

Situation Report 2: Impact of May, 2021 Aggression on Persons with and without Disabilities in the Gaza Strip



Atfaluna MEAL Unit
Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children
(ASDC)
Date: Between the period 1st -10th
June - 2021



Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children:

Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (ASDC) is a local NGO, established in 1992 in Gaza City, in order to help persons with hearing disability in the Gaza Strip to have their chance in life through education, rehabilitation, and job training and employment opportunities. From its establishment as a small school for the students with hearing disability serving 27 pupils in 1992, Atfaluna now serves more than **40,000** persons with and without disabilities annually through a multitude of interventions and training programs implemented within a holistic and right-based and inclusive approaches involving children and adults with without disabilities, their families, service providers organizations, and the community-at-large.

Background:

On the 10th of May, Israeli assaults against the Gaza Strip induced catastrophic humanitarian situation in the lives of the people living in Gaza, [Flash Appeal OCHA](#) shows that more than **253** Palestinians were killed in Gaza, **41% (66 children, 38 women)** of them are women and children, more than **2000** were injured, including **610** children and **398** women, of whom **10 %** were serious injuries and might have a long-term disability that needs further intervention to be familiar with the new cases. More than **70,000** of Palestinians have had to leave their homes in Gaza due to the ongoing air strikes targeting their homes which were completely, partially damaged or their houses at risky areas with a potential to be targeted by bombardment. Where over **2,000** housing units were totally destroyed or severely damaged, and nearly **15,000** suffered some degree of damage The displaced Palestinians sought shelters in schools, mosques or at other places. **58** education facilities, **9** hospitals and **19** primary healthcare centers were damaged across the Strip. Multiple water and sanitation facilities and infrastructure were also damaged.

Due to the shutdown of Gaza's sole power plant as the result of the lack of fuel duplicated the negative consequences for the provision of vital service. Beside of the current aggression against the people living in Gaza, the humanitarian situation is already deteriorated due to COVID 19 pandemic's restrictions and the Gaza imposed siege. The recent escalation doubles the people's suffering more and more.



Introduction:

This report assesses the social, economic effect of the Israeli assaults against the Gaza Strip between the period of 10th to 21st May 2021 as a result of deterioration of the security, safety, health and humanitarian situation. This report is part of the ASDC's tools and mechanisms for identifying and prioritizing the community needs of the families of persons with and without disabilities, where those families are the neediest among the community, and the disability decreases their access to the basic needs and put them at higher risks of vulnerability during these difficult situations. This report raises the impact of the political escalation on the lives of families of people with disabilities (PwDs) and highlight their priorities to achieve efficient interventions which helps in alleviating their suffering.

Methodology and Sampling:

In order to better understand how the conflict has affected the lives of families of persons with disabilities in Gaza, ASDC's MEAL unit conducted a survey with **284** families of the ASDC beneficiaries, and focus groups with **25** parents of children with and without disabilities. This assessment was collected by the online survey by the ASDC and the partners social specialists and data collectors (NAWA, SOS, Al Asriya Library, and Tamer institute). The survey was conducted between the period **1st -10th June – 2021**, where **284 families** of children with and without disabilities (**81.2% families with disabilities, 18.8% families without disabilities**) responded to the survey. This assessment covers the Gaza Strip area, where **55.4%** of the respondent from Gaza, **18.1 % in north of Gaza, 13.1 % middle area, 13.4 % Khan Younis and Rafah**. The assessment targeted the families of children with different disabilities (**61.6% with Hearing, 7.7% physical, 6.4% visual and 24.3% other disabilities**).



Results:

A) House and Economic Damages:

- **54.5%** families reported that their houses were damaged either minor or major damages, where **76.7 %** of the damaged houses are with minor damages that include damages in windows or doors, **22.5%** major damages, and **one** family their house was completely damaged, out of them **3.16 %** of the families didn't go back to their houses as their houses include serious damages. The reported high percentage of damages were due to that **73.5%** of the survey respondents are from Gaza and Northern area, where the majority of damages located in Gaza and north.
- **11.9%** of the respondent families reported that they have damages other than their house, in their farmland, animals, workplaces, or shops.
- **20.4%** of the families of children with disabilities reported that their children lost/damaged their assistive devices during the aggression on Gaza which includes hearing aids, wheelchairs, walkers, glasses, and others.
- **68.6%** of the families responded to the survey reported that they couldn't secure fixed source of income to provide basic needs for their families.
- **49.3 %** of families reported that they were forced to leave their houses, where their houses are at risk to be attacked by the bombardment as its located in borders towns or in destroyed buildings. **82.2 %** of the displaced families reported that they were hosted by their relatives, and **14.1%** reported that they sought UNRWA schools for shelters. **62.4%** of the displaced families reported that the places that they moved to is not suitable for sheltering since they lack basic needs such as; water, electricity, food, food for the children, hygiene, clothes, dignity kits, the medicine, fuel for cooking, mattress, blankets, assistive devices, not adapted for PwDs, and uncomfortable spaces where in some cases more than **30** persons live in one room.



Results:

A) Psychosocial Status of Children

- **97.5%** of the children reported psychosocial trauma among children as their mothers expressed that their children experience nightmares, sleeping disorders, behavioral changes, lack of concentration, all in severe posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms among mostly children and women.
- **81.6%** of the children reported being anxious even after the end the aggression, and **77.4 %** reported changes in the children behavior due to the escalation out of them **50.7%** become feeling terrified when hearing loud sounds such as doors closures, **48%** become aggressive, **19.5%** bed wetting, **10.4%** crying without any reason, **29.9%** lack of concentration.
- **53.8 %** of the families reported that they are not aware of how to calm down their children during the aggression and the heavy airstrikes, and **45.6%** of families reported that they didn't use the efficient techniques to calm down their children like drawing, play with the children, talking to them, etc. and **78.9%** of the parents reported that they need more awareness on how to deal with the children, and techniques to reduce children fears during conflict times.
- **58.3%** of the respondents reported that the family violence increased against women and girls during the aggression.
- **53.2%** of the assessment respondent reported that the family violence increases against the children with disabilities during the aggression.
- **61.9%** of the respondent reported that the social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, and twitter) is the most popular for disseminating awareness and the health messages, while **30.7%** of the respondent prefer to use direct phone call with the PSS specialists, **7.4%** of the respondent use the radio spots and T.V cannel.



Needs and Priorities:

- **Providing nutrition and food assistance** for the families where **68.6%** are unable to afford the basic needs of nutrition and food for their children. They reported that they are highly in needs to food assistances.
- Providing **hygiene kits and basic needs** where the needs of hygiene kits were increased during the ongoing escalation and they couldn't afford the needs of hygiene kits.
- **Providing hearing aids and assistive devices** is essential for the families of the children with disabilities, there are increase in the needs of the assistive devices , where many of the families couldn't have access /get the needs of hearing aids, batteries or other assistive devises and there are more than 200 persons changed to be with disability where they has serious injuries and might have a long-term disability that needs further intervention and assistive devices to be familiar with the new cases.
- **Guidance and PSS supports** where the children and the families are in a highly needs to the guidance and the psychosocial support where the fair, distress and trauma are increased on both the children and the adults due to the explosions, airstrike, pumps, the live/ media views of the killed persons.
- **Access to health services and medical tools** where during the emergencies the families don't have access to medical clinic or health facilities as the medical clinics are closed for the urgent cases only. In addition to that many of the families couldn't move out of their houses due the security issues.
- **Shelters should be inclusive and accessible to persons with and without disabilities.**



It is highly recommended that all responses should be inclusive to meet the needs of persons with and without disabilities, children and adults, females and males.

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