipment, including from the West Bank.
5. The ability for the UN, NGOs, and their partners to obtain Israeli visas, identify and deploy experts, import protective equipment, and other practical, operational issues.
6. Sufficient donor funding, preferably in consistent, multi-year, and flexible modalities.

Political Context for Scaling Up a Durable Early Recovery

The draft strategy notes that any viable early recovery must be firmly rooted in a broader political and security framework that can address the effects of the humanitarian catastrophe and generate momentum to rebuild Gaza as an integral part of a fully independent, contiguous, viable, and sovereign Palestinian State. Such a framework must also lay the groundwork for a political process to end the occupation and establish a two-State solution. Critically, the Palestinian Authority must be at the center of planning for and the implementing of recovery and reconstruction in Gaza.

The key political principles that guide UN efforts are:

1. There should be no long-term Israeli military presence in Gaza, while at the same time Israel's legitimate security concerns must be addressed.
2. Gaza is and must remain an integral part of a future Palestinian State – with no reductions in its territory.
3. Gaza and the occupied West Bank must be unified politically, economically, and administratively.
4. There can be no long-term solution in Gaza that is not fundamentally political.

Central to achieving these objectives is strengthening the institutions of the Palestinian Authority, while rejecting any actions that systematically undermine its viability. International support is urgently needed to strengthen the capacities of the Palestinian Government and prepare it to reassume its full responsibilities in Gaza. Political, institutional, and economic reforms will be needed as well, but they must be achievable and properly financed.

Note to Editors: *The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) serves as the principal policy-level coordination mechanism for development assistance to the OPT. The AHLC is chaired by Norway and co-sponsored by the EU and the US. In addition, the United Nations participates together with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The AHLC seeks to promote dialogue between donors, the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel.*