

# Protection in the occupied Palestinian territories:

“They can do projects here for 1,000 years and nothing will change”

By Rafael Eguiguren & Luna Saadeh

October 2014

*L2GP is an initiative, which works to promote effective, efficient and sustainable responses and solutions to humanitarian and protection crises with an explicit focus on enabling locally-led responses.*

*Contact us at [info@local2global.info](mailto:info@local2global.info) and read more at <http://www.local2global.info/>*



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## Authors' bio:

Rafael Eguiguren has worked in over 60 countries focusing on policy advice and field work in the fields of Conflict Resolution and Intercultural Dialogue, Civil Society, Gender, Human Rights and Development issues. He has extensive experience in evaluation and project management, social research, advocacy and a strong dedication to training and capacity building both in academic and in informal settings.

Luna Saadeh has a Master degree in Women's Development and Law from Bir-Zeit University (2001). She is Gender and women rights expert with 20 years of experience working from the Middle East with international development agencies and local government. She has consulted on gender related issues such as women political participation, gender based violence, women health and women rights with numerous international and national organisations.

## About Local to Global Protection

Local to Global Protection (L2GP) L2GP is an initiative, which works to promote effective, efficient and sustainable responses and solutions to humanitarian and protection crises with an explicit focus on enabling locally-led responses. L2GP studies have been carried out in Burma/Myanmar, Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe and action research is currently undertaken in Syria, Myanmar, Sudan and the occupied Palestinian territories.

L2GP was initiated by a group of organizations within the ACT Alliance<sup>1</sup> in cooperation with other organizations and individuals where the studies have taken place. The initiative has among other been financially supported by Church of Sweden, DanChurchAid, Sida (Sweden) and Danida (Denmark).

A paper summarizing the initiative and synthesizing key findings from the first five studies has been published by the Overseas Development Institute's Humanitarian Policy Group (ODI HPG) as the HPN Paper 72.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The ACT Alliance is a coalition of more than 140 affiliated organisations working together in 140 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalised people regardless of their religion, politics, gender, sexual orientation, race or nationality in keeping with the highest international codes and standards.

<sup>2</sup>HPN Paper 72 - <http://www.odi.org.uk/events/2798-hpn-network-paper-local-global-protection-myanmar-burma-sudan-south-sudan-zimbabwe>

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# Chapter 1

## Protection in the occupied Palestinian territories - Summary

*"They can do projects here for 1,000 years and nothing will change"*

*I don't understand why the international actors do what they do. They come here with aid and development projects, but that is not effective (...). It is not effective because the problem here is not a specific crisis, but a long-standing occupation. You have to realize that with the present logic, they can do projects for 1,000 years and nothing will change (...). So please stop giving us blankets and do the right thing by holding Israel accountable.*

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Woman, Ramallah, West Bank

### 1.1 Introduction and Executive Summary

Since 2009, the Local to Global Protection (L2GP) initiative has undertaken action research with crisis-affected communities to better understand protection challenges from a local perspective. Coupled with research on how communities are coping with crisis and their opinions on appropriate and effective solutions, the research hopes to contribute to increased effectiveness of humanitarian actors and action. The present research on the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) is the sixth full L2GP study to date, and it is based on interviews with over 500 men and women living in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza.

#### 1.1.1 Threats Identified by Communities

Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories stress that the main protection threat they face is what they see as the very cause of the crisis itself - the Israeli occupation. Local communities consider this threat more important than any other and the root of any other significant protection vulnerability. Without further probing from the researchers, conversations about protection and self-protection tend to stop here. Repeatedly Palestinians expressed the opinion - and their frustration - that international protection and humanitarian actors focus primarily on providing a minimum level of survival assistance, and to a lesser extent focus on mitigating the impacts of the occupation. Rather, Palestinians feel that protection and humanitarian actors have a responsibility to protect that

involves primarily demanding accountability from Israel on its obligations under International Law (*see details in the full report*) and should increase national and international advocacy efforts.

When probed, Palestinians report on how their protection needs vary significantly by location, even within the same city or between villages close to each other. The other major source of variability in vulnerability and difference in perception of threats is gender. All interviewees emphasize how they depend on the degree to which restrictions are applied by Israel, influencing the degree of economic activity and subsequently employment, freedom of movement, the availability and quality of services and infrastructure, including housing and municipal services, and the policies and practice of local government. This complexity underlines the importance of a context-specific and participatory problem analysis when designing programmes meant to reinforce local coping strategies and resilience.

By geographic location, the main immediate protection threats and challenges can be broadly categorised:

1. In East Jerusalem, protection priorities include the "housing crisis" due to home demolition (and associated psychological trauma) and restrictions on home building, subsequent overcrowding, discriminatory provision of municipal services, risk of losing right to residency, severe lack of economic opportunities and resulting poverty, restricted movement and access to land and other livelihood opportunities not least due to "The Wall"<sup>a</sup> all of which are perceived as strategies being employed by the Israeli government to encourage displacement or movement out of Jerusalem;
2. In the West Bank (Area C),<sup>b</sup> extreme water shortages for both domestic use and for livelihoods, the latter resulting in reduced grazing areas and fodder for livestock-dependent Bedouin groups, shortages of electricity affecting livelihoods and schools, land confiscation, restricted movement not only of people but also of goods, lack of adequate transportation, the latter particularly affecting school-age youth and women, lack of private sector investment, and corruption/nepotism in local government. These culminate in a lack of economic opportunity and poverty. Poverty in turn is contributing to increasing school dropouts and child labour. Violence by settlers and settler activity including inappropriate disposal of waste contaminating water sources was further cited as a protection threat.
3. In the Gaza Strip,<sup>c</sup> in addition to the occupation, the conflict between Hamas and Fatah adds another dimension to protection threats. Given its complete isolation, imposed by Israel, a greater percentage of Palestinians suffer from abject poverty. Unemployment is perceived as the major cause of divorce, drug abuse, domestic violence, and theft, and not least, loss of dignity.

All of these protection threats should be considered through a gender perspective. The study reveals important gender-related differences in the perception of protection threats, coping strategies and potential solutions. Whereas there is a consensus among the inter-

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<sup>a</sup>The wall between the West Bank and Israel is commonly referred to by Palestinians as the "racial segregation wall" (*jidar al-fasl al 'unsuri*), the "annexation wall" or "apartheid wall". Israelis most commonly refer to the wall as the "separation fence" (*Geder HaHafrada*) or "security fence". In keeping with the 2004 advisory decision by The International Court of Justice, this study will use the term the "Wall", "as the other expressions sometimes employed are no more accurate if understood in the physical sense".

<sup>b</sup>Area C was created under the Oslo II Accords signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1995. Under the Accords the West Bank and Gaza Strip were divided into three areas with different status for a five-year transitional period.

<sup>c</sup>The fieldwork for this study was primarily carried out during 2013, before the Israeli bombardment of Gaza (start 8 July 2014) that affected heavily the civilian population and infrastructures. The authors consider that these events may affect some short-term protection needs, but they do not affect the results of this study for two main reasons. Firstly, the study methodology and aims focus on capturing long-term protection needs, not momentary ones; secondly, the recurrence of wars in Gaza and the population's awareness about the constant possibility of attacks puts this last one in a context already considered by the respondents.

viewees, regardless of gender in identifying protection challenges at general level, when the analysis is taken to a deeper level, women's responses were different from men in aspects as crucial as what problems should be given priority to.

In addition, protection threats can also be considered through an age-, ethnic group-specific perspective, with minority groups like the Bedouin bearing a disproportionate share of the protection threats and challenges encountered in the study.

### 1.1.2 Trying to deal with Threats

How local authorities, communities and families cope with the impact of the occupation has both short and long term consequences. The outcomes fall between two extremes, either reinforcing the importance of and capacity for good governance, self-reliance and resilience or, at the other end of the spectrum, corruption, lack of dignity, loss of livelihoods, aid-dependency and even violence. While the research was implemented with the intention of finding ways to support the former, understanding how to avoid the latter is equally important.

The day-to-day efforts of Palestinians to deal with the impacts of the occupation have largely gone unrecognised and unsupported. Their coping strategies are varied, dynamic and unfortunately oftentimes high-risk, e.g. working in the tunnels, building illegally, engaging in exploitive work, risking punishment by illegally crossing "borders" to find work, displacement and subsequent loss of access to livelihoods including social networks and capital, etc. The latter has longer term consequences for maintaining ownership of assets including property, and losing political ground, given the growing inability of Palestinians to remain in the occupied territories. The plight of rural women is particularly worrying as women leave agricultural/pastoral livelihoods and enter the informal sector, risking abuse during travel and/or at the workplace. Given inadequate and unsafe transportation, rural women often accompany daughters to school and this adds to their already significant work-load. Some families eventually decide to remove their female children from education when they reach secondary school.

Other coping strategies include reliance on networks (family and community) as long as these networks remain viable, being thrifty and rationing available space, water and electricity, including rotating or moving between houses, growing subsistence crops vs. for-profit, or conversely increased reliance on the market for purchase, e.g. potable water, and selling humanitarian assistance to get cash. "Depletive" strategies include reducing expenditures including food purchases, selling productive assets, accumulating debt, removing children from school, even early marriage of young girls.

Examples with longer-term positive consequences include being informed and up-to-date on legal rights, self-organising in committees with a focus on rights protection, and safeguarding essential documentation (e.g. residency permits). Communities are organising to buy community generators, to rebuild roads, and to provide essential services. Respondents noted agencies could (and do) help by facilitating access to credit for small businesses, increasing purchasing power either through cash-based safety nets or through employment schemes, support to the private sector, and when possible information and advocacy when solutions can be found locally vis-à-vis Israeli legislation and permits, e.g. allowing for and facilitating legal road repair. Women's income-earning strategies include work they can do from home (pastry making, cooking, sewing, tutoring, etc). Women in turn would benefit from support in upgrading their skills and marketing their skills and products.

Women reported that both local and international interventions are gender-blind when dealing with the specific protection threats mentioned above, specifically the cultural, fi-

nancial and institutional obstacles that limit their participation in the work force. Small but significant efforts to ensure minimum work standards such as tea/coffee breaks and toilet breaks not only meet immediate health needs but also have social benefits that help women cope. Women are demonstrating effective and low-cost solutions to their problems such as "solidarity" or savings schemes, which allow at least one woman once a week to "cook a good meal for [her] family". Palestinian women's organisations are promoting women's economic empowerment and offering start-up capital and loans to women. Gender mainstreaming also means targeting women in information campaigns; finding ways to ensure that women, who do not often leave the home, are aware of potential assistance/projects. To cope with domestic violence, women are referred to male-dominated 'reconciliation committees' (customary law). Formal law structures are not viewed as just or effective. There are women's organisations that offer advice and counselling, however only a few women reported having access to these. Some reported these organisations' lack of effectiveness in changing violence norms. Men suggested women take a stronger role in mediating domestic disputes, particularly mothers intervening on the behalf of daughters.

While demonstrating short-term effectiveness, due to the protracted and pervasive nature of the crisis, many of these strategies have diminishing returns. Unable to arrest a general decline in living conditions and well being, Palestinians report the disintegration of society, community and family.

### 1.1.3 Conclusions and General Recommendations

The findings of the study are directly relevant for humanitarian agencies and detailed recommendations are provided in the full study. Most important is the request from those interviewed, that humanitarian actors should prioritize and take much more serious their responsibility to perpetually advocate that Palestinians living under occupation should enjoy the full protection and respect of their rights as defined by International Law and International Humanitarian and Law.

It is recognized that finding a long-term solution to the Occupation does not appear forthcoming, but given its centrality in the source of protection threats, it should take center-stage in the strategies of protection agencies in whatever form is appropriate to the capacity and skills of each organisation. As for the continuation of these agencies' work to alleviate immediate suffering, it is important to change their approach in order to increase their effectiveness. The full study includes a detailed discussion of numerous general and specific recommendations. Many of the general recommendations relevant to humanitarian (protection) agencies center on themes and issues such as:

- Assessments need to shift from an exclusive focus on needs to a focus that also includes local capacities, assets and strategies, with flexible program approaches that allow for context- and target group- specific design,
- The context-specific nature of protection threats in different Palestinian communities and their impact on different gender- and age groups demands a much more specific and intense participatory approach to problem analysis and solutions,
- Monitoring and evaluation systems need to shift from a focus on merely monitoring and evaluating how activities are executed to an emphasis on results obtained, so as to understand which solutions actually deliver the desired results which do not work, and why,
- In spite of the existence of gender-related rhetoric, genuine gender approaches are seldom present in programs. This aspect becomes especially important as the study



documents very important differences based on gender, both in the perception of problems and in their possible solutions/mitigation,

- Respondents demand that agencies (including donors) take a more "developmental" approach to project management, avoiding inadequate short-term goals and instead aim at real complementarities between relief, development and advocacy initiatives,
- Increased support is needed for the development of the collective capacity in existing local committees and coalitions as well as the development of new ones.

For a detailed discussion and analysis of the area specific findings and recommendations please see the subsequent sections.

## 1.2 Findings

### 1.2.1 General Findings

While most findings in the study reflect extremely heterogeneous situations in the different communities a number of issues can be considered general among the 287 female and 235 male interviewed Palestinian respondents.

**1. Practically all interviewees in the different Palestinian communities perceive and declare that the main protection challenge they face is "the Israeli occupation".**

This is by far the most repeated answer in the course of the research. This result has important implications, both substantial and for the research itself. It should be noted that in many vulnerable communities in the world, when a researcher asks the question *What is the main protection threat you face?* the answer typically includes very immediate and tangible needs or fears such as "we fear an attack from our enemies", "we don't have enough water" or "our houses might be destroyed". In contrast, Palestinians answer with a root problem, "our main problem is the Israeli occupation", and not with immediate threats even if these are as tangible as air attacks in Gaza or House Demolition in East Jerusalem or the West Bank. It should also be clarified, that this does not imply that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is not criticized as responsible for specific problems -there is in fact abundant criticism- but not as a "main" protection threat. The perception of the Israeli occupation as the major root cause is consistent throughout the interviews.

For this research, this had an additional and practical implication: even if the aim of the study is to try to capture the communities' perceptions and to develop each discussion on the communities' terms and not ours, this research betrayed that principle in this particular case. As the research team considered "the Israeli occupation" as too broad an answer to be treated effectively, instead of discussing this issue, the respondents were specifically asked to speak about more "immediate protection threats". This was the decision of the research team and not that of those interviewed. In consequence, there should be a distinction between what the communities perceive as 'the main protection threat' - the Israeli occupation - as identified by all communities and interviewees in every area of Palestine - and then the more "immediate protection threats" which vary in different areas and are explored in some detail over the subsequent pages.

**2. The local understanding of protection in Palestine is very different from the practice of the international community.** As explained, the Israeli occupation and the abuses committed within this occupation constitute the most repeated protection threat expressed by the interviewees. In a logical suit to this perception, the main "protection response" they expect from international actors is a clear focus on the

enforcement of international law and humanitarian law and more specifically, a sustained call for the end of the occupation, end of the blockade in Gaza, end of demolitions, displacement, illegal settlements, etc. The following quote illustrates a very general perception among most Palestinians interviewed:

I don't understand why the international actors do what they do. They come here with Aid and development projects, but that is not effective and that is not their place. It is not effective because the problem here is not a specific crisis, but a long-standing occupation. You have to realize that with the present logic, they can do projects for 1,000 years and nothing will change. Our people will still suffer the same deprivation, with one additional problem: every day counts to make it worse. When I say it is not their place, I mean a very simple thing: there is wide international consensus about the illegality of the occupation, so please stop giving us blankets and do the right thing by holding Israel accountable (Woman, Ramallah, West Bank)

In contrast, it would appear that most international protection/humanitarian actors perceive themselves as bearers of a much more limited responsibility, restricted to a minimum level of support including survival, resilience and mitigation support. Very few concentrate their efforts on advocacy based on internationally agreed international law.

3. **Main "immediate" protection threats identified** The immediate protection threats that appear with the highest frequency among interviewees are as follows:

#### Main Immediate Protection Threats

- East Jerusalem
  - Displacement-related threats, including housing restrictions such as overcrowding, home demolition, inadequate municipal services and residence limitations and revocations
  - Unemployment
- Area C in the West Bank
  - Water shortage,
  - Electricity shortage (and poor infrastructure)
  - Unemployment
  - Transportation limitations (frequent among youth)
- Gaza Strip
  - Unemployment,
  - Domestic violence

4. The study shows **important differences based on gender** in all dimensions e.g. in relation with the perception of protection threats, in relation with their opinion about which challenges should be given priority, in coping strategies, etc. In contrast, the research also shows that both local and international external interventions are gender blind when dealing with general protection challenges and gender mainstreaming is rare in programs and projects. (See also subsequent detailed discussion of gender specific findings)
5. **Palestine presents an abundant and very diverse range of severe threats.** The threats and challenges listed above show only problems that were mentioned in the majority of interviews as the most important or causing the highest degree of suffering in the opinion of the respondents. However, many other threats and challenges were repeatedly mentioned as equally severe and the only reason for not analysing each of these explicitly is that they are mentioned less frequently in relative terms and a study aiming at providing applicable analysis has limited capacity to treat an extended list effectively. To illustrate the term "extended" it suffices to mention a range of other threats identified by interviewees just in Jerusalem: Denial of family reunification, lack of access to residence permits or access to full citizenship or nationality,

problems with child registration, domestic violence, movement restrictions by different means among which the Wall<sup>d</sup> and checkpoints, drugs, lack of entertainment, lack of trust in the judicial system, education restrictions -health service limitations, housing problems (demolition risk, lack of effective access to building permissions, insufficient space for extended family), severe economic limitations such as a disproportionate rate of poverty and unemployment of Palestinians, limitations due to the effective separation from the West Bank and feelings of deep humiliation and lack of freedom to decide a future. Please see the relevant sections for the extended threats identified by interviewees in all three areas.

6. **Most protection threats in oPt are strongly interrelated.** The second aspect in which this research was not completely faithful to its mandate of respecting scrupulously the communities' perceptions, was by insisting in each discussion that only three protection threats be chosen by the interviewees as the main ones. This decision was made for practical analytical purposes, but most interviewees emphasized that it is hardly possible for them to choose the *main* protection threats, as practically *all of these issues* (see point 4. Above) affect them in essential aspects of their life and are closely interrelated.

The most important protection threat? My house can be demolished, it is so difficult to find a job, my children are harassed by the soldiers for no reason, I cannot move freely to any place 20 minutes from here... You want me to decide on the most important? All are equally important to have a normal life! (Man, Silwan, Jerusalem)

7. **Heterogeneity of protection threats** The research shows a high degree of heterogeneity in the description of protection threats by the different communities in Palestine. This heterogeneity appears in three different ways. Firstly, protection problems and contexts are different in East Jerusalem, Area C in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. Secondly, the main protection threats vary depending on the specific community, neighbourhood or village. Thirdly, even those issues that appear to be shared by many communities are in reality shared only at a general level. Often, what appears to be a common issue adopts different forms in different communities when the analysis is more detailed. This reality has important practical consequences for any actor planning to offer useful and well-targeted support in the field of protection, and more concretely in the program/project identification processes.
8. **Self-protection strategies show limited effectiveness** All coping strategies have as a common characteristic that their mitigation scope is limited or very limited in comparison with the magnitude of the problems faced. None of them is able to solve the problem in a satisfactory manner and -strictly speaking- they belong to those self-protection strategies that can be classified as *endurance or survival strategies*, but rarely as *sustainable solutions*. For example, typical coping strategies used to address Unemployment situations involve incurring into debt, relying on social networks to weather the toughest moments, reducing consumption, or cutting on social interactions that are costly. Given the general context of deprivation and imposed limitations attempting truly sustainable solutions becomes extremely difficult in practice. Again, the root causes related to the occupation and fragmentation of

<sup>d</sup>The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion in 2004 declaring that Israel's building of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory is illegal, that said construction must stop immediately and Israel should make reparations for any damage caused. By a majority of 14 to 1, the judges found that the wall's construction breaches international law and violates principles outlined in the UN charter. Observing that the wall does not follow the green line, but encroaches significantly into occupied Palestinian territory, the Court said the structure's route alters the demographic composition of the occupied Palestinian territory and could "prejudge the future frontier between Israel and Palestine". The Court concluded that Israel could not rely on a right of self-defense or on a state of necessity to justify the wall and that the specific route chosen was not found necessary for security reasons.

the territory become a ceiling that not only causes derived protection threats, but also affects coping strategies.

9. **Self-protection strategies face "dynamic protection threats"**The fact that the main protection threats are not only man made but also "strategically induced" with a final purpose of displacement,<sup>1</sup> make coping strategies obsolete very fast, as most coping strategies elicit additional protection threats to counteract effective protection strategies. For example, when Palestinian families in Jerusalem grow, they typically face one important protection threat: "overcrowding". The first response is often to try to build new floors or annexes to their existing houses or to build a new house. However, this entails the request of an Israeli-issued permit in a system that involves strong uncertainties and high costs. This typically leads to a desperate situation in which construction is attempted without waiting to have a permit, which automatically makes the construction illegal in the eyes of the Israeli system. Thus, this strategy does not solve the problem, or to be more precise, it just transforms the problem "overcrowding" into a different one, at least equally harmful - the risk of demolition.
10. **External actors have acquired a good understanding of the main humanitarian protection issues at the general level** in the oPt. However, the problems are not sufficiently understood by donors and international humanitarian agencies in their full diversity and in the specific form that faces each individual community (see point 6. above and recommendations). After decades of interventions in Palestine, there is still a weak understanding among protection agencies of what works what does not work and why.
11. **External actors have underestimated local assets and strategies** in their identification and programming processes. The focus tends to be exclusively on "needs" and not on "assets", and as a result identification processes remain incomplete and there is ample margin to identify and contribute to local organic processes that can be enhanced or complemented.
12. **External Aid has short-term cycles and short-term goals.** The lack of long-term goals linking advocacy, relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) is inadequate in a framework of a protracted crisis as the time-length of the challenges obviously transcends the boundaries of interventions designed for short-term challenges.

Emergency and relief aid has a negative impact because it's for a short period and its impact vanishes with the end of the program. And it leads to lots of problems between the residents in the village. In contrast, development programs are more sustainable and their impact is more effective for the community.  
(Man, Um al-Khair-West Bank)

## 1.2.2 Gender Specific Findings

The study adopted a gender-sensitive approach and analysis that reveals important differences in the perception of protection threats, coping strategies and potential solutions. The most important aspects are as follows:

1. There is a consensus among the interviewees; regardless of gender; in identifying protection challenges at general level i.e. water shortage, lack of transportation, etc. However, when the analysis is taken to a deeper level, the study shows **important differences based on gender**. For example, women's responses were different from men regarding what problems should be given priority to, and in this respect women expressed that issues such as child bearing, lack of recreation centers for children, lack of elderly shelters, violence against women, and early marriage are highly important

for them, whereas these issues were not raised by male interviewees. On the other hand, there were no issues that were exclusively expressed by men.

