



23 April 2015 – Almost eight months after the announcement of the ceasefire, not a single totally destroyed home has been rebuilt in Gaza.

Over 140.000 Palestine refugee homes were impacted by the 2014 summer hostilities, and [UN RWA](#) has only received funding to reconstruct 200 of the 9000 houses totally destroyed.

“The population in Gaza is angry and frustrated. The atmosphere between both the population and UNRWA staff is very different from the last conflict”, stated UNRWA Director Robert Turner during a press briefing [in Brussels](#) this morning. “After the 2012 conflict there was still hope that things would change, that the blockade would be eased, that there would be some kind of result or closure. Now, none of that hope is left.”

Currently 2/3 – almost 868.000 – Palestine refugees depend on UNRWA’s food aid, the

middle-income economy has largely been destroyed, and the purchasing power of ordinary inhabitants has been halved.

"A year ago, property crime was virtually non-existent. Today, we see an increase in intercommunal violence, family disputes property crime has become rampant in a single years time", Turner stated.



Photo credit: Flickr European Commission DG ECHO

Gaza water crisis

Over 90% of the water extracted from the Gaza aquifer is unsafe for human consumption, the UN has repeatedly warned. If current trends continue, 100 percent of the water will be undrinkable by 2016 and the aquifer will collapse.

"By 2020, damage to the aquifer will be irreversible", Mr Turner said during the briefing.

Overextraction from the aquifer, combined with the saltwater, sewage and fertilizer penetration, is resulting in levels of chloride and nitrate that are well above the World Health Organization's

guidelines. Although Israel sells 1.2 billion gallons of water to Gaza each year, the vast majority of Gazans drink water that has been treated — and sometimes is still contaminated.

Statistics of shame

A major complicating factor for the Gaza Strip is the blockade. The water crisis, the food aid dependency, the gap between pledges made and funds delivered all amount to “statistics of shame”, as Mr Turner expressed. During the last summer conflict, a total of 548 Palestinian children lost their lives and about 1,000 children were injured – some so badly that they will have to live the rest of their lives with disabilities. Thousands more were displaced.

“One cannot assume that pledges of \$5 billion, no matter how needed or welcomed, will fix the situation. Gaza is linked to the crisis on the Mediterranean, to Daesh (IS)... there needs to be a political solution”, agreed Christian Berger from the EU’s [External Action Service](#) .

“Last year’s war in Gaza can’t be known as “the Third War”, said Mr Turner. “It must be remembered as “The Last War”.

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