2. The study shows that both local and international external interventions are generally gender blind when dealing with general protection challenges identified by the community. Gender mainstreaming is rare in programs and projects. Some protection agencies have specialized programs for women on specific issues directly related to women such as, women's economic empowerment, raising women's awareness on rights, violence against women, etc.
3. The female interviewees' responses show that the external interventions on women empowerment only fulfilled their basic needs in the context of the ongoing violations by the Israeli occupation in the three areas of the oPt. Women focused on their basic human rights and that prevented them from addressing more comprehensive woman rights claims, such as economic equality, social status or political empowerment.
4. Further gender differences were identified in relation to the self-coping strategies adopted to deal with the different protection challenges. Women's coping strategies were constrained and chosen based on the accepted social norms that determine the socially accepted jobs and roles women can play. For example, women mentioned the need to be empowered by facilitating job creation and vocational trainings close to their residence or at home. However, the social norms would add a layer of difficulty to these solutions. In contrast, social norms give men more privileges and alternatives to overcome the protection challenges.
5. Violence against women was identified in Gaza Strip as one of the main protection threats. This challenge was mainly identified by women. The results in Gaza Strip show that the closure and the internal conflict, together with the increased rate of unemployment resulted in an increase in domestic violence against women and children compared to the levels of the statistical survey carried out by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 2006.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

The opinions collected from the local communities and the findings point at two types of recommendations. On the one hand, *General conclusions and recommendations* that affect the overall approach and strategy of protection actors, on the other, *Operational conclusions and recommendations* which aim at improving the present Humanitarian Aid mechanisms so as to increase their effectiveness. Recommendations specific to either East Jerusalem, Area C in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip are further developed in the subsequent area sections of the study.

### 1.3.1 General Conclusions and Recommendations

The main mandate of the Local to Global Protection initiative is to try to capture the vision of local communities and in particular their perception of *protection* needs, coping strategies and how external actors can offer better protection. In this regard, two elements stand out as the most general and robust in the oPt study: how practically all interviewees in the different Palestinian communities perceive and declare that the main protection threat they face is the Israeli occupation, perceiving this problem as more important than any other protection threat, and the perception that international protection actors, while doing some valuable work, are not directing their efforts correctly. In this regard, the most

important recommendation at general level is for protection actors **to demand accountability from Israel under International law**, in particular conformity to UN resolutions and application of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977 in the framework of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). This recommendation reaches every protection actor, including international humanitarian NGOs, as from this perspective, the focus on the advocacy work at home becomes a necessary line of work that needs to be strengthened to accompany the humanitarian efforts in the field.

The fact that that international protection/humanitarian actors appear to perceive themselves as bearers of a much more limited responsibility restricted to the survival, resilience and mitigation aspects of *protection* entails a very important gap between the local perception of *protection* and the practice of international protection actors. This gap is by no means a theoretical abstraction, but a core issue with significant consequences, which demand analysis.

Starting with the most simple elements, it may look surprising how even if the oPt are proportionately one of the highest recipients of development and humanitarian Aid in the world,<sup>3</sup> still the overwhelming majority of the interviewees feel that they are not protected. In this regard, it is easily observable that the large amount of investment and initiatives in the oPt do not match with the expected results.



Figure 1.1: Mismatch between protection activities and protection results in the oPt

How is this mismatch possible? To understand this phenomenon better, it is necessary to analyse and distinguish between different kinds of protection support. In this regard, a sustainable and effective protection in the context of a man-made protection threat needs to involve support in three different dimensions.

**Dimension 1** looks at ways of stopping the threat itself, at the root causes. For example, this can be done by international NGOs through advocacy and awareness campaigns in their own countries to influence citizens and governments, by adopting clear stands about agreed international decisions and law in international fora, etc.; **Dimension 2** looks at the minimum obligations defined by Humanitarian law that an occupying country has towards the territory occupied and its citizens;<sup>4</sup> finally, **Dimension 3** looks at survival, resilience and mitigation initiatives. This dimension will always remain insufficient and unsustainable as long as *1 and 2* are not adequately addressed. The importance of such activities though, derives from their capacity to at least partially and temporarily address urgent matters, but they can never be a substitute for the obligation to act in dimensions 1 and 2."

Despite this, the Humanitarian actors still concentrate their efforts on *Dimension 3* with a mix of good and bad results, whereas *Dimensions 1 and 2* seem to be considered outside their scope or marginal for the vast majority of external actors. Even though there are other secondary factors, the small proportion of *Dimensions 1 and 2* in the overall effort suffices to explain the lack of satisfactory protection results in the oPt.

In addition, the fact that the word *protection* is generally used without paying specific attention to this breakdown explains to a large extent the gap in understanding between local communities in Palestine and international actors. This has important consequences:

1. **International normalization of the understanding of protection** restricted to its dimension of survival and resilience. The practice of considering primarily survival

and mitigation strategies as *protection* has become so established and normal, that the two first - and arguably most important - dimensions are regularly considered *political* and therefore perceived as beyond the mandate of most protection actors. However, whereas the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is indeed political, the application of Humanitarian Law and Human Rights in the oPt and to Palestinian citizens is a very different matter, as it counts with wide international consensus and it falls by definition within the responsibility of every protection and humanitarian actor.<sup>5</sup> In this regard, the existing gap in the interpretation of protection is not only between the local communities and the international practice, but also between the international practice and the minimum legal standards that international actors have committed to.

2. **Evaluations of protection initiatives** take as their exclusive reference the protection initiatives included in the mentioned *third dimension* and not the overall framework of *protection*; consequently, protection results appear to be within acceptable ranges, when the real situation is that the analysis just shows a partial picture that renders invisible the failure to address the real and sustainable solutions included in *dimensions 1 and 2*. This invisibility facilitates unaccountability and plays a fundamental role in the perception of the general public opinion and taxpayers who remain unaware of the unacceptable protection breaches and of the very limited levels of protection offered. In turn, this contributes to entrench the status quo and an occupation that has lasted 65 years according to Palestinian perceptions - or 47 years as per international perception - a staggering duration for what should have been a transitory situation in either case. Taking the whole scheme in Figure A as a reference would at least improve visibility of the real situation and enhance transparency and accountability.

**General recommendation** Humanitarian actors must change the practice of understanding *protection* as a concept that exclusively involves survival and resilience support to a comprehensive understanding and practise which puts much more effort into holding all actors accountable to all relevant aspects of international law.

#### 1.3.2 Operational Recommendations

The study has also identified a group of *operational recommendations* that aim at improving the present Humanitarian Aid in oPt in order to increase its impact and effectiveness.

1. **Need for higher investment in more detailed identification processes.** External actors have acquired a good understanding of the humanitarian issues at the general level in oPt. However, the study shows a degree of diversity of protection threats and challenges that makes this general knowledge insufficient to properly target humanitarian needs. As explained, not only protection problems and contexts are different in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but protection threats vary depending on the specific community. Often, even what appears to be a common issue takes on different forms in different communities when a detailed analysis is undertaken. In this context, identification processes that stay at a general level or one-size-fits-all approaches have high probabilities of failure. A larger investment in time and resources in the identification processes, reaching the level of the specific communities, is necessary.
2. **Need to better understand and support existing assets and practices.** External actors tend to focus exclusively on "needs" and not on "assets" or "positive local practices", and as a result identification processes remain incomplete. Identification and programming processes should broaden their perspective and aim not only at understanding "problems", but also at identifying and understanding local assets and

strategies in order to obtain a complete overview. With this approach, programmes and projects would not just include strategies based on problems to be addressed, but also specific local initiatives to be supported or complemented. Due to the heterogeneity in the different communities, these identification processes can not be general, but should look at the specific situation in each community.

3. **Need for results-based systems to understand what approaches work better and why.** After decades of interventions in Palestine, there is still a weak understanding among protection agencies - both international and national - of what works, what does not - and why. To understand change and successful approaches to adopt evidence-based decisions entails the existence of internal monitoring systems with every protection actor, with less emphasis on activity-oriented programs and a renewed focus on the monitoring of results to understand what works and what does not and as a basis to understand impact. In addition, lessons learnt should be better documented and better transmitted inside and between agencies, especially taking into account the difficulty in institutional learning created by the turnover of staff in the international protection agencies.
4. **Need for real gender mainstreaming.** In spite of the favourable rhetoric towards gender equality, both local and international external interventions are - with very few exceptions - gender blind when dealing with general protection challenges in oPt. Similarly, gender mainstreaming is rare in programs and projects. The study demonstrate important differences based on gender in all dimensions that can only be properly identified at program level and addressed if gender-sensitive analyses, tools and approaches are in place and taken seriously. The existence of specific projects addressing women needs is positive, but not a substitute for gender mainstreaming and for a comprehensive understanding of every protection problem through a gender-sensitive vision. This change in approach would involve many other specific changes, for example, the need to involve men in gender-related awareness, and not exclusively women, as both are actors of change.
5. **Need for a more strategic linkage between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) and with advocacy initiatives.** External Aid has short-term cycles and short-term goals that are inadequate in a framework of a protracted crisis. In addition, these three aspects of the same reality (LRRD) should be part of long-term goals that also involve advocacy as a complementary component in a long-term strategy.
6. **Need to enhance local capacity and leadership:** the study shows a general concern by local communities with the sustainability of the interventions, especially taking into account the prolonged unstable situation of the three areas. In this context, local capacity building is a priority in order to improve the situation when external interventions end. Four main needs were expressed in the three areas: a) Developing leadership, especially among the youth; b) Building capacity in resource management; c) Building capacity for local practitioners and researchers to ensure the community's voice is reflected in and strengthened in practice, policy and research; d) Facilitate community access to information. Many interviewees mentioned the need to understand better the available organizations and their mandate. The majority of women mentioned the lack of information they have about the projects in their area and the organizations working there. Access to information not only forms a major aspect of capacity building, but also contributes to a more balanced and fair relationship between those to be protected and the protection agencies. **Addressing the magnitude of the challenges requires not only individual skills but also collective capacity.** In this regard, the respondents stress the need to strengthen the existing local committees and coalitions or developing new ones. More specific needs are: a) to assert the participation of the local communities as real partners in identifying the approach and tools of implementation of the different projects through the



establishment of civilian committees to help in decision making regarding the community needs, if an intervention is feasible, how should it be carried out, etc; b) To enhance the existing Human Rights and Women Rights Coalitions so as to become more effective lobbying bodies; c) To enhance the capacity of NGOs in Area C to increase their capacity to support the community.

7. **Need to improve basic infrastructure, particularly in Area C.** Despite the imposed restrictions in Area C, efforts can be directed in several directions: Those most generally suggested among respondents are: a) Advocacy Level - an international campaign to support the right of improvement of the infrastructure in Area C; b) Improve the internal conditions of the schools and health centres; c) Establish playground and libraries for children and youth; d) Activate the law regarding disabilities so that public places can be used through improving appropriate and suitable access.

## Notes

1. See factual information on displacement trends and causes in East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns. Special Focus. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory. March 2011. See more interpretative analyses on displacement strategies by independent Israeli sources such as: The quiet deportation - Revocation of residency of East Jerusalem Palestinians. Hamoked B'tselem. 1997 / Revocation of social rights and health insurance. B'tselem. May 2006 / Nowhere Left to Go: Arab al-Jahalin Bedouin Ethnic Displacement. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. 2011 / Obstacles to peace - A reframing of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. 2009
2. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). Domestic Violence Survey 2006. June 2006. In:[http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_PCBS/Downloads/book1258.pdf](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_PCBS/Downloads/book1258.pdf)
3. See for example: Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council. Annual Report 2013 on the European Union's Development and external assistance policies and their implementation in 2012; See also OECD and DAC Development Aid statistics <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/aid-at-a-glance.htm>
4. For example, the Fourth Geneva Convention requires occupying powers such as Israel to protect the well-being of civilian populations under their control.
5. Apart from International Humanitarian Law, for example, the EU's Humanitarian Charter states: "we affirm the primacy of the humanitarian imperative: that action should be taken to prevent or alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict, and that nothing should override this principle. ." It also declares "...The right to life with dignity entails more than physical well-being; it demands respect for the whole person, including the values and beliefs of individuals and affected communities, and respect for their human Rights".



# Chapter 2

## Full Study

### 2.1 Main Aims of the Study

The main aims of this study are:

1. To achieve a better understanding of protection needs and solutions in oPt from a community perspective.
2. To improve the effectiveness of external support in oPt (both national and international).
3. To contribute to the involvement and capacity building of local organizations in research affecting their own interests in oPt.

Whereas the present study takes as point of departure the IASC<sup>a</sup> definition of "protection",<sup>b</sup> the primary goal of this research is to capture the understanding of "protection" as defined by communities at risk themselves, which does not necessarily correspond with international definitions and concepts. Three main research questions have been systematically explored throughout the research:

1. What do the communities/individuals see as the main threats to their own protection (security/safety), survival and livelihood?
2. What self-protection strategies have the communities/individuals used to respond to those threats to their protection, survival and livelihood?
3. How does the local community perceive the role of external actors -i.e. Government, Civil Society organizations (CBOs), local and international NGOs, UN, EU, etc - in providing/facilitating protection for local populations?

The focus of the study is on capturing the local perspective on protection at the community level based on in-depth discussions with 522 Palestinians (287 female/235 male) in East Jerusalem, the West Bank (focusing on Area C) and the Gaza Strip. Additional interviews were conducted with international donors and NGOs, local NGOs and local authorities in order to contextualize the collected information. Finally, the research has also aimed at involving local communities in a meaningful manner and to contribute to the capacity of local organisations. The learning experience accumulated in previous L2GP studies in other countries encouraged the decision to take into consideration local

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<sup>a</sup>Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

<sup>b</sup>Protection broadly encompasses activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of all individuals in accordance with international law - international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law - regardless of their age, gender, social ethnic, national, religious, or other background (IASC-endorsed definition).

perspectives not only as the object of the research - as interviewees - but also as an active component of the research, with local actors participating in the research itself and benefiting from it. In this regard, 32 local researchers were trained in different modules regarding research and 18 participated as local researchers in this study.

## 2.2 Structure of the Study

In order to capture the strong contextual differences among geographical areas, the study presents separately Jerusalem, the Area C of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Each geographical area includes the three research areas mentioned above, i.e. "Protection Threats", "Coping Strategies" and "External Aid". The study presents first the analysis of the "Protection threats", developing those that are considered most important by the communities; then, the "Coping Strategies" are presented in the same order as those "Protection Threats" so as to facilitate readability. Finally, considerations on "External Aid" and Conclusions are presented for each geographical area.

## 2.3 Methodology, Local Researchers and Coverage

**Sample** The study is based on in-depth individual interviews and focus groups discussions with 522 Palestinians - (287 female/235 male). Additional interviews in order to contextualize the information and its analysis have been undertaken with international donors and NGOs, local NGOs and local authorities. The sample of 522 Palestinians includes both geographical and categorical strata.

**Geographical strata** The research covered Palestinians living in three areas that offer distinctly different contexts and even different legal situations, namely East Jerusalem, the West Bank (Area C) and the Gaza Strip. 143 local persons (83 female/60 male) were interviewed in East Jerusalem; 214 local persons (119 female/95 male) were interviewed in Area C and 165 local persons were interviewed in the Gaza Strip (85 female / 80 male).

Each of these geographical areas contains a large diversity of communities, and in order to capture this variety, the research included a further geographical breakdown as follows: **East Jerusalem:** the researchers were distributed so as to cover interviews in the Old City, in the Holy Basin, in sensitive areas (Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, Al-Issawiyah, etc), in urban suburbs North and South, on the outside side of the Wall and in rural areas. **West Bank:** the comparatively large area of the West Bank, and the fact that the research is concerned with protection, made advisable to focus the efforts in Area C (61% of the total area in the West Bank). The inherent assumption was that by including area C the research would capture most of the problems that also affect Areas A and B, but not the other way around, as area C encompasses a larger number of protection problems, including most in Area A and B. Still, Area C contains significant geographical differences and in order to capture them, the researchers were distributed in five geographical sub-areas with different characteristics: Central West Bank (around Ramallah, closer to the Palestinian authority with comparatively more opportunities for employment, more urban, etc); Southern area (around Hebron with more agriculture and land related problems, etc); Northern area (specific social characteristics, further away from centre); and the Jordan Valley. **Gaza Strip:** the distribution included three main geographical areas: South (around Rafah and Khan Yunis), Center (around Gaza city) and North (around Beit Lahiya).

**Categorical strata** The most important strata considered was male/female (slightly tilted in favour of female (see *gender approach* below). Other categories considered for the distribution were rural and urban settings, age groups (incorporating married and single) and social condition.<sup>c</sup> Finally, the sample also includes "**bias mitigation meetings**" i.e. a specific attention to groups that are not proportionally represented, but whose particular characteristics call for special attention. The most important of these groups was refugees, but the coverage also included a sample of Bedouins, middle-high class (otherwise not captured), elderly (to compensate the demographic preponderance of young and middle age), and residents near buffer zones in Gaza or fishermen.

**Data collection and data analysis** The fundamental base of the study is *qualitative*, but the extent of the sample and its stratification has allowed a degree of *quantitative weightings*. Whereas it should be clear that this method does not transform the essential qualitative nature of the study into a quantitative one, it adds a useful approximation in order to show decision-makers which behaviours, opinions or actions described are more *general* and which ones are more *exceptional* in terms of frequency. These quantifications in the data analysis process are not based on absolute thresholds, but on relative terms i.e. *some statements are more frequent than others*. The qualitative detail of each interview comes from the attention and time given to each of the different persons who participated through semi-structured interviews to individuals and focus groups<sup>1</sup> with an emphasis on probing. The questionnaires/interview guides were initially designed by the two lead researchers after an extensive consultation process with different actors - donors, government, local and international NGOs - to identify potential aspects of particular interest. The draft was subsequently piloted by the two lead researchers to ensure its feasibility and effectiveness. Finally, the draft was discussed in detail with the local researchers in order to refine it and further adapt its language and content to get as close as possible to a natural interaction with the local communities. The two lead researchers collected information independently except for the piloting phase, whereas local researchers worked in teams of two combining male/male, female/male, female/female so as to adapt to the cultural environment, balance between those with/without previous knowledge of the local community, etc. This "couples" approach also aimed at improving the research result (correcting each other mistakes and using the best skills of each other) and improving the capacity building process.

**Training and engagement of Local Researchers** The two lead researchers trained 32 local researchers of which 18 participated in the subsequent research. The training was both theoretical and practical (with accompaniment to the field and joint reflections), with three main objectives: (1) To equip the trainees with the skills needed to participate as researchers in the L2GP research and contribute to enhance its coverage in quantitative and qualitative terms. (2) To train the researchers beyond the needs of the L2GP research from design to data analysis and report writing. This part of the training equips the trainee with the remaining fundamental skills needed to undertake qualitative research in the future. (3) The organizations that contribute to L2GP in Palestine are strengthened in their research capacity both for their own research needs or to offer services to third parties. (See details about training content in "Appendix D. Training concept for 32 local researchers").

The engagement of local researchers entails advantages and disadvantages. The main disadvantages are the need of a serious effort in training - as a superficial approach would

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<sup>c</sup>Whereas "bias mitigation" interviews were held with persons of all social classes so as to capture different angles of how protection threats are perceived, the vast majority of interviews were conducted with random Palestinian community members who experience situations lived by average Palestinians.

not suffice - and the much higher degree of uncertainty it entails in terms of time prediction - different persons have different rhythms, translations are needed, quality control is needed. Another potential issue to be taken into account is the objectivity of the researchers. Whereas any person - local or foreigner - has biases, the local ones are of a different nature and need to be addressed differently.

The main advantages are the improvement of the final result in terms of scope and legitimacy and a process that constitutes in itself an important benefit for all the parties involved. In the opinion of the Lead Consultants the pros clearly outweigh the cons.

**Quotes** The most representative quotes among similar statements have been chosen so that the reader has direct access to original comments. When different statements add different nuances they have also been added. Every quote indicates its source in the sample<sup>2</sup> so that the reader can contextualize the opinions. The objective information is accompanied by the author's analysis, but interpretations are separated from the quotes, so that the reader can have the final judgment.

## 2.4 Acknowledgements

First of all, the authors express their heartfelt thanks to those who ultimately laid the foundations for this study, the 552 persons who gave us their time, trusted us and shared their life stories and opinions in the hope that this information could help decision makers to make better decisions for Palestine. Their trust became our responsibility and we humbly hope to have been at the height of their expectations.

The participation in the field research of a group of local researchers was instrumental not only to expand the study coverage in geographic and quantitative terms, but also to count on their local perspective and approach. In Jerusalem and the West bank the team was composed of Amany Khalefa, Layan Al Azza, Ayat Hasanat, Samah Al Khateeb, Reena Abu Sneneh, Amer Arouri, Iyad Khalefeh, Khaled Salem and Khaleel Abu Khadijeh. In the Gaza Strip the team was composed of Sabreen Al Tartour, Wala' Sa'afeen, Dalia Younis, Reem, Al Shareef, Mohamad Abu Asaker, Mohamad Abu Ameera and Mahmoud Al Afranji.

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## 2.5 Background: Situation in Palestine

Twenty one years have passed since the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (Oslo Accords) between the Palestinian Liberation

Organisation (PLO) and the Government of Israel, in September 1993. The accords implied that after a transitional period, Israel would agree on the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel in exchange for Palestinians accepting that said state would be limited to a small part of the entire territory of historic Palestine and recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the remainder. A protocol in 1994 was signed between the two parties regarding the economic agreement which addressed the need for "employment for Palestinian labourers; economic growth to bring about a rise in standards of living and create opportunities for personal growth; and developing a public sector that would supply public goods (including infrastructure), while creating a sound tax-collection system."<sup>3</sup>

The Oslo accords saw a steady process of decline as both sides accused one another of failing to implement key aspects of the agreements and what was meant to be a transitional period, became a permanent de facto situation where the interim Palestinian Authority (PA) became permanent and the West Bank remained divided into Areas A under Palestinian control, Area B under Palestinian civil control and Israeli/Palestinian military control, and Area C<sup>4</sup> under exclusive Israeli military and civil control. In addition to this, the continuous expansion of illegal<sup>5</sup> Jewish settlements in Palestinian land and progressive Israeli fragmentation of the Palestinian territories increasingly make the creation of a viable Palestinian State unfeasible.

Since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1993, the PA immediately began to direct its efforts towards the establishment of effective administrative control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip through the formation of nascent government institutions to provide basic services to citizens, develop public policy, a national planning process and a legal framework as first stages in the state building project. Several reform activities took place by the PA mainly on education,<sup>6</sup> health<sup>7</sup> and internal security (Police) with the involvement of several international aid and United Nations (UN) agencies as well as local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>8</sup> A committee known as the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC) was formed under Norwegian Chairmanship to provide overall guidance and coordination for the implementation of the Oslo Agreement.<sup>9</sup> However, the economic aspect after Oslo was not stable, but it was starting to overcome the recession afflicting it since the initiation of the "peace process".<sup>10</sup>

By 1996, Palestinians witnessed their first national elections, resulting in the independent election of a president and a Palestinian Legislative Council. This phase is considered particularly decisive for Palestinian non-governmental organizations, working to ensure the building of a Palestinian state based on the democratic principles enshrined in the 1988 Palestinian Declaration of Independence. Many initiatives took place at this time by human rights and women organizations to implement the provisions of this declaration, which calls for Palestinian equal rights.

In 1999, a decline in the Palestinian economic growth was witnessed, "the gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 6.1 percent, compared to declines of 5.1 percent in 1996 and 0.7 percent in 1997 and a slight rise in 1998. Unemployment fell from a high of 32 percent in 1996 to less than 11 percent in the first half of 2000".<sup>11</sup> Comparing to the Israeli economic Growth, since 1970s to 1996, there was a continuous growth as stated in the World Bank report "The Israeli economy has enjoyed rapid growth since the late 1980s. GDP has risen 42 percent since 1990, at an annual average of 6 percent. The growth rate of real GDP reached 6.5 percent in 1994 and 7.1 percent in 1995; per capita GDP growth rate reached 4.0 and 4.3 percent in these two years respectively.<sup>12</sup> This growth continued to date with a slight decline in 2013. The Unbalance between the Palestinian economic growth and the Israeli growth refer back to the fact that Israel has "shaped the links between the two economies and determined overall economic policy. These links between the two economies, combined with the economic policies of the Israeli government, resulted in a distorted structure of employment and trade in the Palestinian economy".<sup>13</sup> Israel

intended to keep the Palestinian economic weak and dependent as declared by Israel's defence minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1986: "there will be no development initiated by the Israeli Government, and no permits will be given for expanding agriculture or industry, which may compete with the State of Israel"<sup>14</sup>

Since the Second *intifada* in 2000 to date, Israel followed a policy of targeting Palestinian establishments and infrastructure and implemented a regime of collective punishment resulting in sharp declines in all socio economic indicators including the quality of health and education services and a steep increase in the unemployment rate,<sup>15</sup> and a separation between families as a result of the restrictions on movement due to the Israeli military blocked entrances and exits and the construction of the Wall.<sup>d</sup> Villages and cities were cut off from each other.<sup>e</sup> A suffocating siege was imposed on movement even for medical crews who were either were delayed at checkpoints or denied access. Cases were recorded of women having to give birth at checkpoints due to delays while commuting from Areas C and B to Area A in an attempt to reach properly equipped hospitals. These developments were paralleled by an escalation in land confiscation as a result of an increase in Israeli settlement construction and the construction of the Wall on Palestinian agricultural lands across the West Bank. All these factors have severely impacted the establishment of the Palestinian State.

In 2007, tensions in the Palestinian Authority areas heightened with the growing strife amongst political factions following an election won by the Islamist movement, Hamas, over its main rival, Fatah, a mainstream party led by the Palestinian President. As a result, the Palestinian Legislative Council was suspended, not only limiting the possibility of unifying the legal framework of the oPt, but also removing any effective checks and balances on the Executive. At the same time, violent fights broke out between Hamas and Fatah in Gaza Strip where Fatah had ruled since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1993. As soon as Hamas took control over the Gaza Strip, Israel immediately imposed a very tight blockade on the territory to contain Hamas, causing a humanitarian crisis and, as a response, donor countries shifted their support in Gaza Strip from development to relief assistance to help Palestinians cope with the situation. Food, medical supplies, construction materials and all other goods were only occasionally allowed into the Gaza Strip and to a very limited extent and access for Palestinians and aid workers became extremely limited. The strip remains under Hamas rule.

From mid-2002, however, donors began again to focus on support to public sector development with the Palestinian National Authority in the West Bank. To support the largely donor driven public sector reform programs, a donor coordination structure was established comprising sector task forces and sector reform support groups. Membership in sector groups was largely restricted to donors.<sup>16</sup> Following the signing of the Paris Protocols governing economic relations between Israel and the Palestinians in 2005, a new shift in the pattern of external aid became clear. The donors increased their direct support to the Palestinian Authority resulting in a decrease in funding to Palestinian Non-governmental Organizations. In 2006, following the Hamas victory in the Palestinian municipal elections, an international boycott of the Hamas government in Gaza began and donor funding in support of the Palestinian public sector was re-directed to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, recognized by the international community as the legitimate authority. The humanitarian crisis in the besieged Gaza Strip continued to grow deeper.

<sup>d</sup>Its total length is 708 Kilometres, approximately twice the length of the 1949 Green line and its width ranges between 80-100 metres. 9 % of the West Bank is forcibly annexed into Israel. Upon completion, it is estimated that 85% of the wall will have been built within the West Bank.

<sup>e</sup>The Wall also contributes to restricted movement and loss of access to the formal and informal job market and economic disruption, particularly between Jerusalem and the West Bank



The 2012 UN Consolidated Appeal (CAP) articulates the humanitarian community's two-year strategy to tackle the most urgent humanitarian needs resulting from this protracted humanitarian crisis. The appeal requested US \$416.7 million for 149 relief projects in 2012. The OPT is considered one of the top 20 recipients of international humanitarian aid, receiving a total of US \$6.5bn<sup>17</sup> between 2001 and 2010.

Palestinians in the West Bank also continue to face economic hardships despite the increase in external aid, particularly those communities in areas impacted by the continuing construction of the Wall and those communities in area C, who are not direct recipients of Palestinian Authority development assistance as they are under full Israeli administration. These areas have, as a result, become increasingly vulnerable to poverty, high unemployment and domestic violence.

Palestine is considered a deeply patriarchal society, with social and cultural norms, traditions and values, which give privilege to men over women based on the concept of the primary role of males as income earners for the household. Gender roles are constructed based on this gender division, which subordinates women's status and stresses their role in the private sphere conferring more value to men's productive role. Notable progress has been made on gender integration issues at the level of public policy. Examples include the development of a national gender strategy, the requirement for gender budgeting, the endorsement of CEDAW and the adoption of SCR 1325. However, real implementation of gender-sensitive policies is still weak - both in local and external interventions - and gender balance remains a challenge.

## Notes

1. The focus groups had an average of 4 persons each.
2. Male/female, age if relevant, individual interview or focus group and location.
3. Arnon, Arie & Spinak, Avia. Economic Aspects of Oslo Process. *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture*. Vol.5 Nos. 3&4 1998.
4. Less than 1% of area C is designated for use by Palestinians, who are also unable to build in their own existing villages in area C due to Israeli restrictions. *West Bank and Gaza - Area C and the future of the Palestinian economy*. Washington DC; World Bank Group. World Bank. 2013.
5. The establishment of settlements in the West Bank violates many rules of international law to which Israel is committed. International humanitarian law prohibits the establishment of settlements. In addition, failing to adhere to this prohibition has brought about the violation of other fundamental human rights of the Palestinians, which are enshrined in international human rights law. See details in By Hook and by Crook. *Israeli Settlement Policy in the West Bank*. B'tselem. July 2010.
6. Several schools have been established in rural areas which before 1993 were abandoned by Israeli occupation authority. Also, During the PA regime unified a curriculum between Gaza Strip and West Bank was accomplished. See In: See more in: *Jerusalem Media and Communication (JMCC). Palestinian Education: "A threat on Israeli Security"*. Jerusalem. January.1989( In Arabic) Also In: [http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/palestine/rapport\\_1.html](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/palestine/rapport_1.html)
7. Many primary health care centers established in the suburban areas to meet the need of the increase rate of population. Giacaman, Rita. Abdul-Rahim. F, Hanan. Wick, Laura. (2003) *Health Sector Reform in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT): Targeting the Forest or the Trees?* Oxford University Press. See in: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1457109/>
8. Ibid
9. UN Women, *Cooperation for development effectiveness in the occupied Palestinian territory: Addressing the gender equality gap*, February, 2012
10. Farsakh, Leila. *Under Siege. Closure, Separation and the Palestinian Economy*. Middle East Research and Information Project. Published in MER217. See in: <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer217/under-siege>
11. World Bank. *Development Under Adversity. The Palestinian Economy in Transition*. Edited by Ishac Diwan and Radwan A. Shaban. 19162 March 1999 P.22

12. World Bank. Development Under Adversity. The Palestinian Economy in Transition. Edited by Ishac Diwan and Radwan A. Shaban. 19162 March 1999 P.22
13. Arnon, Arie & Spinak, Avia. Economic Aspects of Oslo Process. Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture. Vol.5 Nos. 3&4 1998
14. Ministry of national Economy and Applied Research Institute (ARIJ). The economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the occupied Palestinian territory. September.2011.p.11
15. For more information about the second Intifada see in: <http://www.alhaq.org/>
16. UN Women, Cooperation for development effectiveness in the occupied Palestinian territory: Addressing the gender equality gap, February, 2012.p.13
17. Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2012, Global Humanitarian Assistance.

# Chapter 3

## Jerusalem

### 3.1 Background: Situation in Jerusalem

The status of Jerusalem remains one of the most complex and key factors vis-à-vis the political resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to the future of Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Muslim relations.

This research does not concern itself with political positions or opinions related to those political aspects, but with the humanitarian situation of its residents. In this respect, this part of the study fundamentally focuses on East Jerusalem from a humanitarian point of view and as an area witness to abundant protection threats.

From a legal point of view, East Jerusalem was annexed by Israel and included within the municipal boundary of Jerusalem following the 1967 war. The international community does not recognize this annexation. The Security Council has resolved that all legislative measures and actions taken by Israel to alter the character and status of Jerusalem are null and void.<sup>a</sup> As an Occupying Power, Israel is bound by the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in time of War to which Israel is a signatory. Article 53 prohibits destruction of property that is not justified by military necessity. The Fourth Geneva Convention also prohibits the transfer of an occupying power's civilian population into the territory it is occupying and the transfer of an occupied civilian population. In spite of this legal protection to minimum standards in situations of conflict, the Israeli authorities have breached these norms aiming to perpetuate the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem and to undermine Palestinian presence in order to obtain territorial and demographic advantage.<sup>b</sup> A number of active measures serve to this purpose, such as restrictive zoning and planning, house demolitions, inequitable provision of municipal services, establishment of settlements, a restrictive residency permit system, inequality of education and health access and the construction of the Wall.

From a strictly humanitarian point of view, some of these measures present direct protection threats whereas others constitute indirect risks. An example of the latter is the establishment of settlements, which fundamentally entails political consequences, i.e. it renders practically impossible any sort of future solution with Jerusalem as a capital of

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<sup>a</sup>See, inter alia, Security Council resolutions 252, 267, 471, 476 and 478.

<sup>b</sup>This reality is abundantly described by numerous independent sources. Some examples are reputed publications -both Israeli and international- such as Shlaim, Avi. *Israel and Palestine. Reappraisals, revisions, refutations.* Verso. 2009; Quigley, John. *The case for Palestine. An international law perspective.* Duke University Press. 2005; Pappè, Ilan. *A history of modern Palestine: One land, two peoples.* Cambridge University Press. 2006. This reality is also reflected in reports from international organizations, such as the EU heads of mission reports published yearly and abundant UN statements.

both states and impedes the contiguity between Jerusalem and the West Bank that is needed for an autonomous and viable Palestinian state. The rest of the measures mentioned above -apart from their political significance- directly affect the basic humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian residents.

A number of humanitarian organisations are present in East Jerusalem, from international agencies such as the European Commission and UN Agencies - including OCHA- to international and local NGOs. It deserves mentioning the existence of a number of Israeli NGOs -mainly in the field of Human Rights- that work in monitoring, researching and exposing the situation of Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem.<sup>c</sup>

## 3.2 Main Protection Challenges in East Jerusalem

Before undertaking the analysis of the specific protection threats perceived as the most important by the local communities in Jerusalem, four aspects need to be clarified. Firstly, practically all interviewees in the different Palestinian communities perceive and declare that the main protection challenge they face is "the **Israeli occupation**" and Jerusalem is not an exception. The perception of the Israeli occupation as the major root cause is consistent throughout the interviews. As the research team considered "the Israeli occupation" as too broad an answer to be treated effectively, instead of discussing this issue, the respondents were specifically asked to speak about more "immediate protection threats". This was the decision of the research team and not that of those interviewed. In consequence, there should be a distinction between what the communities perceive as 'the main protection threat' - the Israeli occupation - as identified by all communities and interviewees in every area of Palestine - and then the more "immediate protection threats" which vary in East Jerusalem, Area C, and the Gaza Strip, and which are explored in some detail over the subsequent pages.

Secondly, Jerusalem presents an **extended catalogue of severe threats**. To illustrate this point, it suffices to provide the reader with an overview of protection threats mentioned by the Palestinian Jerusalemites interviewed in this research. Interviewees mentioned -inter alia- denial of family reunification, lack of access to residence permits - and lack of access to full citizenship or nationality-, problems with child registration, domestic violence, movement restrictions by different means among which the Wall and checkpoints, drug addiction, lack of entertainment, lack of trust in the judicial system, education restrictions -both basic and higher education-, health services limitations, housing problems -among which demolition risk, lack of effective access to building permissions, insufficient space for extended family, severe economic limitations such as a disproportionate rate of poverty<sup>1</sup> and unemployment of Palestinians, limitations due to the effective separation from the West Bank and feelings of deep humiliation and lack of freedom to decide a future.

<sup>c</sup>Among the most notable are the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (B'Tselem), the Center for the Defense of the individual (Hamoked), Ir Amim, or the Israeli Committee against House Demolition (ICAHD).

## Protection Threats mentioned in Jerusalem (no ranking) Identified by Gender

Israeli Occupation	Men&Women
Residence permit related problems	Men&Women
Child registration for Palestinians	Men&Women
Family reunification problems	Men&Women
Continues humiliation	Men&Women
Restricted freedom of movement	Men&Women
Drugs	Men&Women
Having to use an Israeli law system and institutions	Men&Women
Domestic violence	Women
Lack of entertainment facilities for children and youth	Women
Wall	Men&Women
Health access	Men&Women
Isolation from the West Bank	Men&Women
Lack of citizenship	Men&Women
Lack of nationality	Men&Women
Unemployment	Men&Women
Difficulties to access building permits	Men&Women
Uncertainty in the process of get a building permit	Men&Women
House demolition risk	Men&Women
Limited space in the house for extended family	Men&Women
Unaffordable housing	Men&Women
Lack of decision power to decide the future	Men&Women

Thirdly, the research shows a high **heterogeneity** in the description of protection threats by the different communities in Jerusalem. This heterogeneity appears in two layers: not only the main protection threats vary a lot depending on the specific community, but even those issues that appear to be shared by many communities are common only on a general level. Often, what appears to be a common issue adopts different forms in different communities when the analysis is more detailed. This reality entails important practical consequences for any actor planning to offer useful and well-targeted support in the field of protection (see conclusions and recommendations).

Finally, most protection threats suffered in Jerusalem are **interrelated**. Indeed, most interviewees emphasized that it is hardly possible for them to choose the main protection threats, as practically all of these issues affect them in essential aspects of their life and are closely interrelated.

The most important protection threat? My house can be demolished, it is so difficult to find a job, my children are harassed by the soldiers for no reason, I cannot move freely to any place 20 minutes from here ... You want me to decide on the most important? All are equally important to have a normal life! (Man, Silwan, Jerusalem)

Having said this -and for the sake of usefulness and clarity<sup>d</sup>- we exclusively present below the qualitative analysis of those protection threats that were most frequently mentioned by the interviewees in the communities. Among the different issues, two were repeatedly mentioned as the most important among the 143 persons (83 female / 60 male) interviewed in East Jerusalem:

- Displacement-related threats, including Housing restrictions and Residence rights limitations.
- Unemployment.

<sup>d</sup>See details of this approach above, in 2.3. Methodology, local researchers and coverage

## 3.2.1 Displacement-related Threats

The majority of Palestinian Jerusalem residents interviewed identified both Housing Restrictions and Residence Rights limitations as one of the most important protection problems they are suffering. These two problems are presented by the interviewees under multiple angles and with a wide range of negative effects on their lives. Having said this, one common concern prevails in the vast majority of interviewees who are affected by any of these two problems: the pressure to be displaced from Jerusalem. From this perspective, and in spite of the many differences between these two problems, both Housing restrictions and Residence Rights limitations can be considered as two different sides of the same overall protection threat: Displacement from Jerusalem.

### 3.2.1.1 Housing restrictions - Key protection threat as perceived by the community

The majority of Palestinian Jerusalem residents interviewed identified Housing restrictions in general as one of the most important protection problems they are suffering. It is worth observing that whereas House demolition is undoubtedly one of the most visible threats to essential human wellbeing, this particular aspect is perceived by the local communities as one manifestation among many within a wider problem intimately related to a displacement intention. In this regard, the problem can be more accurately defined from a local perspective as the practical impossibility to access appropriate housing to address the natural needs created by the growth of their families. This situation leads in practice to a choice limited to two options: living under tremendously stressing conditions or displacement (see "Coping strategies" below). Before analyzing the perception of the Palestinian residents interviewed in the different Jerusalem communities, we provide the reader with an overview of general facts to help contextualize those testimonies.

### General facts: Housing restrictions in East Jerusalem<sup>2</sup>

- West Jerusalem is exclusively inhabited by Israelis. In East Jerusalem -the area internationally recognised as belonging to Palestine- there are presently approximately 300,000 Palestinian residents, representing approximately 60% of the total population in East Jerusalem. In contrast, only 13% of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction, much of which is already built.
- The access to building permits issued by Israel authorities entails lengthy and often unaffordable processes with a high degree of unpredictability for Palestinian residents.
- The Israeli approach to the zoning, planning and permit process, in combination with the growth of the Palestinian families creates an artificial housing shortage that raises the cost of scarce housing.
- In practical terms, the fact that 70% of Palestinian residents of Jerusalem are below the poverty line forces them to choose between leaving Jerusalem -which results in Israel revoking their residence rights- or expanding their houses without permits.
- The provision of municipal services. Despite the fact that Palestinian residents constitute 37% of the total residents of Jerusalem and pay taxes, they receive 10% of the municipal budget and an inadequate provision of even basic services such as sewage systems, roads, parks, lighting, post offices, schools and community services.
- At least 33% of all Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem lack building permits, which puts at least 93,100 residents in a situation of extreme vulnerability and stress as having been forced to build illegally, they also risk demolition of their homes and subsequent displacement.
- Since 1967, the Israeli authorities have demolished over 1,900 houses only in East Jerusalem -without counting other structures. In the last 10 years 448 houses were demolished only in East Jerusalem.

The interviewees who mentioned Housing restrictions as one of the main protection threats, described experiences that show different angles of the problem. Indeed, similarly to what happens with the rest of the protection problems in Palestine (see Area C and Gaza Strip Chapters), the appearance of having many communities suffering from the same problem remains true as long as this problem is defined in broad terms -i.e. Housing restrictions. However, from the moment in which the research gets closer to the community's specific perception of that problem, heterogeneity becomes the rule, and communities show a vast array of different problems, that often need different answers. As we will see below, within the category of Housing restrictions there are some individuals and communities that emphasize universal protection needs such as avoiding the risk of home demolition or the desperate difficulty of paying rent. In contrast, many others perceive as their biggest problem the lack of privacy in the overcrowded Palestinian houses and neighborhoods. The common link to these problems is that all communities share a strong stress caused by a constant pressure to abandon Jerusalem that is exerted in different and simultaneous forms.

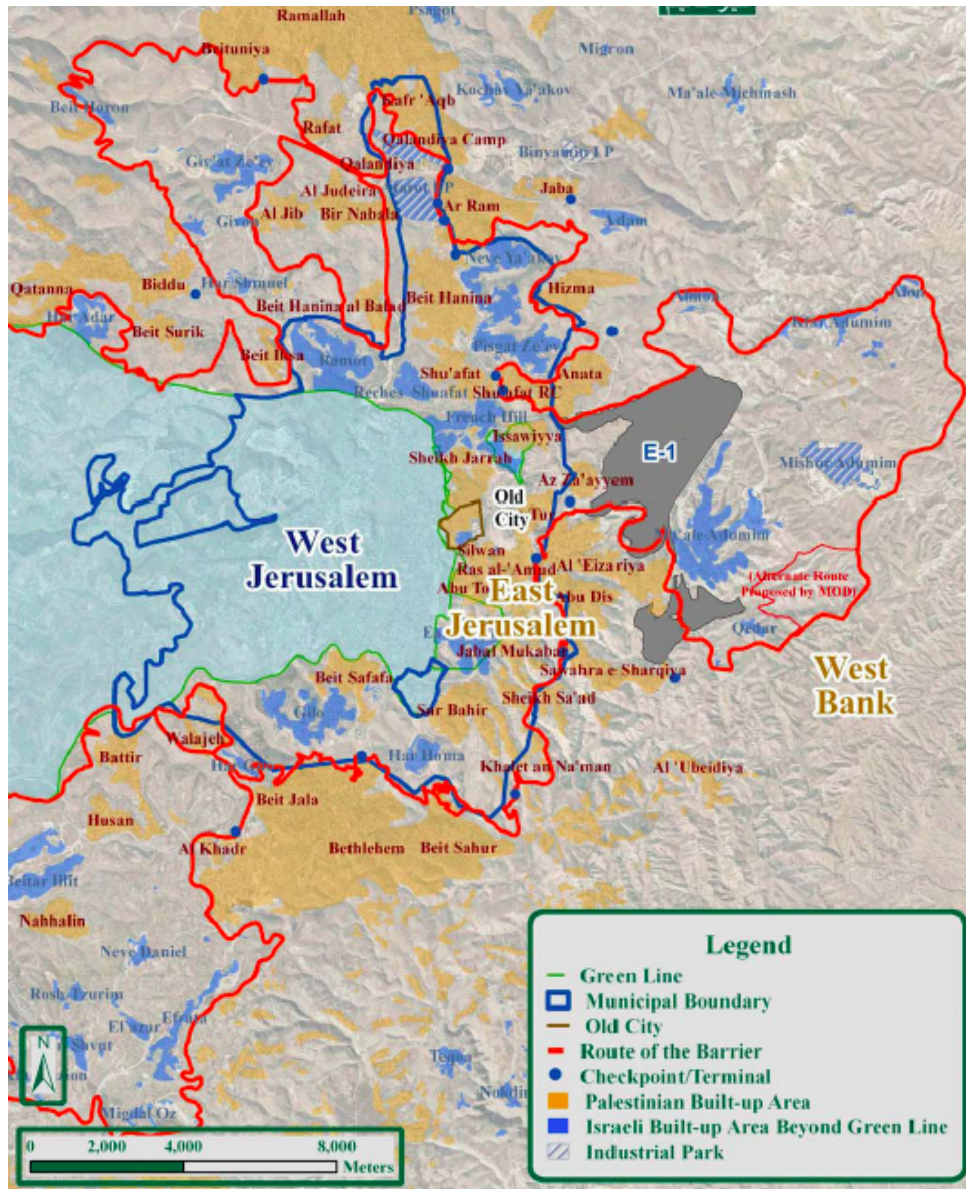


Figure 3.1: The map<sup>4</sup> shows an overview of the Jerusalem Municipal boundary (blue), the internationally recognized green line between Israel and oPt that also divides West and East Jerusalem, a red line showing the route of the Wall built well inside occupied Palestinian territories, and those Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem -in light brown- and Israeli settlements - in blue -constructed beyond the green line.



The specific protection challenges within the *Housing restrictions* problem as perceived by the communities can be categorized as follows:

- Overcrowding
- Home demolition risk
- Dissatisfaction with municipal services
- Difficulty to pay rent (to be presented together with "unemployment")
- Specific situation of Bedouins

**Overcrowding** Problems related to overcrowding are pervasive among interviewees. One of the negative effects emphasized by the interviewees is the pressure that overcrowding puts on social relations within the household and with the neighbors.

We cannot build another floor, and our house is really full. We were 9 living in two rooms, and now our cousins are coming to live with us. I don't know what are we going to do. It puts pressure on all of us, it is like being in a submarine (Male, 40, Old City, Jerusalem)

We live in Jerusalem, a modern city, but if somebody visited this neighbourhood, they would be really shocked to see the state we live in. I think that the world just does not understand that we live in the Third World here, no room for a decent human life with families piling on each other, no sanitation, pressure and stress all the time. And all of this is just well thought, is not an accident. The world does not understand this... or maybe they don't want to understand (Female, 30s, Anata, Jerusalem)

The lack of privacy, intimately connected to social tension is also frequently singled out:

Whenever one has a problem not only the rest of the family knows, but also our neighbours can hear us, because we live wall to wall, it is unbearable (Male, 30, Old City, Jerusalem)

You know how hard it is not to have a single moment alone? To live in a life where being alone in a room, thinking or looking yourself at the mirror does not exist? (Female, 20s, Old City Jerusalem)

Women feel particularly burdened by the situation, as their already high responsibilities within the household are further increased.

Since my brother family had to move in with us, I have time for nothing. Of course, I am happy we can help them, but you have to understand that cooking and washing for all, and taking care of all children is a big job (Female, 28, Al- Issawiya, Jerusalem)

Apart from the negative effect on the family and on social relations that appear explicitly in the interviews, it would be fair to estimate that there is a high likelihood of additional consequences connected to overcrowding but not explicitly shared by the interviewees, as their causality is less obvious to them. Studies in Palestine and abundant international research<sup>5</sup> connect overcrowding with substandard education, early marriage, health risks<sup>6</sup> and -specially- psychological effects.<sup>7</sup> *"Direct and indirect psychological effects result from overcrowding: lack of privacy is linked to depression and other negative psychological outcomes; overcrowding contributes to psychological frustrations which, in turn, have a bearing on behavioural responses and residents' ability to cope with the conditions."*<sup>8</sup>

**Home demolition** The human consequences related to the demolition of a family's home is difficult to comprehend in all its dimensions by an external actor. It destroys essential assets and it impedes life stability at its core in many different ways:

We barely had 10 minutes to take the most important things before they started demolishing. Losing our home is something that you cannot explain to somebody who is not in that position. It is not only our things, but our dignity, our place in the world (Man, Anata, Jerusalem)

We have rebuilt the house three times, with the help of friends and organizations, but this is no life, knowing that at any moment somebody can come and destroy everything. You cannot make plans, you don't really feel that you have a safe place to be (Woman, Abu Tor, Jerusalem)

We live next to the wall, and all of us have demolition orders. We don't know what to do. We are not even allowed to make repairs in the houses and they are in a very bad condition with water leaking into the houses... In winter is terrible. There are no vacant houses for the young ones or for us, but we refuse to leave, we have left too many times already (Focus Group, women, Anata, Jerusalem)

Notwithstanding the immense direct negative impact, in the perception of local communities, the damage provoked by house demolition goes beyond immediate consequences, as it causes trauma and further vulnerability.

Not only they destroy the houses, but the families are requested to destroy the houses themselves or they have to pay for the "service". It is humiliation over humiliation, clearly they want to break you, and in some cases they succeed, you can see it in the eyes of some people (Focus Group, men, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

The destruction is terrible in itself. But the trauma inside is also horrible and much more difficult to see, but it is there. Children lose their references, they start having problems at school, they cry without apparent reason... (Social worker, Beit Hanina, Jerusalem)

The family who goes under a process of home demolition accumulates problems, not just the home demolition, as they become more vulnerable. Some have to ask for help and get debts, the children need special care, the men feel that they lose their honour and have more conflicts with their wives... It is difficult to single out one aspect, but all of them together puts the family under enormous pressure (Man, Old City, Jerusalem)

The extent of the problem is by no means small. Even if it is not possible to access official figures covering the phenomenon or appropriate breakdowns, specialized estimations<sup>9</sup> calculate that 24,130 Palestinian homes have been demolished in all of oPt since 1967. 1,900 houses have been demolished only in East Jerusalem - not counting other structures. The homes of 448 families have been demolished in 2012 alone. It is also relevant to clarify that whereas other democratic countries resort to demolition as last resort for enforcement of planning regulations, Jerusalem is the only place in which this is combined with a systematic denial of permits to a particular ethnic group and in which demolition orders are issued in such scale and in open disproportion against a particular ethnic group.<sup>10</sup>

Over and above the actual number of demolitions, the protection threat related to demolitions is not just the demolition itself and all its terrible consequences, but the very real "risk of demolition" in itself, which creates a tremendous pressure on the communities even before it takes effect.

**Dissatisfaction with municipal services** A closer discussion with the interviewees reveals that one of the main perceived problems within Housing restrictions, is the strong dissatisfaction with municipal services,<sup>e</sup> despite paying taxes like any other resident in West Jerusalem. This is regularly perceived as part of a displacement strategy.

We pay taxes in the same way that Israelis pay taxes. However, we get nothing in return. See this neighbourhood, the pavement, the waste management, anything. Now compare it to any West Jerusalem neighbourhood. They are just stealing from us in open light, and there is nothing we can do (Man, Al-Issawiya, Jerusalem)

<sup>e</sup>In spite of constituting 37% of the total residents of Jerusalem and paying taxes, Palestinians residents of Jerusalem receive 10% of the municipal budget and an inadequate provision of even basic services such as sewage systems, roads, parks, lighting, post offices, schools and community services.

The provision of municipal services is inadequate and discriminatory against Palestinian residents. In spite of constituting 37% of the total residents of Jerusalem and paying taxes, they receive 10% of the municipal budget and an inadequate provision of even basic services such as sewage systems, roads, parks, lighting, post offices, schools and community services. These complaints represent many similar ones, and are also consistent with the global data offered by different actors. A breakdown offered by B'tselem in 2011 serves to acquire an idea of the disproportion between West Jerusalem and East Jerusalem, even if data are not updated. It included the following comparative data: Almost 90 percent of the sewage pipes, roads, and sidewalks are found in West Jerusalem; West Jerusalem has 1,000 public parks, East Jerusalem has 45; West Jerusalem has 34 swimming pools, East Jerusalem has three; West Jerusalem has 26 libraries, East Jerusalem has two; West Jerusalem has 531 sports facilities, East Jerusalem has 33. More recent data (2012) by ACRI show for example that there are only 9 Post Offices in East Jerusalem compared with 42 in West Jerusalem.

As regularly emphasised in the interviews, this vulnerability aspect can only be understood in its whole magnitude when interpreted in combination with other protection threats. Together, they constitute a multifaceted pressure on the local residents that encourages them to leave.

It is not a coincidence that in the Palestinian neighbourhoods of Jerusalem there are insufficient schools, terrible municipal services, demolition risk, no gardens. These are just the things that any normal citizen would need to live a normal life. Not providing them is the silent strategy of the Israelis to make us leave. It is as simple as that, you do not need to look further (Focus Group, men, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

**Specific situation of Bedouins** The Bedouins living between East Jerusalem and its periphery further East- already in Area C- appear in the study as a especially vulnerable community that is in particular risk regarding Housing restrictions and more specifically Home demolition.

You will find how many in this community have eviction orders, not just one or two, but most of us. It is very hard to live like this, not knowing if at any instant they will come with the bulldozers and the soldiers and will be left under the sky with no place to go (Woman, Bedouin community, East of Jerusalem)

My parents were displaced from the Naqab in 1948, then we were forced to move again in 1967... Even if they make our life impossible and threaten us, we will not move again; they just want to make space to expand their settlements, they have no right... (Male leader, Bedouin community, East of Jerusalem)

These testimonies are general among Bedouins interviewed and are consistent with the general situation experienced by this community. Approximately 3,000 Bedouins live in the area located east of Jerusalem. 300 of them have been displaced due to demolitions and 90% of them have demolition orders pending against their homes. Over 80% of them are refugees. 50% of them are not connected to the water network and none of them have access to the electrical grid (see main protection problems in Area C). Despite receiving humanitarian assistance, 55% of them are food insecure.<sup>11</sup>

The situation of Bedouins is not unrelated to that of Palestinians in East Jerusalem. The displacements in East Jerusalem and in the Bedouin community combined contribute to the creation of an Israeli continuity between Jerusalem and the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim which advances towards the creation of a "Greater Jerusalem" that with the development of Mevaseret Adumim would reach the Jordan Valley.

Thus, the strategic significance of the pressure exerted on these communities, transcends the negative impact on each community affected. It contributes to further fragmentation and discontinuity of the West Bank, rendering a viable two-state solution unfeasible.

### 3.2.1.2 Residence Rights limitations - Key protection threat as perceived by the community

As mentioned above, the majority of Palestinian Jerusalem residents interviewed identified Residence Rights limitations as one of the most important protection challenge they face. Even if the interviewees expressed a variety of sub-problems within this category, the common concern that prevailed in most testimonies is the threat of displacement. In this regard, Housing restrictions and Residence Rights limitations constitute two different sides of the same overall protection threat: Displacement from Jerusalem.

Before analyzing the perception of the Palestinian residents interviewed in the different Jerusalem communities, an overview of general facts may help contextualize the subsequent testimonies.

#### General facts: Residence Rights limitations in East Jerusalem<sup>12</sup>

- Under Israeli law, the majority of Palestinians living in Jerusalem are 'permanent residents' rather than citizens of Israel, and their residency status is conditional on their proving that their 'centre of life' lies within the Israeli-defined municipal boundary of Jerusalem.
- Residence status can be revoked if authorities consider that the conditions for residency are not met. Approximately 14,000 East Jerusalem Palestinians had their residency revoked between 1967 and mid-2010 (not including dependent children).
- As permanent residency is not automatically transferred through marriage, a Palestinian resident of East Jerusalem who marries a Palestinian from elsewhere in the oPt, and wishes to reside in the city with his/her spouse must apply for family unification. The application process for family reunification is onerous and has become virtually impossible since 2003, when Israel introduced the Nationality and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order). The Law disproportionately impacts residents of East Jerusalem, who are forbidden from family unification not only with their spouses, but with their minor children.
- Unlike citizenship, permanent residency is not passed on to the holder's children 'by right', and children can only receive permanent residence under certain conditions. This leads to difficulties in the registration of children - where one parent is a Jerusalem resident and the other is a resident of the rest of the West Bank or Gaza Strip - with one source estimating that there are as many as 10,000 unregistered children in East Jerusalem. As a consequence, there are numerous Palestinians residing 'illegally' in East Jerusalem with their spouses, and incidences of separated families where the non-Jerusalem partner is forced to live outside of the city, with or without the children.
- Since Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967, and its subsequent annexation, Palestinian residents of the remainder of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have been prohibited from residing in East Jerusalem, other than through the 'family unification' process. Since the early 1990s, Palestinian residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have also required permits to enter East Jerusalem and Israel.

The interviewees covered by this study mentioned all the problems expressed in the box above as some of the most pressing protection threats they are experiencing. Two aspects were almost universally underlined in the testimonies.

- Dependence for fundamental rights on a hostile occupying power
- Burden of proof causing permanent vulnerability

Most interviewees emphasized the outrage experienced by having their residence rights depending on rules and decisions made by an occupying power.

I was born here, my father was born here, my grand-father was born here. Can somebody explain to me on what right can an Israeli authority decide if I am from Jerusalem or not? (Man, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

I hope you realize how absurd this is. The same people who want to see us leaving this place are the ones who get to decide if we comply with the rules or not. Do I need to explain why this makes no sense? (Young woman, Al-Issawiya, Jerusalem)

The unequal treatment of Israeli and Palestinian citizens is mentioned by many as an additional reason for resentment.

Persons from any part of the world, from Australia, from Russia, from anywhere, can decide one day to come here, because the State of Israel welcomes them if they are Jews. And at the same time, we, who have lived and grew up here, we need to prove one thousand things if we want to stay! (Focus Group, men, Old City, Jerusalem)

My husband is not a resident, I am, and it is impossible to imagine all the difficulties I am given to just register my child. Do you know that an Israeli child can be registered without a problem even if is born in any other country? (Young woman, Beit Hanina, Jerusalem)

The fact that the Palestinian residents may be required at any time to prove that they comply with every requisite to be a resident, places them in a situation of high vulnerability. The burden of proof in itself is underlined by many as a source of stress and concern.

Israeli inspectors visited us by surprise before Eid, just to check that we had food in the refrigerator and that we were really staying there and preparing to celebrate (Man, Beit Hanina, Jerusalem)

In the moment that something is unclear to the Israelis, they will make your life impossible asking for all kinds of proof that you really live here. It never ends, if you show a rental receipt, then they ask you for a different bill. To some people they ask them for pictures showing that they have been there continuously (Woman, Ras Al- Amud, Jerusalem)

One of the aspects of concern that most interviewees underlined is the permanent stress caused by the sensation that any trivial fault or oversight may accidentally put them in risk of displacement.

It is very easy to forget one month about some municipal tax or requirement and to get in trouble if you are unlucky" (Focus Group, women, Al-Issawiya, Jerusalem)

It is difficult to know every requirement, especially when the rules also change. Many of us may be at risk of not complying with some regulation without even knowing it, they are so complicated and we are simple people, we cannot know all of them (Focus Group, men, Old City, Jerusalem)

The Residence Rights limitations combined with House restrictions and demolitions, inadequate provision of services in East Jerusalem exert a pressure that not only creates direct vulnerabilities and protection threats, but it ultimately encourages "voluntary" displacement. One testimony among many similar ones explains this sentiment:

It is very clear to us that none of these policies are a coincidence, they are very well planned to make us leave Jerusalem, which is the main purpose of the Israelis. One day you can call it revocation of residence rights, another day you can call it having your kid arrested with no reason. It is all part of the same strategy: putting pressure on us until we leave (Focus Group, men, Silwan, Jerusalem)

### 3.2.2 Unemployment

The interviews and study shows Unemployment as the most fundamental protection problem in East Jerusalem together with the already presented Displacement-related threats.

Although the Unemployment problem shows different manifestations and shapes in Jerusalem, its disproportionate impact on Palestinians is perceived by the interviewees as directly linked to Israeli interventions.

Before presenting the analysis of Unemployment as described by the communities in East Jerusalem, some general facts may help contextualize the testimonies:

#### General facts: Unemployment in East Jerusalem<sup>f,13</sup>

- 40% of the male Arab population in Jerusalem does not participate in the labour market.
- Approximately 85% of Palestinian women in Jerusalem do not participate in the workforce.
- 75.3% of Palestinians and 83.1% of Palestinian children (over 95,000) live below the poverty line.
- East Jerusalem has historically served as the centre of Palestinian economic and social life. Following the 1967 war, Israel annexed the area and Israeli law came into effect, differentiating status between Palestinians living in Jerusalem and in other Palestinian areas. The route of the Wall, which winds its way around Jerusalem along 142 km has effectively cut off Palestinian neighbourhoods from one another and isolated them from Jerusalem's urban centre.
- Due to the checkpoints and a requirement that Palestinians from the West Bank attain permits from the army to cross into the city, East Jerusalem has gone from being a central urban hub that provides services and opportunities to wide portions of the West Bank, to a border city with extremely limited access.
- More than 5,000 Palestinian businesses in Jerusalem have closed their doors between 1999 and 2011.
- The only industrial area of East Jerusalem, in Wadi Joz, is in danger due to fines and eviction orders issued after being categorized as a residential area by the Israeli authorities.
- There are three primary fields of employment for Palestinians in East Jerusalem: The hotel and restaurant sector (25%), education (19%), and general service providers (19%).

The interviewees who mentioned Unemployment as one of their main protection threats, described experiences that show different angles of the problem. Again, similarly to what happens with the rest of the protection problems in Palestine (see Chapters treating Area C and Gaza Strip), the appearance of having many communities suffering from the same problem remains true as long as this problem is defined in broad terms -i.e. Unemployment. However, once examined more closely, heterogeneity becomes the rule, and communities show a vast array of different sub-problems and different strategies, depending on the specific context. Having said this, the feeling that there is a strategic pressure from Israel to have Palestinians abandon Jerusalem is shared by all communities interviewed.

<sup>f</sup>There is no official data on unemployment rates amongst Palestinians in East Jerusalem because the statistics compiled by the Israeli authorities do not differentiate between Arab and Jewish residents.

The different situations and causes related to Unemployment according to the communities interviewed can be categorized under the following main three groups:

- The Wall and its economic impact
- Israeli measures affecting Palestinian workers in East Jerusalem
- Women's specific difficulties to join the work-force

**The Wall and its economic impact** The Wall has de facto isolated East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. Jerusalem has traditionally been the centre of Palestinian economic, trade and social life, but now the very limited access impedes its natural potential and has a core negative impact on trade. Interviewees add different additional obstacles to this general situation:

The Annexation Wall is destroying our business. Before, many people from big neighbouring areas such as Abu Dis or Al-Azariya would come and do their shopping here. Since the Annexation Wall was built that is over (Man, merchant, Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem)

It is very hard to survive, the Israelis find always ways of making our life difficult. This market used to be flooded by people coming from the West Bank, especially on Fridays when they came to pray. The Annexation Wall finished that and things have been very tough. I used to have two assistants, but I could not longer keep them (Man, merchant, Old City, Jerusalem)

**Israeli measures affecting Palestinian workers in East Jerusalem** The difficulties created by the lack of access to customers from the rest of the West Bank are compounded by Israeli trade regulations that strongly hinder the flow of goods and services between the West Bank and Jerusalem.

The Israelis make us feel as if the West Bank was a different country from which we need to import and pay taxes. You realize? Import! From our brothers who live 30 kilometres from here and were always our suppliers or buyers. It does not make sense (Man, merchant, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

Others emphasize the compounded effect of trade regulations with other pressures on the overall budget to sustain a livelihood.

It is easy to make the calculation. What we buy from the West Bank has become more expensive, and we barely make a profit. At the same time, the prices we pay for rent have risen: how can we make ends meet?" (Man. Merchant, Beit Hanina. Jerusalem)

As with "Housing Restrictions" the threat of displacement constitutes a gloomy backdrop to all these economic problems.

It is not possible to be competitive with agricultural products from the West Bank in Jerusalem. The only solution left is to leave Jerusalem and go to the West Bank, which is what the Israelis want. We will try to avoid that as long as we can, but honestly, I don't know how much longer will that be possible (Focus group, women, merchant families, Old City, Jerusalem)

**Women's specific difficulties to join the work force** As mentioned above, only 15% of Palestinian women participate in the work force in Jerusalem. The interviewees identify the different causes for this inequality as stemming from gender roles, the pressure exerted by double work and the shortage of municipal pre-school programs.

The majority emphasize a combination of gender roles and poor salaries:

One thing is clear: we women have to take care of the house and of our children. If we work, we keep the same obligations at home and it is really exhausting (Focus Group, young women, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

Some of us do part-time jobs, but it would really be difficult to find the time to do a full-job, and in any case they will always prefer a man (Focus Group, young women, Silwan, Jerusalem)

This situation of disadvantage is further compounded by the shortage of pre-school programs:

Working? It would be great to help my family, but I have twins, 3 years old. I cannot work unless they can go to school but very few Palestinian children have access until they are 5. They should by law, but the reality is that there are no places for our children and we have to take care of them (Woman, Old City, Jerusalem)

### 3.3 Main Self-protection and Coping Strategies in East Jerusalem

In order to identify the assets and strategies of the local communities, the present study considers as "self-protection" or "local coping strategies" only those strategies that are used by the communities to face protection threats without any external help. In this regard, the work done in coordination with protection agencies and even the work of local NGOs or local Government is considered "external" to the community.

The coping strategies are presented in the same order as the main protection threats discussed above.

#### 3.3.1 Displacement-related Strategies

As seen in the description of the protection threats, the majority of Palestinian Jerusalem residents interviewed identified Housing restrictions and Residence Rights limitations as some of the most important protection problems they are suffering.

##### 3.3.1.1 Housing restrictions - Protection and coping strategies

In summary, the concrete threats documented under House restrictions were: Overcrowding, home demolition risk, difficulty to pay rent, and dissatisfaction with municipal services.

The main coping strategies to face Housing restrictions can be categorized under three groups:

- Construction of house annexes or new houses
- Displacement as self-protection
- An array of mitigation and endurance strategies

All the self-protection or coping strategies vis-à-vis housing restrictions in Jerusalem show one common characteristic: coping strategies do not face a "static protection threat" but what could be defined as a "dynamic and strategic protection threat". In other words, the coping strategies and adaptations used by individuals and communities are responded to by Israeli authorities in ways, which appear to be designed to make the coping strategies ineffective (see examples below).



This has important implications, both for the scope and effectiveness of self-protection strategies themselves and for the usefulness and relevance of external aid by the international community working on protection (see later for details).

In relation with the limited scope of the mitigation strategies, it is worth reflecting how in the case of "static" protection threats, a self-protection strategy may be able to gradually understand a problem so as to offer partial solutions or adaptations that make the problem more bearable. In contrast, in the case of "dynamic and strategic" threats, a coping strategy that starts to be successful elicits a reaction, because the protection threat is not originated as a by-product of a given situation, but an intentional threat aiming at creating distress and eventually, displacement. The analysis of the process in each of the main coping strategies identified shows this pattern.

**Construction of house annexes or new houses** When Palestinian families grow and they face Housing restriction problems, the first natural response is to try to build new floors or annexes to their existing houses or to build a new house, depending on the circumstances and economic capacity. In Jerusalem, this involves requesting an Israeli-issued permit that is prohibitively expensive for residents with low income. It also entails engaging with an Israeli administrative system that makes the time-frame of the process unpredictable and that is unlikely to grant permits to Palestinian residents.<sup>g</sup> This puts the Palestinian residents in a desperate situation. Therefore, one of the most recurrent coping strategies as identified by interviewees in the research is building without waiting to have a permit.<sup>h</sup>

We thought that asking for a permit to build was a waste of time and money. They are Israelis, they just want us to leave! How are you going to ask for a permit to somebody whose dream is to see you leaving?" (Focus Group, male, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

When the crowding of all of us in one room and the living room got unbearable, we tried to get a permit, just to build another floor. It was a difficult bureaucratic process but my cousin has a friend who gave us advice. The main problem is that we don't know when will we get an answer. After a few months they came saying there was some information missing. Then a few months later another thing... We provide every time what is requested, but one year after the last request, we are still waiting for a response. We cannot wait anymore, and we have decided to start building hoping that will have a positive answer, although most people I know tell me I will never get it. (Male, Beit Hanina, Jerusalem)

Of course, building without a permit is high risk, but we just have no option. And you know? Everything about being a Palestinian and deciding to stay in Jerusalem is high risk, because our children are harassed on the street, we get no services, we are made to understand that we better leave. So we need to cope, and coping comes with risks, because they will do their best not to allow it. (Focus Group, female, Old City, Jerusalem)

This strategy, however, does not provide a solution, as it transforms the problem of "overcrowding" into a different one: "demolition risk". The logical step of "building" in order to face "overcrowding" automatically becomes "illegal building" in the eyes of the Israeli system. This is a good example of the pattern mentioned above: if a coping strategy appears to be successful, it elicits a reaction from the authorities before it can provide a solution.

<sup>g</sup>Over the last years Palestinians have received fewer than 200 building permits per year. Based on the population growth, permits for 1,500 housing units annually would be necessary to cover the housing needs of Palestinian residents". EU Heads of Mission, Cover Note, 2012.

<sup>h</sup>The results of this research are consistent with overall figures, e.g. "OCHA estimates that at least 32% of all Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem have been built in violation of Israeli zoning requirements. East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns. Special Focus. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory. March 2011.

It is true that the risk of having our house destroyed or your shop, is very hard for us, but we did not have to think a lot to make a decision about adding a new room, decisions are easy when you have no other option (Family, Ras Al-Amud, Jerusalem)

Most of us have received demolition orders. It is very disturbing, but we will not leave, we do not want to leave. And when our families grow we will build for them, because it is our right and because it is the only thing we can do (Focus Group, men, Silwan, Jerusalem)

Notably, these testimonies do not speak directly about demolitions, but about "demolition risk". It is important to realize that the scope of the problem of home demolition is not well described by the number of homes demolished alone; the magnitude of the protection threat is more accurately understood including "those at risk of home demolition" even in the demolition has not taken place. The stress and pressure exerted to leave a home when a demolition order is issued is enormous. Even if the order remains unexecuted for an undetermined period of time, it constitutes a permanent source of stress hovering on every aspect of the family living in the house.

You cannot imagine what it is to live without knowing if tomorrow, in a month, in a year, your house will be destroyed. Am I supposed to buy a better TV that can be destroyed? Am I supposed to invest money in a better toilet or to plant something costly in the small backyard? Every decision you make, risks being a disaster if you are unlucky" (Male, Al-Issawiya, Jerusalem)

Most of us leave with the permanent fear of having to leave in a rush. The soldiers come and tell you that you have 15 minutes to leave and you just take what you can... (Focus group, female, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

All of us have received demolition orders. Who will be next or when? That we dont know... (Focus group, male, Ras Hamis, Jerusalem)

There are no reliable data on the current extent of "illegal" construction, but according to OCHA's calculations in 2011<sup>14</sup> at least one third of the Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem - around 93,100 persons- are potentially at risk of having their homes demolished. Obviously, the incentives for displacement for these 93,100 persons are extremely high. This threat is also compounded by other threats that encourage displacement from Jerusalem (see above Residence rights limitations).

**Displacement** Regardless of any political or moral judgement, displacement constitutes in itself a de facto self-protection strategy to avoid protection threats such as overcrowding, home demolition and all the duress exerted on Palestinians in Jerusalem.

We always thought that we would stay in Jerusalem at whatever cost, but then we saw the constant harassment to our family, the growing pressure on our kids, we thought of their future and we moved to Ramallah. It was the hardest decision in our life (Family, Ramallah)

Many leave Jerusalem just because they cannot even afford it, the Israelis have been able to leave us with so little land to stay that everything has become artificially expensive; I am lucky to have a good situation, but for many the only possible way to live decently is moving somewhere else (Male, Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem)

Two characteristics of this strategy deserve attention: firstly, in the majority of cases, leaving Jerusalem as a self-protection strategy is used only as a last resort and in most cases amounts to 'forced displacement'. Secondly, such displacement has severe negative impact and consequences. Palestinians in Jerusalem are classified merely as "permanent residents," not citizens. That means that if Palestinians move outside the municipal borders in the West Bank, the Israeli system considers that they have shifted their "center of life" from Jerusalem and they not only lose their residence, but also the possibility to go back again to Jerusalem freely, even as visitors. In addition, all social benefits linked

to their residency in Jerusalem are lost. Apart from the pain that these families have to endure in relation to the abandonment of their own home and city, the price to pay is so high in terms of restriction of movement, loss of social connections and material benefits, that it is a decision only taken in desperation, as shown in the interviews.

Whereas leaving Jerusalem is a decision made at an individual or family level, the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem are aware that such a decision has a direct impact on the overall situation for the entire community. What the individual might consider an ultimately necessary or unavoidable decision, may shift the demographic balance in Jerusalem and this process would predetermine future negotiations on the city in a way that is perceived as advantageous to the political interest of Israel. The interviews show how the moral dilemma between the best interest of the individual and the wider community is often solved by a "social/patriotic" decision to stay. However, and as the restrictions on day-to-day life increase, the dilemma also becomes increasingly difficult, even for those who have the means to leave to another country:

My husband has a double nationality and we could go to Europe. Sometimes I look at my children and I think: do I have the right to limit their future making them live the terrible situation we live in Jerusalem on a daily basis? And then I also think: but if those who can leave comfortably left, Jerusalem would be lost forever for all of us, can I do this to my people? And I am still live here, in spite of all the constraints (Woman, 30's working in an International Organisation, Beit Hanina, Jerusalem)

Such dilemmas between the best interest of the individual and the interests of the wider community are even more difficult to manage in a society with a strong sense of collectivism.

We have lost all power and all chances in this battle to keep our land. The only remaining strength we have is our will to resist and to stay despite everything. If I leave, I betray all those who fought before me, all the ones who are resisting with me (Young man, Silwan, Jerusalem)

Simultaneously, the fight at the political level to assert the sovereignty on Jerusalem on both sides -Israel and the Palestinian Authority- also detracts from the individual needs and human rights of individual human beings, who pay a double price: as much as Israel has a political interest in displacing Palestinians from Jerusalem, the Palestinian Authority tries to discourage movement/displacement from Jerusalem. In this regard, those who take the difficult decision to leave and move to the West Bank, are not recognized by the Palestinian Authority either, becoming de facto "stateless" to an even higher degree than the rest of Palestinians in the West Bank. Interviewees who emphasised displacement threats were also aware of this situation.

Due to the lack of reliable official figures on the numbers of Palestinians displaced from East Jerusalem (such data being considered sensitive by both sides) it is not possible to quantify this protection challenge with precision. However, this research and multiple observations from NGOs and UN agencies reveal multiple cases. In parallel, it is undisputable that the "risk of displacement" due to the unbearable conditions and continuous pressure affects practically every Palestinian living in Jerusalem to a larger or lesser degree.

**An array of mitigation and endurance strategies** Those who do not resort to "illegal" construction or move to other areas of the West Bank to find more affordable housing and avoid pressure (at the price of losing their residency rights) have no option but to continue living in overcrowded houses, some risking demolition, and with inadequate municipal services. This group shows a wide range of different coping strategies that the interviewees mention as general or abundant in the communities. These are very heterogeneous, addressing different aspects and angles of the Housing restriction problems, but all of them have at least one common characteristic: Their mitigation scope

is very limited in comparison with the scale of the problems faced and none of them satisfactorily addresses the relevant problems. In this regard, instead of "self-protection strategies" they could be better labelled endurance or survival strategies:

The main ones mentioned by interviewees are as follows:

- **Family support.** Extended family support constitutes the most important asset when an individual or family suffers the different aspects of Housing restrictions. The main limitation comes in the -abundant- situations when the whole family is affected or when gradually all the persons in the network share similar problems at community level or neighbourhood level.

I dont know what we would have done without the help of my brothers. Thank God they are always for us, with all kinds of help, not only financial, but also allowing us to use their house, making us feel that what is theirs is ours (Male, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

- **Community support.** In the case of imminent threats, the support of the rest of the community in the form of immediate help or just by "being there" constitutes an aspect highly valued by the interviewees. Again, in the face of the scale of the challenges this is an important contribution to endurance - but far from a real protection solution.

They gave these demolition orders to four families. The elders met to discuss the situation, some thought about who could help to give us advice. I know that they cannot stop this if the Israelis really want to go ahead, but we never felt alone, and that is very important (Focus Group, female, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

It was one of the most difficult moments of my life, after all that work, we were on the street. Immediately everybody offered something, even if they have very little, from a place to stay to something to eat. On the one hand we were so sad, on the other we felt so strong (Family, Bedouin community, Jerusalem / Area C)

- **Avoiding accumulation of valuable assets** in cases of demolition risk. Some families who have assets that they consider especially precious, entrust them to a friend or family member in a less risky situation to avoid losing them in the case of sudden demolition. One example is as follows:

I have a collection of books that I inherited from my parents. Poetry, theatre... everything. Some of these books are quite old, but they are more important for what they mean to us. I would love to have them on the wall, choose the one I want, show them to friends when they visit, but we cannot risk losing all this in a day. So we just keep a few and have lent the rest to friends of my wife who live in a more secure area (Male, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

- **Taking shifts** in overcrowded houses. The stress caused by the concentration of extended families in reduced spaces is mitigated by some families by self-organization regarding time and uses of the house so that the benefit from the scarce resources (light, water, space) can be maximized.

We learned little by little, but now we know that it is important to decide who studies when and who sleeps when, to make sure we use the light and also let the others sleep. Knowing the best time for shower depending on our schedules is also essential. Now we organize every aspect, we had to learn (Focus Group mixed gender, adolescents, Old City, Jerusalem)

- **Leadership and associations.** The capacity of communities or neighbourhoods to organize themselves either to advocate for a cause and make it visible or to push improvements in local services and infrastructure. One example of the latter is the neighbourhood association in Wadi Al Joz. The Bedouin community has created the Bedouin Protection Committee, a representative body to give the community a voice, especially vis-à-vis displacement risk.
- **Demolition and children protection.** Children suffer demolition situations in a different way from adults and are much more prone to trauma. Some coping strate-

### 3.3. MAIN SELF-PROTECTION AND COPING STRATEGIES IN EAST JERUSALEM

gies mentioned by interviewees are avoiding that children see the physical demolition of the house, and above all to be available for them, encourage their expression of feelings and to give them support. Seeking professional help remains a rare occurrence due to its scarce availability and the competition of needs in the families.

#### 3.3.1.2 Residence Rights limitations - Protection and coping strategies

The majority of Palestinian Jerusalem residents interviewed identified Residence Rights limitations as one of the most important protection problems they are suffering, especially in the framework of the overall protection threat of Displacement from Jerusalem. Having all papers and obligations in order and well organized constitutes for many the best way of avoiding vulnerability.

I am very careful to make sure that all my taxes and obligations are up to date, we should not give the Israelis an easy way to throw us out (Woman, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

They will find another way of making our life difficult, but at least we should not give them an easy opportunity by not presenting paperwork on time, etc (Focus Group, men, Old City, Jerusalem)

The strategies most frequently mentioned by the interviewees are related to trying to be sufficiently informed of their obligations and rights so as to avoid revocation of residence or situations of vulnerability for the family.

Normal people don't have a degree in law. One of the most dangerous things is that many persons are not really informed about all their obligations and duties, and they can see themselves in a difficult situation easily. We organize sometimes meetings to discuss some regulation or typical mistakes, but much more is needed (Focus Group, women, Old City, Jerusalem)

#### 3.3.2 Unemployment - Strategies

The majority of Palestinian residents in Jerusalem interviewed identified Unemployment as one of the most important protection problems they are suffering (together with Housing restrictions and Displacement-related threats).

The coping strategies used by Palestinians to address Unemployment situations are very diverse. Looking at their different degree of effectiveness in providing long-term satisfactory solutions, the strategies can be categorized<sup>15</sup> under three groups:

- Reductive or Depletive strategies
- Maintaining strategies
- Regenerative strategies

For protection agencies and donors aiming at supporting Palestinian protection needs it is important to observe that only the Regenerative strategies are truly sustainable.

##### 3.3.2.1 Reductive or Depletive strategies

When facing unemployment, most interviewees use reductive or depletive coping strategies to try to mitigate in the short term the effect of a reduced income basis. These strategies are "reductive" when they merely mitigate the negative impact of low income, without providing long-term advantages. When the coping strategies provide a temporary relief, but erode the long-term assets of the family, they are considered "depletive". Examples of reductive strategies -among many others- are as follows:

Every time I go to the market I keep on looking for the cheapest. This does not solve our problem, but it helps maintaining the family until my husband finds another job (Woman, Al-Issawiya, Jerusalem)

We have not eaten meat for a long time, it is just too expensive in the situation we are now. Honestly, I do not mind cutting costs on other things, but with food I am worried that we are not giving to the small ones a sufficiently balanced diet (Woman, Ras Al- Amud, Jerusalem)

Examples of depletive strategies -among many others- are as follows:

We find ourselves selling things that we do not need urgently so as to resist a bit longer until a job appears. We sell all kinds of things, from a radio to tools. When my husband is employed we need to buy them again (Woman, Anata, Jerusalem)

Many women have sold their gold. In moments of despair this has been a big relief, even if it is sad to have to give up all the savings (Focus Group, women, Old City, Jerusalem)

The coping strategy consisting of reducing the visits to relatives or friends so as to save money, can be considered also depletive; this approach not only deprives the community of an important source of joy, but also weakens the social networks that constitute a source of coping strategies in the long-term.

The only thing we can really do is to reduce expenses. For example, we visit friends who do not live in the neighbourhood much less frequently. Even relatives, we see them for important festivities, but we would see them more often if we could afford it (Husband and wife, Al-Issawiya, Jerusalem)

### 3.3.2.2 Maintaining strategies

Maintaining strategies do not solve unemployment in the long-term either, but they increase temporarily the resilience of families with neither negative nor positive effects in the long-term. The reliance on social networks constitutes the basis of most of these strategies.

Buying on credit and counting with the understanding of those in the community who are slightly better off constitutes a coping strategy that is generally used, even if reluctantly.

I know that when I really need it, I can buy in some shops and pay by the end of the month. I prefer not to do it, because we have to pay anyway and it makes it more difficult for the shop owner, but it helps a lot in many occasions (Woman, Old City, Jerusalem)

It should be noted though, that buying on credit is an option that becomes more difficult as the situation of crisis becomes more general, affecting also shop-owners.

I like to be flexible with people and let them pay later. It is good, because they not always have the cash in hand and we need to help each other. However, sometimes I find I have difficulties to pay my own bills, and I do not know exactly when I will be paid. The situation becomes really tight and I don't know what to do: it is hard for me to say to somebody that they cannot pay later, but I might be forced to do it in the end (Shop owner, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

### 3.3.2.3 Regenerative strategies

These coping strategies provide true alternatives to a situation of unemployment. They are much less frequent among the persons interviewed given the difficulty of their successful undertaking.

Starting a new business constitutes an ideal solution for those who have the talent and means to consider this option.

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I knew I had to find a way out of this situation and I think I always have good ideas for trade, so I asked for a credit and I opened my own shop. It was not easy, we were really afraid that if we did not have enough customers, we would end up unable to pay the credit, but so far and with the help of all the family we are moving forward (Young man, Abu Tor, Jerusalem)

It should be noted that due to the little margin for economic response, the risk implied in the decision of starting a new business is disproportionately high if the venture does not give the expected results. This high-risk factor encourages more conservative solutions and discourages many from entrepreneurship.

I have thought about different businesses, maybe a little restaurant. On the other hand, that needs a big investment and we have seen so many others ending indebted and losing their freedom. It is nerve wrecking just to think about it. Believe me, if I could start something with less risks, I would go for that option. But now it is like jumping without a net and putting my family at risk (Man, Anata, Jerusalem)

Looking for a job in the economically stronger West Jerusalem is an option that presents some difficulties according to the interviewees:

A friend of mine went to work in West Jerusalem. However, it is not an option that all of us can consider. Some do not want to work for Israelis, but for those who would do it, it is not so easy: you need to speak Hebrew and the Israelis ask you for special requirements if you are Palestinian (Focus Group, Men, Shu'fat, Jerusalem)

## 3.4 Community's Main Considerations on External Aid in East Jerusalem

One of the main aims of the research was to explore not only how the community perceives protection threats but also how they perceive the support from external actors. The perception of the Israeli occupation as the major root cause of protection vulnerabilities is consistent throughout the interviews in East Jerusalem, being this a common characteristic also in Area C in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. Local communities consider this problem as more important than any other protection threat. This perception also explains a general dissatisfaction with the role of protection actors in East Jerusalem. Whereas the support that East Jerusalem has received from donors is appreciated, it is considered by most interviewees as having at best a palliative effect. In addition, the fact that the vast majority of international protection/humanitarian actors focus on minimum protection levels including survival, resilience and mitigation support, diverts attention from the main role that protection actors should have according to the local communities: to demand accountability from Israel under International law.

As for the more "immediate protection threats" identified specifically in East Jerusalem as the most important, most interviewees express limited satisfaction with the services provided by external support (both female and male), whereas a smaller percentage of interviewees express either very high satisfaction or conversely, complete dissatisfaction and even anger.

These are the main general considerations explaining the different perceptions on external protection support in Jerusalem:

1. Protection actors should spend more time doing advocacy at home, so that the law is applied in Jerusalem, than trying to cover desperate situations. The present situation is unsustainable.
2. Even if external actors know what are the general problems, they fail to understand the specific situation and approach needed in each community. The structure and

processes of the external actors create a tendency to identify "general solutions", but the reality is that very often each community demands its specific solutions. This demands a better understanding of each community and more time spent in consultation before implementing programs.

3. Local actors feel that the external protection actors don't have a good understanding of their own solution approaches and assets. Due to the exclusive focus on needs, the analysis remains incomplete and the solutions provided to the community are not ideal and miss existing opportunities offered by local initiatives and strategies.
4. Most protection problems in East Jerusalem follow a long-term logic that does not suit the short-term cycles and goals of most protection donors. The lack of long-term goals linking advocacy, relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) is inadequate in a framework of a protracted crisis. The time-length of the challenges transcends the boundaries of interventions designed for short-term challenges.

The specific considerations related to the external support related to the specific protection threats identified by the communities in East Jerusalem -displacement-related challenges and unemployment- are treated together with recommendations in the next section.

## 3.5 Conclusions and Recommendations for East Jerusalem

Four characteristics define the protection threats as perceived by the Palestinian communities in Jerusalem:

Firstly, practically all interviewees perceive and declare that the main protection challenge they face is "the Israeli occupation".

Secondly, Jerusalem presents a very extended catalogue of severe protection threats (see extended list above).

Thirdly, most protection threats suffered in Jerusalem are interrelated in a way that most interviewees had difficulties to choose the main protection threats, as practically all of these issues affect them in essential aspects of their life. Following the researcher's requirement to choose the most important specific protection challenges, interviewees emphasized two: on the one hand, displacement-related threats, including housing restrictions, home demolition, inadequate municipal services and residence limitations and on the other hand, unemployment.

Fourth, the research shows a high heterogeneity in the description of protection threats by the different communities in Jerusalem. Often, what appears to be a common issue adopts different forms in different communities when the analysis is more detailed.

Regarding the coping strategies adopted by individuals and the communities in Jerusalem, they generally face dynamic threats related to the nature of an ongoing occupation and show limited effectiveness, being more useful to provide survival and mitigation elements than sustainable solutions.

### 3.5.1 Recommendations

The most important recommendation in East Jerusalem according to the interviewees is for protection actors to **demand accountability from Israel under International law** so as to provide effective and sustainable solutions. This recommendation reaches every protection actor, including international humanitarian NGOs, as from this perspective,



the focus on the advocacy work at home becomes a necessary line of work that needs to be strengthened to accompany the humanitarian efforts in the field. The most important operational recommendations are presented below. The general ones are presented first and those related to specific protection threats are shown afterwards:

**Need for more detailed identification processes.** Protection threats vary depending on the specific community. In this context, identification processes that stay at a general level or blanket approaches have high probabilities of failure. A larger investment in time and resources in the identification processes, reaching the level of the specific communities, is necessary. The existence of instruments specifically designed for support in Jerusalem<sup>1</sup> constitute an important step in the right direction.

**Understand and support existing assets and practices** External actors tend to focus exclusively on "needs" and not on "assets" or "positive local practices", and as a result identification processes remain incomplete. Identification and programming processes should broaden their perspective to better understand local initiatives and assets that can be potentially supported or complemented.

**A more strategic linkage between relief, rehabilitation and development and with advocacy initiatives.** External Aid has short-term cycles and short-term goals that are inadequate in a framework of a protracted crisis. In addition, these three aspects of the same reality (LRRD) should be part of long-term goals that also involve advocacy as a complementary component in a long-term strategy.

**Enhance Local Capacity Building and leadership:** Local leadership and community organisation constitute some of the most appreciated assets at community level, as they allow a better expression of the community voice and better probabilities of mitigating protection threats. Support in this respect is highly valued.

As for the specific protection challenges generally identified as the most important by the communities in Jerusalem, the main suggestions and observations are as follows:

**Displacement-related threats** including housing restrictions, home demolition, inadequate municipal services and residence limitations.

For **housing**, some measures were regarded positively to mitigate vulnerability. The most general ones: Legal aid for individuals under threat of expropriation or demolition or trying to obtain building permits. Development of alternative sources and mechanisms to support housing loans and financing schemes.

For **municipal services**: Again, the most important recommendation is for protection actors to demand accountability from the Israeli authorities in meeting its obligations as an occupying power by improving the services to Jerusalem's Palestinian residents, especially taking into account the high municipal taxes paid by them. As provisional measures, legal aid is also mentioned as a way to support more effective communities' demands on the municipality or courts.

For **residence limitations**:

- Apart from the requirement from protection actors to demand accountability of Israel to the international law, the need for legal aid is repeatedly mentioned as one of the most necessary measures to prevent and mitigate residence-related vulnerabilities.
- The existence of information and awareness resources is still very limited and needs to reach the most vulnerable and uneducated communities.

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<sup>1</sup>The EU budgetary line and call for proposals explicitly allocated for Jerusalem was often mentioned positively by those interviewees who were more conversant with donors' mechanisms.

### 3.5.1.1 Unemployment

- The economic constraints for Palestinians in East Jerusalem are intimately related to the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem 47 years ago and the policies implemented by Israel, such as the Wall and its economic impact and the aforementioned Israeli measures affecting Palestinian workers in East Jerusalem. In this regard, protection actors need to address the annexation and policies themselves, as any other measure will always be partial and unsustainable in the framework of the wider economy.
- During the transition to global sustainable solutions, useful mitigating measures should look at how to assist the private sector in East Jerusalem, especially taking into account the absence of a functional Palestinian political representation in Jerusalem.
- Women should be specifically targeted, both in the analytical processes of identification of needs and assets and in the provision of support.
- Non-governmental social service providers constitute a group of important actors that should be strategically supported.
- Individuals can benefit from simple support in the form of affordable credit-mechanisms, business counseling and capacity building.

## Notes

1. 78% of Palestinians, and 84% of children, residing in Jerusalem District live under the poverty line (ACRI, 2012).
2. Sources: HaMoked - Center for the Defence of the Individual, B'Tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, Ir Amim and the United Nations Coordination Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. See specific references at the end of the study.
4. Ir Amim. Greater Jerusalem. 2009.
5. See for example Ruback, R.B. and Pandey, J. Crowding, perceived control, and relative power: an analysis of households in India *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* , 21, pp. 351-44. 1991. or Heiberg, Marianne. Housing. In Heiberg, M. and Ovensen, G. *Palestinian Society in Gaza, West Bank and Arab Jerusalem: A Survey of Living Conditions*. Oslo: FAFO Report 151, pp. 81-97. 1993.
6. "Overcrowding results in insufficient ventilation in homes, causing or exacerbating respiratory illness; also susceptibility to disease, the severity of diseases, the spreading of illness, and the mortality due to disease all increase as a result of social and physical overcrowding" Marshy, Mona. *Social and Psychological Effects of Overcrowding in Palestinian Refugee Camps in the West Bank and Gaza. Literature Review and Preliminary Assessment of the Problem*. 1999.
7. See for example Fuller, Theodore D., et al. Chronic stress and psychological well-being: evidence from Thailand on household crowding. *Social Science Medicine* , 42 (2), pp. 265-80. 1996.
8. Marshy, Mona. *Social and Psychological Effects of Overcrowding in Palestinian Refugee Camps in the West Bank and Gaza. Literature Review and Preliminary Assessment of the Problem*. 1999.
9. ICAHD estimated in 2009 that some 24,130 Palestinian homes have been demolished in the oPt since 1967, based on information gleaned from the Israeli Ministry of Interior, the Jerusalem Municipality, the Civil Administration, OCHA and other UN Sources, Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and ICAHD's own field work.
10. *Obstacles to peace. A reframing of the Israeli -Palestinian conflict*. Jeff Halper. ICAHD. 2009.
11. *Nowhere Left to Go: Arab al-Jahalin Bedouin Ethnic Displacement. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions*. 2011.
12. *East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns. Special Focus. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory*. March 2011.
13. Sources: *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem 2011*; *Israeli National Insurance Institute annual report, 2010*; *Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. 2011*; Alyan, Nisreen; Sela, Ronit and Pomerantz, Michal. *Policies of Neglect in East Jerusalem: The Policies that created 78% Poverty Rates and a Frail Job Market*. ACRI.

May 2012; Palestinian Workers' Rights in the Israeli Labor Market and in Settlements; Al-Maqdese for Society Development, 2011; and the United Nations Coordination Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. See specific references in Annex 5. References

14. East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns. Special Focus. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory. March 2011.

15. We follow Jude Howell's scheme for classifying household coping strategies during crisis. Howell, Jude. Household coping strategies in Kyrgyzstan. *Development in Practice*, Vol. 5, Issue 4, 361-364. November 1995.



# Chapter 4

## Area C

### 4.1 Background: Situation in Area C

#### 4.1.1 Palestinians in Area C

Today, Area C is inhabited by circa 150,000 Palestinians living in 542 communities. The area is known for its population diversity including the original residents, Palestinian refugees of 1948 and Bedouin communities.<sup>1</sup> Bedouins are divided into two groups: those living in tents and those living in mud houses; both of these groups are the most vulnerable communities in Area C.<sup>a</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Israel's Continued Control over Area C and its Legal Obligations

Area C was created under the Oslo II Accords<sup>b</sup> signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1995. Under the Accords the West Bank were divided into three areas (A, B, C) for a five-year transitional period to end with the establishment of a Palestinian State encompassing all three areas. However, twenty years after the signing of Oslo, Israel has failed to relinquish control of the majority of West Bank land. Today, only Area A, which encompasses 18% of the West Bank, is under full Palestinian Authority (PA) control (i.e. both "security and administrative control"). Area B, which encompasses 21% of the West Bank remains under Palestinian administrative control but joint Israeli-Palestinian security control. **61% of the total area of the West Bank -Area C - remains under full Israeli military control;** this includes control over service sectors such as education and health,<sup>2</sup> as well as control over land, water and other natural resources

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<sup>a</sup>Those living in the Bedouin and other herding communities are the most vulnerable of West Bank residents; they live in very basic structures e.g. tents, tin shelters, etc.; have limited access to services; and have no service infrastructure (including water, sanitation and electricity infrastructure). Food insecurity among these communities is high, at 55 percent, post-assistance, compared to the overall level of 22 percent for the West Bank. See OCHA report: Displacement and Insecurity in Area C of the West Bank. <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/634ea0efe460133c852570c0006d53f2/9100b847ecad72c4852578df006748be?OpenDocument>. See also in occupied Palestinian territory Consolidated Appeal. 2012 OCHA

<sup>b</sup>Oslo is a two-phase agreement between the PLO and Israel under which a step-by-step process takes place to establish a Palestinian state on 1967 lands. Oslo 1, signed in 1993, is the first step in the peace process to establish the state in Gaza- Jericho. Oslo II, 1995, is an interim agreement demanding Israel to redeploy its troops out of West Bank and stating the administrative and security measures taken to facilitate the process.

and all building and development in the area.<sup>c</sup> In short, the entire West Bank remains occupied territory with Areas A and B consisting of 227 non-contiguous enclaves, cut off from one another as well as from their land and other resources in Area C. Israel retains full control over building and planning in Area C and has designated 70% of it<sup>3</sup> (about 44% of the entire West Bank) as settlement areas, firing zones, or nature reserves; thus they are completely off limits to Palestinians.<sup>4</sup> The Israeli planning system<sup>5</sup> undermines a series of basic protections provided for by the international humanitarian and human rights law.<sup>5</sup> In a report produced by AIDA, it stated that around 30 European -funded structures have been demolished during 2012 and dozens more, including basic tents, water cisterns and animal pens are under threat of demolition".<sup>6</sup>

Successive Israeli occupation have not only failed to withdraw from the remainder of the West Bank in accordance with the Oslo agreements, but have continued construction in the building and expansion of illegal settlements, largely in Area C, and used significant financial incentives to encourage these settlements. In 2012, the Israeli government increased tenders for settlement construction by more than 250% compared to 2011.<sup>7</sup> This settlement policy combined with the Wall and the accompanying comprehensive policy of movement restrictions on Palestinians, as well as Israeli confiscation of land, closure of areas and an extensive network of bypass roads for 325,000 Israeli settlers<sup>8</sup> now living in 56 illegal settlements on Palestinian land in Area C<sup>9</sup> have all deprived Palestinians, and especially those living in Area C, from the right to move freely and live with dignity in their homeland.

Moreover, Israel actively pursues a policy of discrimination,<sup>10</sup> which has systematically undermined the welfare of Palestinians living in Area C and caused an ongoing deterioration of the humanitarian conditions for its communities.<sup>11</sup> Within this context, it is not surprising that Area C is home to some of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in the oPt.

Based on the reports of many international organizations (for instance UNDP<sup>12</sup>) among the most harmful aspects of Israel's continued military occupation of Area C are the movement restrictions, the Wall, house demolitions, prohibitions on construction, control over water resources and electricity and land confiscation in support of Israeli settlement expansion in Area C. These are in addition to Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians and their property in Area C.

These practices breach the core of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>13</sup> Based on IHL, Article 64 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and article 43 of Hague Regulations, Israel, as an occupying power, is obliged to respect public order, to provide the main needs and secure the safety of civilians living in Area C as it is an occupied area. Israel is further prohibited to use the natural resources of Area C or to change the nature of the occupied area. In reference to the CEDAW Convention, the Israeli occupation has breached articles 2,3 and 14(2)(b)(h), which demand the right of women to live with no discrimination.<sup>14</sup>

The security of Palestinians living in Area C is further undermined by Israel's general prohibition on Palestinian Authority activity in Area C.<sup>d</sup> The PA cannot bring services to Area C and at the same time, restrictions on movement make it difficult for most Palestinians in Area C to reach services provided by the PA elsewhere in the oPt. For example, according to women's organizations one of the main obstacles they are facing in protecting women from domestic violence and honour killing relates to the absence of

<sup>c</sup>A series of further agreements were signed to ensure Oslo's implementation. The Wye River Memorandum of October 23, 1998 clearly outlined Israel's withdrawal in three stages with withdrawal from 13 % of Area C and the transfer of 14.2% from Area B to Area A in the first two phases.

<sup>d</sup>Because of Israeli restrictions, PA activity in Area C has thus far been limited and indirect, with various national plans including targets for Area C with no clear means of implementation.

# The Israeli-controlled AREA C in The West Bank



Figure 4.1: Area C

security implementing bodies in Area C, as this limits their ability to intervene in such cases. Under IHL, Israel as the occupying power is obliged to provide for the personal security of the population but has dramatically failed to do so.<sup>15</sup>

Damage to Palestinian socio-economic development resulting from Israel's policies in Area C is not limited to communities there. The World Bank notes that Area C, as 61 per cent of the West Bank, is "key to future Palestinian economic development." According to the World Bank report on "Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy" ending restrictions on Area C would benefit the economy of the Palestinian residents in Area C and in the West Bank and Gaza in general. The report notes that freeing economic activity in Area C would have a particularly high impact on the development of businesses in agriculture and Dead Sea minerals exploitation, stone mining and quarrying, construction, tourism, and telecommunications. Other sectors would benefit from improvements in the quality and cost of infrastructure and increased demand for goods and services. The volume of increased economic activity would greatly improve the PA's fiscal position. It is estimated that government revenues would increase by US\$800 million, which would cut the fiscal deficit by half, hence reducing the need for donor support, unemployment and poverty rates.<sup>16</sup>

### 4.1.3 Humanitarian interventions in Area C

Despite the resulting deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Area C over the past two decades, few humanitarian organisations -international or local -are active there. While awareness of the need to provide services to Area C are widely recognized by humanitarian agencies, most have not been willing to challenge Israeli restrictions on interventions in Area C and are unwilling to risk having projects demolished by the Israeli occupation authorities. Among those agencies currently implementing a restricted number of projects and programs in Area C are the European Commission, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Dan Church Aid and a handful of local NGOs including Ma'an, Arij and YMCA.

Most of the projects in Area C are relief projects designed to meet basic needs such as food security, health services, education, along with some awareness raising on human rights in general and on women's rights in particular. The relief services framework is based on direct and short term intervention to alleviate humanitarian crises and does not adequately respond to the economic and developmental damage caused by prolonged occupation of the oPt in general and Area C in particular.

Some local organizations support small business projects or vocational training programs. In addition, a few infrastructure projects involve construction of housing, schools or water systems; these are considered of critical importance because of Israel's policy on restricting infrastructural development in Area C. Infrastructure projects require the submission of an application for a permit to the Israeli authorities which is rarely approved. According to UNCTAD report, Israel bans Palestinian construction in 70% of Area C, allowing 1% for Palestinian development, while restricting construction in the remaining 29%.<sup>17</sup> Also the report noted that in the last five years 2,224 Palestinian structures were demolished including residential structures and schools. In 2011 alone, 1000 structures were demolished.<sup>18</sup>

Under the Consolidated Appeal (CAP), humanitarian aid in Area C has, over the past several years, been directed toward eight clusters: agriculture; cash-for-work / cash assistance; education; food security, health and nutrition; protection; shelter; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and coordination. Communities living in Area C were identified



as one of the main beneficiaries for CAP. However, OCHA reports on CAP implementation note ongoing obstacles facing implementation of projects in Area C due to Israel's restrictive policies.

## 4.2 Main Protection Challenges in Area C

This section of the report focuses on aspects of protection as perceived by the communities living in Area C. This exploration aims at assisting humanitarian decision makers to direct their interventions to better respond to local perceptions and meet local needs, as well as enhance the quality of services provided to this group of Palestinians.

First, a qualitative analysis of the threats most frequently identified by the interviewees is presented with special consideration given to the influence of gender, types of communities and youth. The three main protection challenges were repeatedly mentioned across all three districts in Area C (North, Centre and South):

1. Water shortages<sup>e</sup>
2. Electricity shortages
3. Unemployment

Finally, a protection threat that was not so highly recurrent among the interviewees globally, but that was very frequently mentioned within the youth category -Transportation - is added and analyzed in this section as a fourth protection challenge.

4. Lack of Transportation

Before presenting and analyzing the main three protection challenges as perceived by the community, it is important to highlight four key trends apparent in the data.

Area C presents an **extended catalogue of severe challenges resulted from the Israeli discrimination policies**. Palestinians in Area C interviewed in this research mentioned several protection challenges water shortages, electricity shortages, land confiscation, restrictions on movement, settler violence, poor infrastructure such as the lack of a sewage system, unpaved roads, lack of health services, an increased rate of unemployment, house demolitions, lack of entertainment places for youth and children and weakness in the educational system in schools in Area C.

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<sup>e</sup>Interviewees used the term Water shortage as a substitute of Lack of access to water. The used term here is based on what the community used. The problem in area C is not related to a natural shortage in water, but due to the Israeli discrimination policies, inhabitants are deprived from their right to reach the sources of water which resulted a water shortage.

Protection Threats mentioned in Area C(no ranking) Identified by Gender	
Israeli Occupation	Men&Women
Water shortages	Men&Women
Electricity shortages	Men&Women
Poor infrastructure as lack of sewage systems or unpaved roads	Men&Women
Unemployment	Men&Women
Transportation	Youth-female/male
Land confiscation	Men&Women
Lack of health service	Men&Women
Lack of grazing lands	Men&Women
Lack of entertainment places for youth and children	Women&Youth-female/male
Floods in the winter	Men&Women
Lack of places for people with special needs	Men&Women
Lack of places for care of elderly people	Men&Women
House demolitions	Men&Women
Weakness in the educational systems in schools	Youth-female/male
Education facilities	Men&Women
Waste & pollution problems	Men&Women
Insecurity	Men&Women
Settlers' threats	Men&Women

Although there was significant homogeneity in the identification of top priorities related to protection challenges across the three districts of Area C, differences in the ranking of these priorities is apparent across gender, age, and community types/resident status (refugee or resident or Bedouin). The perceived quality and severity of the effects of these challenges also differ between groups. Analysed independently, different groups (by sex, age and disability) raise additional priorities. Thus, for example, for youth, lack of transportation between Area C and the other parts of the West Bank ranks among the top three priorities. While women's top four priorities are: House demolitions, entertainment for children, care of the elderly, and women's economic empowerment.<sup>19</sup> These dominant concerns for women were also less apparent in other groups. Understanding these variations is critical in order to ensure that organizations develop more effective programs and strategic plans.

The interrelated nature of the different protection challenges in Area C emerges clearly from the study results. Although the four main protection challenges identified by the communities are discussed separately, an analysis of the results reveals that these four challenges are interrelated -both with one another and with a range of other challenges. The study respondents repeatedly describe a collection of interconnected and interacting challenges. This complex and interdependent set of challenges requires organizations to think in a broader framework and adopt a more holistic approach when planning interventions in Area C.

### 4.2.1 Water Shortage

Water shortage<sup>20</sup> was perceived by the majority as a main protection challenge in all parts of Area C (North, Centre and South). Respondents typically spoke of a range of other problems connected to water shortages. Gender differentiations emerged in relation to water usage and management as well as in relation to agricultural production.

In discussing the negative impact of water shortages, the following associated issues exacerbating the problem are identified by interviewees:

- Shortage of water for daily use
- Water contamination
- Decrease in agriculture and fodder production

- Israeli army and settler activity

### General facts: on water in Area C

The main sources of water shared by the two sides are (i) surface water, including the Jordan River and Wadi Gaza, and (ii) groundwater sources, or aquifers, lying under the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.<sup>21</sup>

- The Jordan Valley consists of the easternmost strip of land in the occupied West Bank, bordering the Jordan River from the Dead Sea in the south to the Beisan crossing in the north. The Area Comprises 28.5% of the West Bank and is naturally rich in water, fertile land, and other resources.<sup>22</sup>
- Since 2009, a total of 44 cisterns and rainwater collection structures in Area C have been demolished, twenty of them between January and July of 2011 by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA). Those demolitions have directly affected the lives of 13,602 Palestinians. Having lost their access to water, 127 people have been displaced, including 104 children.<sup>23</sup>
- 313,000 Palestinians from 113 communities are not connected to a water network.<sup>24</sup>
- 42,000 Palestinians are critically vulnerable, accessing less than 30 litres per day, and facing an acute risk of displacement.<sup>25</sup>
- The water consumption of some 42 communities in the southern West Bank is under 60 litres of water per person, per day; herding communities in the northern Jordan Valley consume only about 20 litres per person, per day. This consumption is significantly lower than the 100 litres per person per day recommended by the World Health Organization. As a point of comparison, the average water consumption in Israel is between 100 and 230 litres per person per day<sup>26</sup>
- While most of the West Bank's aquifer and spring water is located in Area C, Palestinians have not been able to draw their agreed allocation of 138.5 million cubic meters (MCM) per annum<sup>27</sup>
- Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley are only permitted to use 40% of the water in this basin or approximately 58 MCM of water per year.<sup>28</sup>
- While the cost of water supplied by a central running-water network ranges from about one dollar per cubic meter, the water-tank owners charge from about four to seven dollars per cubic meter, depending on the supplier and the location of the community.<sup>29</sup>
- On average, some 33 percent of the water carried through the pipes is lost by leakage<sup>30</sup> as a result of the poor condition of the pipes.
- According to the World Bank report "Area C and the future of the Palestinian Economy" the increase of lands cultivated by the settlers was from 35 % in 1997 to 93% in 2012. Settlers' good access to water was the reason for this increase.<sup>31</sup>
- Half of Palestinian wells have dried up over the last twenty years with the result that total Palestinian water production in the West Bank has dropped by 20 MCM / year since 1994.<sup>32</sup>

**Shortage of water for daily use.** As indicated by the results, residents in Area C suffer from the effects of water shortage in their daily life. It is noted that basic needs such as drinking, cleaning, and washing, have been affected by the shortage of water. In such cases, the results show that women bear the primary burden. It is related to women's reproductive role,<sup>33</sup> i.e. their role in taking care of their families and households.

Three to four days per week we don't have water. Water is cut off. We don't know how to manage in cleaning and washing, especially when you have a large family and children. I have to fill the bucket with water to manage our needs (FGD Women -Beit Our)

**Water contamination** was viewed as a contributing factor to increasing the protection threat of water shortages. Interviewees mentioned the weakness of the water pipes network, which significantly reduced the amount of having clean water for drinking and daily use. Interviewees also mentioned the Israeli policy of prohibiting any development of the infrastructure increased the water protection threat. Results show that people suffer not only from the amount of available water but also from the absence of clean water:

We have a problem of water here in our village. We suffer a 45% shortage in water. And the water pipe network is more than 30 years old; it's totally damaged. The bad condition of the pipes leads to water leakages which also cost us money for the water wasted. We feel this problem mostly in the summer. We suffer a lot from the shortage of water. (Woman from Al Jania)

This problem is identified by many of the interviewees. They also associate the bad conditions of the pipes with water contamination. People noted that the bad conditions of the pipes leads to mixing with the sewage system, the infrastructure of which is similarly old and faulty:

The water system here is very bad. Our problem is the polluted water from the sewage, it mixes with the drinking water. (FGD women from Far'a refugee camp)

**Decrease in agriculture and fodder products.** Interviewees, particularly Bedouin, perceive livestock as a major source of livelihood. Bedouin interviewees noted that the water shortage resulted from the restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation on access to water resources has led to three challenges: (i) a decrease in the planting of fodder because it requires regular irrigation, (ii) a decrease in grazing areas and (iii) a decrease in the quantity of crops. Water shortages have affected crop irrigation and led to a decrease in agriculture in general. This decrease has in turn resulted in an increase in the price of fodder in the market and a decrease in the number of livestock.

We are Bedouins; our lifestyle totally depends on livestock. Hence, the scarcity of grazing areas and the high prices of fodder became major issues that trouble the lives of the people living here; they are suffering from financial constraints. Raising livestock has become a burden and not a source of income. (Bedouin man from Bani Na'im)

We used to plant and harvest large quantities of wheat and barley, now we harvest small amounts that are just enough for storage to be used throughout the year. We don't raise cattle now because of the scarcity of water needed to grow fodder (to feed the cattle). We had to buy fodder to feed the cattle and that was expensive. The price of the fodder went up and the value of the cattle went down, there was no profit there. (A group of women - Bedouins, Bani Na'im)

I am facing water problems: I want to plant but because of the water shortage I had to stop planting. (FGD women from al-Khass)

**Israeli army and settler activity.** Interviewees mentioned how Israel's policy of cutting off water and diverting it to the settlements<sup>34</sup> had a direct effect on the daily lives of people:

There is no life without water and because settlements are close to us we are forbidden from having a water network and we are not allowed to dig wells. In the summer the ICA closes the wells if we dig, and they will cut off our water supply. We can't use the water – neither for ourselves nor for our livestock. (Man from Um al-Khair)

Listen, I can't say we don't have water at all; we do have it, but from March until November we suffer a lot from water shortage and most of the time it's rare to have water during this specific period of the year. This year the problem continued through December. All the water goes to the settlements around us.  
(FGD women from Jeftelek Village)

## 4.2.2 Electricity shortage

The second protection challenge identified by the majority of interviewees is the electricity supply. The main problem with electricity as perceived by the interviewees is either the weak current or complete absence of electric power. Interviewees mentioned that the lack, and in some places, the absence of electric power is due to the long distance from villages in Area C to the nearest substation of the Palestinian electricity company. Absence of electric power is particularly the case for Bedouin communities living in remote areas.

Electricity doesn't cover the whole village – only part of it. In my part of the village, we are still using the fuel motors, we still don't have electricity. (FGD men - Atouf Village)

Study results show that the two main protection challenges – water and electricity – are closely related to each other. Interviewees note that pumping water requires electricity for generators, and generators are rarely available because of their prohibitive cost:

You see we need the generators – if we don't have generators, we can't have water, but if we do have them, it will help us to have water. (FGD men - Fasayel al-Fouqa)

### General facts: on Electricity in Area C

- Forty-one per cent of households surveyed<sup>35</sup> have no electricity compared to just one per cent of all families in the West Bank without electricity.<sup>36</sup>
- In 2012, the Civil Administration issued demolition orders for wind- and solar-powered electric systems erected by the non-profit Comet-ME in nine villages in the South Hebron Hills (the orders were not implemented).<sup>37</sup>
- The main cause of electricity shortages is Israeli control over the electricity supply; Israeli authorities allow only a limited supply to different villages in Area C, which has not kept pace with the population increase.

Communities prioritize electricity shortages as a protection challenge due to a number of resulting negative effects. Respondents note that the lack of adequate electricity affects their daily life in many ways, but especially during summer and wintertime.

Electricity is one of the basics of life. In winter we suffer from continuous power cuts, people need heating in cold weather, and we also need it for our daily life, for housework and for work especially in shops. With the rising fuel prices we need electricity more than before, especially when it keeps cutting off continuously more than 20 times in the daytime; sometimes it is off throughout the night. (Man from al-Fawwar refugee camp).

In the summer here, the weather becomes too hot; sometimes it reaches 50 degrees [Celsius], the same as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, so you can't live without air-conditioning and this needs electricity. (Man - Fasayel al-Fouqa).

A second reason for giving priority to this challenge is related to education. Due to the fact that the classrooms in Area C are not renovated and small with bad infrastructure, the electricity shortage negatively affects students, especially during summer and winter:

The elementary school in the village up to 7th Grade have asbestos roofs, so classes are very hot in summer and very cold in winter. (FGD men - Fasayel Al-Fouqa)

Generally speaking, we take electricity from the Israeli company but they have been supplying us with the same amount of power since 1967, and it is not enough because our numbers have increased ever since. This means not all people can have electricity. (FGD men - Sabastia)

In the past, the generator used to cover 130 families but now the same generator covers 750 families (FGD men - Sabastia)

Despite limited access to electricity from the Israeli company, which is the nearest to Area C and is responsible for providing the settlement in the area with electricity, the high cost of electricity provided by the Israeli power company makes it unaffordable to local Palestinians due to the lack of income as described by interviewees:

To summarize the problem, the cost per unit of electricity is very expensive, when it costs 70 Agora (.70 NIS), for sure nobody will think of buying it. (FGD men - Sabastia)

### 4.2.3 Unemployment

According to the study results, unemployment was perceived as one of the main protection challenges within the three districts of Area C (North, South and Centre). In addition, interviewees consider that the exclusive Israeli control over Area "C" contributes decisively to wide-ranging unemployment. Also, the gender aspect is clear both in identification of the results and causes of unemployment

#### General facts: on Unemployment in Area C

- The World Bank report stated that the increase in the Palestinian GDP will result in an increase in employment. This requires major structural changes in the Palestinian economic system, which need to end the restrictions and control from the Israeli side over Area "C"<sup>38</sup>. The increase in employment emanating from lifting restrictions on Area C would "put a considerable dent in the level of poverty in Palestinian territories".<sup>39</sup>
- Farmers report increasing difficulties in accessing their agricultural land, much of which is now located behind the Barrier. This poses a serious threat to their income and livelihoods.<sup>40</sup>
- The West Bank economy grew in 2011 at a slower rate than it did in 2010. The slowdown in growth in the West Bank can be attributed to falling donor support combined with the uncertainty caused by the Palestinian Authority's fiscal crisis, as well as the Israeli restrictions imposed on Area C.<sup>41</sup>

The interviewees talked about two levels of factors leading to unemployment: Those related to the Israeli occupation and those related to Palestinian Authority policy.

Factors related to the Israeli Occupation as perceived by the communities are:

- Land confiscation
- The Wall
- Settler violence

Factors related to the Palestinian Authority policy are:

- Nepotism
- Scarcity of private sector

**Land confiscation** by the Israeli Occupation is perceived as a main income destroyer for the community in Area "C". It is recognized by the community as a root cause of unemployment. Due to the fact that Area "C's" main resource is agriculture and livestock, the confiscation would deprive the majority of the population living in area "C" from their income as explained by the interviewees. This has been highlighted and well explained by all the interviewees and focus groups.

Our lands are confiscated, we tried many times to enter our land, we need to reach our olives, but the Israeli soldiers prohibited us. We used to plant our land with different vegetables, and we used to have plenty of oil to sell. Now we can't sell olive oil like before, we don't produce like before because of losing our land. We sometimes buy olive oil for our own use (FGD women - Alkhas)

Interviewees explained the relation between the deprivation from the main income and its effect on the family welfare:

We live in a village that depends in its income primarily on agriculture, if you don't plant your land then you can't cover all the expenses of your family. Even in the days when there is no military practice, settlers accompanied by soldiers come to our lands. (Man from Attouf)

**The Wall** is another root cause which, according to the interviewees lead to an increase in the unemployment rate. It separates Area "C" from the 1948 areas -areas that used to be an open labour market for Palestinians as mentioned by the interviewees.<sup>42</sup>

The wall affected us badly, as workers we used to enter Israel to work, but now it is completely closed, we don't have many options. (FGD men - Alkhas)

Most of us here are unemployed. The wall closed the major labour market for workers. We used to enter Israel to work there, although we were not paid well but we used to have work. Now we can't do anything, we keep searching for work, but we failed. (FGD men - Beit Leqia)

The wall has caused plenty of problems especially for youth. They used to work in Israel without permits, but now the wall has closed off movement between us completely. Also the wall has a direct impact on women who used to go to the land where the wall is built. Women used to sell their products, but now they are also unemployed. Women used to participate and support the welfare of their families. (Woman from Nalen)

**Settlers** have played a major role in controlling the land and water resources in Area C. Responses show the impact of the settlers' attacks and control over land in increasing the unemployment in Area 'C'

Settlers control our grazing and agricultural lands, they chase the livestock. Many lands have been confiscated and families living in the area are prohibited to move. This has affected our economic situation. We have lost our main income. (Man from Um Elkhair)

Respondents also saw other issues for the unemployment and added nepotism and lack of private sector projects as two factors resulting from the lack of accountability and follow up from the Palestinian Authority.

**Nepotism** is perceived as one of the obstacles facing the community in finding jobs and additionally in getting support from organizations. This has led some people to benefit from nepotism depending on authorities, relation of kin or family or those otherwise in decision-making positions.

We suffer here in al-Ma'sara village from unemployment. We don't know what solutions we could have. Jobs in the village depend on kin and power. My cousin applied for a job in the village and she deserves it, as she is a hard worker, but unfortunately the other family fought for having the job and they got it. (FGD women - Almas'ra)

Nepotism is the main cause of unemployment. Only those who have someone to support them will get a job (FGD women -al-Khas)

**Scarcity of private businesses<sup>43</sup>** has caused an increase in the unemployment rate in Area "C". Respondents stated that the limited number of small private businesses played a role in this increase.

In the refugee camp here, we suffer a lot from unemployment, more than other places. We don't have factories to work in; all what we have is small shops which can't afford any employees. It's self-employment. (Man from al-Fawwar refugee camp)

Unemployment as a key challenge is strongly interrelated with other protection challenges. Through the responses of the interviewees, three protection threats were identified:

- Lack of family welfare - a gender problem
- Decline in psychological/mental health
- Child labour

Regarding family welfare, the results show the burden on women to maintain their families' welfare. They need to meet the family daily needs such as food and clothes. Due to the increased percentage of unemployment, women would bear more burden and face more challenge to meet their families' needs.

Unemployment affects us negatively, Most of the time we can't afford or provide the main needs of our children, food, medical treatment, our men don't have jobs or work. If they work, they work for low wages. We have also our needs as women which we can't cover. (FGD women -al-Fawwar refugee camp)

Being desperate to meet and maintain the daily needs of the family affects the community in general as mentioned by women:

We need to have job opportunities, we need to help those who are unemployed to maintain their situation. Being unemployed and not paid affects the psychological situation of individuals specially the university graduates who are the most unemployed category (FGD-Women -al-Ma'sara).

The high rate of unemployment has led to an increasing number of school drop-outs so as to join the labor market (child labor):

One day my 13 year old son came home from school with one idea on his mind: to sell vegetables in the market to earn money. He just threw away his school bag and told his brother that he will not just stay home doing nothing like his brother. He was caught by the police in the market selling vegetables and they forced him to sign a paper saying that if he was caught again he will be sent to prison. (Woman from Jenin Camp)

#### 4.2.4 Lack of transportation

According to the interviews, youth view transportation<sup>44</sup> as a top priority. Female and male Youth stress that they need to commute daily either to schools in nearby villages or to universities in the cities. Youth focused on the long distance between their communities and the cities and the scarcity of transportation. The absence of adequate transportation in Area C was also viewed as a threat by many of the interviewees, although not a priority as seen amongst youth.



For some remote villages in Area C, the problem is the absence of transportation altogether. Residents in these areas have to commute to different destinations with a main station and then have to walk the rest of the distance to/from their villages or residential communities. Interviews show this to be a major problem for students, particularly female students who need to walk long distances between villages to reach their home. This is not generally accepted by the community, as females are seen as vulnerable and needing male protection.

Where transportation is available, youth as well as women stress that transportation is insufficient as it is usually only available for a limited time: Generally, departing transportation is only available in the early morning and return transportation is only available until 2 pm. This creates problems for students and women in particular. These times do not meet student needs for making scheduled times for lectures, classes or exams and negatively affects their studies.

### General facts: on Transportation in Area C

- The livelihoods of Area C residents are being eroded by Israeli-imposed closure obstacles that restrict access to transportation routes that are necessary to access basic services and agricultural and grazing land.<sup>45</sup>
- Any development on infrastructure in Area C should be approved by the Israeli occupation through its implementation body ICA. Most of the permits are denied by the Israeli system.
- There are 61 permanently staffed military checkpoints across the West Bank, including 36 located along the Barrier, 11 in Hebron City and 14 on key routes elsewhere.<sup>46</sup>
- In September 2013 OCHA monthly report stated that there was deterioration in access to education in the Israeli-controlled part of Hebron city (H2), which included the temporary closure of some schools, the injury and arrest of school-age children, and declining school attendance.<sup>47</sup> Humanitarian organizations providing protective presence reported that their interventions to facilitate the crossing of students and teachers through the Israeli checkpoints in this part of the city have been largely unsuccessful.<sup>48</sup>

The absence of adequate transportation is strongly correlated with two other factors, both of which are tied to Israeli restrictions on movement and development in Area C:

- Poor transportation infrastructure
- Prohibitive costs

The interviewees, in general, highlighted the risk they take because of the dangerous conditions of the roads -unpaved and unlit, especially because of the high and steep areas they need to pass through to get to/from their communities.

All our roads are unpaved and that is a major obstacle that we face especially in winter, we live in a valley and plains area. (Man - Bedouin, Bani Na'im)

Inadequate access to transportation is directly linked to a range of other protection issues including access to education, health services and social support networks. Youth tend to emphasize effects on their education. Women are more likely to focus on how the absence of adequate, affordable transportation means they have neither adequate time nor resources to access services and support networks. Women need to shop and perform other basic errands in nearby cities because local shops have only limited supplies. Women typically travel to cities once a month for shopping; this is in addition to extra trips required when, for example, they need to visit a doctor or have other appointments. In such cases women have to leave early in the morning and then have to wait until

the afternoon transportation, to return to their villages. This ultimately limits their movement to the essentials only. Some of the women interviewed for this study expressed their resentment and anger because the scarcity of transportation has not only limited their access to health services but led to their isolation from the surrounding world, since neither time nor household budgets are sufficient to allow for visiting family and friends.

I wish we had a better transportation system from and to our villages because we have a lot of difficulty reaching the health care centres. We have to call for a cab to take us to our destination and because the roads are not paved the car charges 40 NIS back and forth; that is a total of 80 NIS. If we need to buy any merchandise that is not found in our village then we need to wait until our husbands bring it with them on their way back home. We are deprived of going out and of everything, it is a miserable life!  
(FGD women - Bedouins, Bani Na'im)

## 4.3 Main Self-protection and Coping Strategies in Area C

This section will analyze the individual and community coping strategies in dealing or eliminating the protection challenges the communities are facing. The aim is to learn from the experiences of the local communities the best approaches and ways in responding to the challenges in order to support the external, local and international actors in order to enhance their intervention approaches and methods.

Discussion of self-protection strategies is organized to correspond with each of the priority threats discussed.

### 4.3.1 Water shortage - Strategies

As clarified earlier, inadequate water supply was prioritized by the majority of study respondents across Area C (North, Centre and South). However, self-protection strategies varied between both individuals and households; these variations appear to be based on the resources owned, with some differences in strategies also occurring between men and women.

Four main strategies are adopted by both men and women as a means of confronting and overcoming water shortages:

- Buy water from those who own wells
- Seek support from one's family or neighbours
- Drawing on existing wells
- Balancing water for daily household use and water for agriculture

**To buy water from those who own wells.** Palestinian villages usually have wells as a tradition in the architectural structure as clarified by interviewees. This strategy was adopted by individuals and not practiced as a community since it depends on the availability of financial resources.

If the rain fall was abundant we pump water to all inhabitants but if we suffered from scarcity of water people would buy water from those who have wells. And if you have a tractor then you can get and buy water on your own. (FGD men -upper Fasael)

When asked about the efficiency of buying water as a strategy, interviewees said it is not sufficient for two reasons. First, even those who can afford to buy water are unlikely to be able to withstand the financial burden over the long-term; the approach serves as a means of temporarily alleviating shortages rather than a viable long-term solution. Second, the amount of water collected in wells is not enough for even one family in times of severe shortages.

**To seek support from one's family or neighbours.** This is also a strategy pursued at an individual level and is pursued when financial resources are lacking. According to study results this strategy is only practiced by women.

What can we do, we don't have any income and our families need to eat and live. When I have no other option, I ask my family for support and they will help me. But I can't keep asking, it's only when I don't have any other solutions. (FGD women)

When asked about the efficiency of this strategy, interviewees stressed that it may be a short lived social support, but it provides no permanent solution and can only be pursued as a means of last resort. Moreover, family and neighbours are often also suffering shortages so one generally strives not to burden them.

I, as many others, have to ask people for water! I use water from my parents' well. (FGD women -al-Khas)

**Drawing on existing wells.** Many respondents pointed to the existence of rain-fed wells that are usually dug and designed as part of the traditional architecture in Palestinian villages. The interviewees use their wells as a solution when water supplies are cut off, especially in the summer. While wells provide a partial response to shortages, the amount of water collected is not enough for daily use because of the decline in the amount of rainfall. The quality of well water is also an issue.

Most people have wells dug within their house premises and have water tanks so as to store water pumped, but the problem is that the water collected is not clean and is not enough for the daily uses. (Woman from al-Janieh)

We tried to overcome the problem by buying water tanks or through collecting water in the wells during the rainy season. This is insufficient because it can collect up to 80 cubes only and this is not enough. So it depends, as you see, on the amount of rain water collected which is not enough to cover all the needs of the inhabitants. (Bedouin man from Bani Na'im)

**Balancing water for daily household use and water for agriculture.** Women are generally expected to find a balance between domestic water use and providing water to the livestock. Both men and women interviewees consider managing water supply and shortages as part of women's duty to take care of their families and provide them with basic needs, such as food, water, and clothing.

We try to find a balance between our need for water and the amount of water needed for the livestock. Cattle consume large quantities of water! We also need water for cleaning, cooking, washing... (Woman from Rashaedeh)

Men confirm women's responsibility in dealing with shortages in the supply of water for domestic use and note the communal strategies women adopt to save water:

Men and women deal with the water problem in the same way, but women tend to use water rationally when it comes to household chores. For example, they gather all their laundry and wash it on the same day when the water is not cut off. (Bedouin man from Im al-Khair)

The majority of interviewees found this strategy inadequate as it neither solves the problem nor even partially addresses it: the water shortage remains and these strategies are simply an attempt to cope with it.

#### 4.3.1.1 Water contamination - Strategies

With regards to strategies specifically responding to water contamination, people coped by using two strategies:

People stopped drinking from the water network system and began to buy the water specially for drinking.

We stopped drinking water from the main network we began to buy the water from the shop (FGD women - Far'a refugee camp)

Others mentioned they use water from the wells, despite the fact it is also not clean:

Most people have wells, they would use the water from the wells when needed, but the problem is water from wells is sometimes unclean (FGD women - al-Jania)

#### 4.3.1.2 Decrease in agriculture and fodder production - Strategies

As noted previously, water shortages have negatively affected the ability of communities to engage in the production of fodder and other agricultural crops. Given the central role it plays in the Area C economy, the *decrease in agriculture and fodder production* is a major threat to livelihoods. This has resulted in changes in the labour structure as the primary coping mechanism has been for residents to move out of agricultural production to other income generation activities; residents have been forced to move from farming their own land to working as paid agricultural workers for others or moving into unskilled or semiskilled jobs. This has also meant that people living in Area C are shifting from being producers of food and fodder into consumers. Women in particular report moving to work in the informal sector<sup>49</sup> and appear to bear the greatest burden in this transition.

A lot of women go to work in tailoring workshops outside our town; some still work there until today. Workshop owners take advantage of them and abuse their rights. I one of those who was taken advantage of. (Woman - Burqa)

A second coping strategy reported, both in response to water shortages limiting possibilities for irrigation, as well as a response to land confiscation by the Israeli occupation, is a shift to growing subsistence crops only. A number of interviewees reported limiting their planting to gardens for household use and selling only if there was any surplus produce.

We only grow necessary products to be able to use them in our daily life. It is not enough but we are now self-sufficient. If there's surplus, we sell it in the market. (Man -al- Ma'sarah)

Interviewees mentioned two main responses to coping with the fodder shortage, especially those who depend on their livestock for their livelihoods such as the Bedouin. The first is to buy fodder from the market, usually from the Israeli produced goods market. This strategy is perceived as unsatisfactory because of the escalating cost of fodder due to the decrease in supply and increase in demand as fewer people are able to rely on production of their own fodder, while at the same time incomes are declining.

The second response is to sell some of one's livestock to be able to buy the fodder. However, selling part of one's herd negatively affects the amount of dairy products a household can produce; again undermining a primary source of income in Area C, particularly for Bedouin communities. This response provides only temporary respite resulting in an

ultimate decrease in the income which, in turn, limits the resources available for the next round of production. In short, the protection threat remains and, in fact, escalates over time.

We used to plant and harvest large quantities of wheat and barley, now we harvest small amounts that are just enough for storage to be used around the year. We don't raise cattle now because of the scarcity of water needed to grow fodder (to feed the cattle). We had to buy fodder to feed the cattle and that was expensive. The price of the fodder went up and the value of the cattle went down, there was no profit there.  
(FGD Bedouin women - Bani Na'im)

We needed to feed the cattle all year round; the price of the fodder kept going up and so we had to sell part of the livestock to be able to feed them. Eventually, we sold all our cattle and we still had debts to settle. This wouldn't have been the case if we still had our pastures. It would have saved us at least 3 months of payments and expenditures.  
(Bedouin man from al-Hathalin)

#### 4.3.1.3 Israeli army and settler activity - Strategies

The interviewees mentioned two strategies in dealing with the Israeli army and settler activity as follows:

To accept, unwillingly, the situation as is To confront the settlers

**To accept, unwillingly, the situation as is.** Protection in such a long-term difficult contexts is hard to achieve, as the interviewees mentioned before. From their personal experience they've realized that one strategy to protect themselves from settler abuse is to accept, unwillingly, the situation as is, especially with the absence of any international and local support to help them mitigate the harm done, as one mentioned:

We have many things to solve and don't even know where to start. In fact, just as the wall issue, we need international resolutions and national support. Even if we come up with solutions it would be temporarily effective. (Man from Safa)

It appears from the responses when there is no hope to find solutions to reach protection; when they feel hopeless and depressed they resort to God the savior:

What can we do?! Nothing of course... We have to live in this situation and God will protect us (Man from Seka)

**To confront the settlers.** Interviewees mentioned their struggle to protect themselves through confronting the settlers:

They flood their sewage waste water towards us. With the cooperation of B'Tselem we took an action against them. We took our case to the courts and we protested. Many foreigners and Israelis came for solidarity, eventually we successfully stopped them.  
(FGD men -Ni'lin)

#### 4.3.2 Electricity Shortage - Strategies

In response to electricity shortage, residents report four main strategies to limit the damage resulting from prohibitions on expanding the supply of electricity power:

- Buying Generators to increase the electric power
- Organizing a system of social solidarity
- Buying electricity from the Israeli Electricity Company

- Reducing household dependency on electricity

The strategies ranged between individual and community level responses and were influenced by the available resources of individuals. If cash is available, households buy generators to increase the availability of electric power. This may provide at least a partial solution for those who can afford it, but it is perceived as an inadequate response due to the high costs involved. Still, this strategy was mentioned frequently among the interviewees who mentioned electricity as a main protection threat.

If you have money, then you can buy a generator and get electricity. And those who do not have money have to tolerate the network and its weak capacity.  
(FGD men - upper Fasaal)

At the community level, a system of social solidarity is sometimes pursued where people collect money in order to jointly buy a large generator to increase the availability of electricity for the whole village. This strategy was mentioned frequently among the interviewees who mentioned electricity as a main protection threat.

Each family contributed with 50NIS so as to increase the capacity of the generator, but it's still not enough. (Man from Jiflik)

Another approach is to buy electricity from the Israeli electricity company through Israeli Civil Administration (ICA). This approach was noted by interviewees from villages close to the electricity network managed by Israel; this is possible because the settlements in Area C are supplied with electricity through the ICA. This strategy was viewed as inadequate because the cost involved was deemed formidable.

A final response is to attempt to limit the amount of electricity used on a daily basis by reducing household dependency on electrically operated appliances such as heaters, stoves, etc.

What can people do?! They ration its [electricity] use. Instead of electric heaters they use gas ones or they use firewood and fire to heat water. They connect the stoves with the interior water network to get hot water, which is very effective in winter.  
(FGD men - Sabastia)

### 4.3.3 Unemployment - Strategies

In response to unemployment, different coping strategies were adopted in an attempt to provide families with the minimum level of economic security. Five strategies for coping with unemployment are frequently noted by study respondents:

- Some Palestinian workers would enter illegally into 1948 areas
- Join the temporary labour market
- UNRWA employment project
- Women usually seek jobs which are acceptable in Palestinian culture
- Social relations and solidarity (limited to women)

The first strategy is that some Palestinian workers would enter illegally into 1948 areas. This though, is risky and dangerous if they get caught by the Israeli soldiers. As the respondents clarified, it is not allowed for the Palestinians to enter 1948 areas without a permit from the Israeli occupying authorities. However, issuance of a permit is rejected most of the time.

I enter Israel illegally to find work, and if I get a permit which is usually rejected, I use it to work there. (Man from Salfeet)

### 4.3. MAIN SELF-PROTECTION AND COPING STRATEGIES IN AREA C

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They (Palestinian workers) go illegally to Israel to work there because they can't get permits. (Woman from Jenin Camp)

Respondents who mention this consider it an inefficient strategy because many men have been caught while trying and this can lead to their imprisonment.

The second strategy is to join the temporary labour market which depends on crafts or working in factories. This strategy has its shortcomings: work available is short-term and seasonal, the workers receive low daily wages -and they work in poor conditions.

I work in anything: construction, farming... let me give you an example: my younger brother is a university student and on Fridays he works in a sweets shop because it gets very hectic on those days. My other brother is a graduate and he is unemployed, he spends his time at home. My third brother is an employee, he only earns 900 NIS and it barely covers his expenditures. He has to pay loan fees and he needs 1000 to 1800 NIS to pay the rent and the electricity and water bills. You see he needs another pay check to be able to support his family. During the olive picking season we help landowners in the picking and we divide the profit between us. (Man from Salfeet)

The third commonly noted strategy is related to refugees who have an additional option of work within the UNRWA employment project. The respondents clarified that they can register and apply only once at UNRWA employment office, and if they have the chance to enrol in the program, they get work for six months and after that they are not allowed to apply again. Women and men have equal access to register to the programme as clarified by the interviewees.<sup>50</sup>

UNRWA has an employment project in which they give job opportunities to the young men but in rotation. It means each individual gets to work for 6 months then the job is given to a different individual. (Young man from Al-Jalazon camp)

Respondents perceive this strategy as effective although it only solves the problem partially and for a limited time period.

The fourth strategy is limited to women. Interviewees, both men and women, noted that women usually seek jobs which are acceptable in Palestinian culture and within current social norms. Such jobs include sewing, embroidery, jobs in the Palestinian clothing and food industries and gardening.

When my husband was made redundant I built a greenhouse to earn money and help with house expenditures. (A group of women- Al khas, Bethlehem)

We were not allowed to take a break, not even for a brief moment. We worked from the moment of arrival to the moment of departure. We only had a break from 10 -10:30 to eat, drink...we even were not allowed to go to the toilets; nothing to be ashamed to talk about, you are all here like sisters to me! Sometimes we felt like listening to the radio while working or drink something or even talk to our colleagues, but it was forbidden. (Women -Burqa)

I opened a simple accessory shop to earn money. If we don't look for jobs then we will not be able to survive... A simple investment is better than nothing; it will keep us safe in the rainy days. (FGD women -al- Ma'sara, Bethlehem)

The fifth strategy is also only practiced by women and concerns relying on social relations and solidarity between women from within the community:

We formed a group of 10 women. Each pays 20 NIS every Thursday and each week one of us takes the sum of money. It is a little amount of money but it really makes a difference, that day we would be able to cook a good meal for our families. (Female- Jenin Camp)

Women view the solidarity committees as important in helping them manage their monthly needs. According to them, these committees are established among themselves and normally include friends, relatives or neighbours where each woman puts a certain amount

every week. Every month, a different woman gets the total amount deposited by the rest of the committee.

### 4.3.4 Lack of Transportation - Strategies

Study results show four main coping strategies were adopted in dealing with the Transportation challenge:

- Adjusting movement based on transportation availability
- Collective initiatives to collect money to repair the roads
- Accompany their daughters to/from pick up locations
- Drop out of schools and universities

**Adjust movement based on Transportation availability.** Youth, who allocated top priority to the threat resulting from inadequate transportation, generally respond to the scarcity of transportation in Area C by leaving their villages early in the morning to catch the only available cars or buses, even if their lectures start later in the day.

The transportation schedule in the morning is between 7 am and 9 am, then from 1pm till 3 pm, so we have to organize all our times and appointments... to take place within those hours. (Female university student - Deir Keddis)

However, when youth and interviewees were asked about the effectiveness of this strategy, they clarified that this approach is not always effective, particularly since vehicles usually don't depart until they are filled and are therefore often delayed.

The van does not move unless it is full, all 14 passengers. Once I had an early mid-term which I missed and so I flunked because of the unfair transportation schedule. Even the patients miss their morning appointments. (Female student - Al Janieh)

Moreover the shared taxis and buses often take a long, circuitous rather than direct route.

Listen! If a student wants to attend the 8 am lecture, then he has to leave at 6:30 am if he is using transportation. If he has a [private] car it does not take him that long. Now, if he is taking the mini-bus (17 passengers) then it takes a lot of time because the bus route goes through Sabastia too. (Man from Burqa)

**Collective initiatives to collect money to repair the roads** the problem of adequate transportation, is as noted above, strongly correlated by study respondents, to poor transport infrastructure. In response, some interviewees reported on collective initiatives to collect money within a given village to repair the roads. However, this strategy is perceived as inadequate. First, because of the prohibitions by Israeli authorities on any infrastructural development without permits (which are rarely granted); Second, because the costs of repairing and maintaining roads is a financial burden too heavy for the community to shoulder.

The study suggest that women suffer more than men from the lack of transportation as they are at once the first to lose the opportunities to move when budgets are restricted and because their freedom of movement is already more restricted than that of men. In dealing with such gender issue, two strategies have been adopted:



**Accompany their daughters to/from pick up locations.** In order to ensure the security of young female students who rely on transportation to get to classes, families sometimes organize for brothers or mothers to accompany them to/from pick up locations, particularly if they are living in remote areas. Several mothers mentioned that they would take their sons and wait for their daughters in the entrance of the village until they arrive home which adds more burden on the mothers:

This really puts us under pressure, I have a daughter who goes to a university and her brother and I have to walk until the water spring to wait for her especially during winter when her lecture finishes at 5 pm. (Woman from al-Khas)

**Drop out of schools and universities.** In some instances, families decide that it is best for their daughters to drop out of schools and universities located in different villages or cities fearing for their safety especially when they arrive home late.

This phenomenon which my friends and I are talking about and I call it phenomenon because it is spreading among mothers, is affecting the girls' education. Their mothers get them engaged at an early age and while they are in school to prevent them from going to colleges. (FGD women - Beit Our)

## 4.4 Community's Main Considerations on External Aid in Area C

Palestinian society, both its governmental and non-governmental institutions, depends primarily on external funds. In general, the relationship between international organizations and local Palestinian organizations is based on a "partnership" model in which the former contracts or provides grant funds for the latter to carry out projects over an agreed period. As mentioned before, only a few organizations whether international or Palestinian are working in Area C due to the obstacles imposed by the Israeli occupation. A number of projects designed to improve access to basic services such as, water, health, education, and housing have been significantly hindered, blocked altogether, or demolished after implementation by Israeli order.<sup>51</sup>

One of the main aims of the research was to explore how external actors support the community to continue living in such a challenging and dangerous environment -as seen from the community perspective.

### 4.4.1 External Interventions Related to Protection Threats

In their responses, the community dealt with the international and local assistance as one and the same as they pointed out that projects implemented by the local organizations depend on the agenda and programs of the international donor. In evaluating interventions by external actors respondents focused on the extent to which they were able to solve the problem and meet their actual needs or not.

Based on the participants' answers, Area C communities' satisfaction with external interventions can be classified into three levels:

Some expressed high satisfaction with the quality of the services. The majority of respondents (female and male) expressed limited satisfaction with the quality of services offered. Some expressed anger and dissatisfaction with the services offered.

**High Satisfaction.** Some participants expressed high satisfaction with the quality of the services provided by local and foreign institutions and individuals<sup>f</sup> even though the services only served as a partial solution to the problem.

We worked with the UNRWA on building a water drainage system to drain rainwater. The municipality ran and executed the project and we built drainage manholes but the project was not completed because we ran out of materials and so the system did not reach the valley and the agricultural lands. The project solved the problem of water drainage in some areas only; people living in those areas connected their water systems with the drainage system and thus they solved their problem. (Man from Ne'leen)

Let me tell you, the Japanese work really well in this country, especially in the valley area, they offer good projects. Here also, we benefitted from the well drilling projects. It solved 20% of the water problem. However, not all the town inhabitants benefitted from this well drilling project. If you walk around the village you will find only 20 wells. (FGD men - 'Attouf)

Study results suggest a correlation between satisfaction levels and the type of intervention. As in the two cases noted above, satisfaction appears to be more likely when the intervention responds directly to the core needs as understood by the community:

"There were some good projects. 75 chickens were given to those who could provide a good space for them. We also contributed: we paid 270 NIS and they gave us five bags of fodder. This was excellent! We had enough eggs [for ourselves] and we sold the rest. With this money we bought fodder, we did not make a profit. (FGD women - Ne'leen)

We are refugees. We work in the "Refugee Card" project for a period of time varying between one to three months a year. We do embroidery and the UNRWA sells it for us. The project is excellent, thank God. (FGD Women- Ne'leen)

**Some degree of Satisfaction.** The majority of the participants, both female and male, expressed some degree of satisfaction with the quality of the services offered by local and foreign institutions and individuals. Also the interviewees mentioned that the protection threats are not limited or solved through the intervention; but it may give the community a feeling of security for a shorter period depending on the duration of the programme.

Some of the participants expressed anger and dissatisfaction with the offered services. The dissatisfaction resulted from the poor quality of the services by both the international and local organizations.

The health clinic team, as you know, is on strike. If in the past they came and spent a day here, now they don't come at all, and as you can see it is closed. The UNRWA clinic opened and offered its services for a short time but we had to pay visiting fees for the doctor and it was expensive. (Man from Jiftlik)

**Dissatisfaction.** Others mentioned that the dissatisfaction resulted from lack of information about the services and projects in the area. This was highlighted by both men and women, but the results show that women more frequently complained that they did not know about interventions. This may be due to women's limited activity outside the home or the fact that external actors often rely on community and village councils which women rarely reach.

We don't know anything about the programs which came directly to the village council. The members there are all men; they are the ones who get to know about the programs. (Woman from Safa)

<sup>f</sup>Some individuals from the community or Palestinian society in general would give financial support to families in need, especially on religious occasions.

#### 4.4. COMMUNITY'S MAIN CONSIDERATIONS ON EXTERNAL AID IN AREA C

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There is no one here offering services for us to say if the services were positive or negative. What we mean is: how can we judge someone if he is good or not if we don't know him! (FGD men -upper Fasaiel)

Dissatisfaction is also related to the lack of follow up and monitoring of projects by the external actors. According to one of the participants of the focus groups:

[Institutions] come to you with a project idea and tell you we want to do one, two and three. They give you the money and at the end of the project, they say we want bills and a report about the project, but in reality no projects were done. (FGD Men -Burqa)

A few expressed their dissatisfaction with the foreign aid because they have political agendas and are not really offering genuine help:

These institutions come to a city with the aim of normalization. We don't accept that."(Man from Salfit)

I can tell you that three-quarters of the projects that come to this country are political ones and not developmental. It taught people how to steal and loot in this country. (FGD men - Burqa)

The last issue eliciting criticism from some of the respondents concerning the selection criteria adopted:

The criteria do not apply to those in need, the definition of criteria and the conditions on which they depend to offer services are unfair. Nepotism and the other dealings make it very hard to get any services. (FGD men - Safa)

You can't apply to these funders as an individual; it has to be through an institution. These are the benefactors' conditions for any project. (FGD women - Al Far'a Camp)

#### 4.4.2 External Interventions in Supporting Community Strategies to Overcome Protection Threats

**Water Shortages.** Building wells was a main intervention implemented in partnership between the international and local organizations. Based on the interviewees' comments, this strategy is considered suitable for communities' needs but the problems with these interventions focus on two things. First, the costs were considered very high as the donor covered only a percentage of the cost and the selected household would cover the remaining amount. This policy limits the support to the families who are able to pay the cost of completing the wells and excludes those who can't. Second, respondents pointed to the absence of clear criteria for selecting the beneficiaries and the fact that not all families in the same village were able to benefit from the programme.

**Electricity shortages.** As mentioned in the beginning of this section, the relation between the international and national agencies is generally based on a partnership model. The international agency implements a project through a local organization. This is the case with projects directed in response to the electricity threat, especially in Bedouin communities where projects aim to provide solar power. Similarly, in refugee camps, local organizations are also working to upsurge the electric power through short-term and costly solutions such as generators. Interviewees evaluate these interventions as unsuitable for two reasons. First, the intervention was not extensive enough for all people to benefit from the project. The reason behind this criticism appear to be that these projects were not completed by the implementing organization. Secondly,, interviewees mentioned the Israeli restrictions, which hinder the work of the implementing organizations.

**Unemployment.** Respondents point out that few external interventions were designed to mitigate the threats and challenges posed by unemployment.

The UNRWA project "Work for Food" was perceived as the main project directly addressing the unemployment issue. Respondents describe it as a useful programme because although it lasted only for a short period it has helped them to find jobs. On the national level, results show that there was an intervention from the Ministry of Social Affairs through the project "Cash Transfer" which aims to support families below the poverty line. Although not many families benefit from the project in Area C, it was perceived as a good project in that it helps people to manage within a difficult economic situation.

The few other existing projects intended to respond to unemployment are mainly undertaken by Palestinian women's organizations such as Asala, working on women's economic empowerment through offering small loans for women. Some organizations also provide vocational training to help people in getting employment opportunity. Responses show that the benefits were rarely satisfying because the organizations did not take into consideration the actual needs of women.

**Transportation.** The one external intervention aimed at improving transportation that was discussed by respondents was undertaken directly by an international organization with the local council in the village without contracting a local organization. The project aimed to support school children in reaching their schools located a long distance from their home communities. The international agency provided a bus to transport students to/from their schools for one year. The project only partially solved the problem as the bus departed very early which discouraged a number of students from using the service. Moreover, the service was only provided for one year.

### 4.4.3 Good Practice in Relation to External Interventions

Study results show that communities use basically one criterion in highlighting the best practices in the implementation of external interventions. This is compatibility between the actual needs of the community and the outcomes of the projects. For example in dealing with unemployment, as we noted previously, the UNRWA project was the most effective programme as it responds to the actual need of community members, i.e. the need for a job and an income.

Despite the fact that a project cannot solve the problem at hand, an intervention is seen as successful if it at least partially contributes to dealing with the protection threat or challenge: Some protection is better than nothing.

FAO supported us with seeds and fodder, also the UNRWA programme "Work for Food" and the Ministry of Social Affairs. They all supported us. The truth is it didn't solve the problem but it helped us for a while to overcome and deal better with our suffering. (FGD men - Masafer Bani Nae'm)

### 4.4.4 Negative Aspects of External Interventions

According to the results, the respondents in Area C highlight two negative aspects of external interventions. Both are addressed to the international community. Notably, this was the only issue where those interviewed differentiate between international and local organizations. The first criticism concerns the international donors' approach toward the communities in Area C. Respondents clearly objected to being seen as "relief communities". They explain that this approach has led people to rely on support and not to search for alternatives or how to use available resources to overcome the problems they

are facing. Stress is placed on the need for developmental programs which will better enhance community welfare and be more sustainable.

Emergency and relief aid has a negative impact because it's for a short period and its impact vanishes with the end of the program. And it leads to lots of problems between the residents in the village. In contrast, development programs are more sustainable and their impact is more effective for the community (Man from Um al-Khair)

The second criticism relates to the scope of interventions. Responses show that the issue of a limited number of beneficiaries is a significant source of dissatisfaction. Moreover, this situation has led to disputes between families.

## 4.5 Conclusions and Recommendations for Area C

The situation in Area C presents a multitude of acute inter-related challenges paralleled with a range of other challenges. Although there was significant homogeneity in the identification of top priorities to protection challenges in the three districts of Area C, the study shows that there are differences among the respondents in ranking priorities of the main protection challenges based on gender, age, and place or residency.

The fact that international and local organizations largely deal with protection challenges by the as homogenous is misleading and led to misinterpretation in identifying the interventions/projects needed. This results in neglecting the different classifications within the community and their different needs. The study shows a gap between the international intervention and the community needs.

Four main issues were raised. Firstly, a majority of responses showed reluctance and dissatisfaction with the assistance and services offered. Still, they accepted the provided services with the justification that having minimal support is better than not having any. Secondly, the interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction with the short-term projects approach offered as a mean to help them improve their conditions; preferring a longer term approach. Thirdly, much criticism was expressed and directed toward the criteria set by the beneficiary organizations to determine the target group and the suitability of the projects, questioning if these criteria actually are helpful to meet the needs of the population. Fourthly and lastly, lack of follow up and monitoring system which led to an increase in the gap between the actual needs of the community and the external interventions.

Coping Strategies remain mitigation strategies rather than sustainable solutions -first and foremost due to ongoing Israeli violations and unfulfilled obligations under International Laws and International Humanitarian Law.

To ensure more effective results for external interventions, the following recommendations and suggestions should be applied:

- An international conference funded and backed by the EU and held in a European city to discuss the above-mentioned violation of Area C is very timely. This will provide a forum where stakeholders will be able to propose long-term solutions for such marginalized communities as opposed to crisis management strategies. These communities fall under Israeli sovereignty; however, Israel is not treating these communities as inhabitants living under a foreign occupation and therefore the communities are not provided with necessary services and security measures, as required under International Law.
- Increased support for long-term, sustainable projects in the use of the natural resources:

- Agriculture has historically been the main source of livelihood for communities in Area C. Support to the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture should be prioritized with a particular focus on rain-fed agricultural projects.
- Replacing electric power with the solar power and renewable energy.
- Support the building and rehabilitation of water wells, as well as natural water springs. This is vital for agricultural production and thus any initiative should ensure that the wider population in these communities benefit from collective use as opposed to individual family use.
- As far as water and well projects, a need for water conservation, water recycling, wastewater management and proper irrigation projects such as drip irrigation. Adding, soil management as a way to conserve water.
- Comprehensive projects, as opposed to silo, thematically geared projects should be properly planned and implemented. For example, infrastructure development can be parallel with capacity building, such as developing worker skills and knowledge in design and renovation.
- Community Capacity building is needed to maintain the sustainability of the projects and to empower the community with the necessary tools and knowledge to deal with emergency crises situations and in parallel, continue the work on development aid programs. Programs could include:
  - Awareness raising for the local communities regarding the discourse on International Law and International Humanitarian Law within the communities in Area C. It should be one of the main aspects in empowering the communities to protect themselves.
  - Leadership and advocacy skills and knowledge, with a particular emphasis on youth.
  - Intensive training and follow-up on documentation for the different communities living in the three districts in Area C to document their stories and the violations they face as a result of the Israeli policies. It is also important for the community to voice their opinion through text, audio and visuals.
  - Psychological and social services for families and individuals.
- Despite the fact that Area C is still under the full Israeli control, it is important to work on enhancing the role of the Palestinian local government, who is responsible for dealing with the Palestinians living in Area C.
- Establish and support long-term programs for youth in Area C: the "Youth to Youth" approach is one of the tools to empower the youth and engage them in community life. Youth continue to be one of the main neglected groups in Area C.
- Conducting assessment of community priorities, resources and needs as a means and an essential tool within a process to ultimately lead to advocacy for tangible change. It is a main tool to be used in determining the intervention needed in any community and obviously any comprehensive and effective assessment should be applied from a gender perspective.
- Establishment of a monitoring committee comprised of community and partner organizations is essential in order to monitor, assess, and positively influence the effectiveness of implemented programs.

## 4.5.1 Operational Recommendations arising from the Interviews in Area C

The following specific recommendations can be drawn from the interviews:

### Water Shortages

- Develop and enhance the wells projects as an alternative to the Artisan wells, which is prohibited by the Israeli Occupation.
- Palestinian Local Council should support the inhabitants by providing tanks and free transportation in transferring water

### Electricity Shortages

- On the short term, the interviewees suggested to provide the areas with larger electric generators.

### Unemployment

- A community needs assessment to identify the suitable programs for the community.
- Networking with foreign institutions, including the assistance of donors, to assist in marketing handicraft products such as embroidery, abroad.
- Establish business incubators to market women's products and enhance the quality of products to meet market standards.
- Develop vocational curricula in line with the needs of the market in vocational and training institutes

### Lack of Transportation

- Signing contracts with companies responsible for providing transportation between the residential communities and other cities.

## Notes

1. Based on UNDP report: "around 40.000 Bedouins in the oPt, most of refugees and displaced indigenous tribes that settled in areas suitable for their lifestyle around Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem and Jericho". In: UNDP. INFOCUS: Bedouins in the occupied Palestinian territory. September. 2013. In: <http://www.undp.ps/en/newsroom/publications/pdf/other/Bedouins%20in%20the%20occupied%20Palestinian%20territory.pdf>

2. Based on UNDP report "Bedouins in the occupied Palestinian territory": The "Israeli settler retain control over all building and planning in Area C leaving the Palestinian Authority with marginal responsibility over health and education services" this lead to deprive Palestinian in Area C from a their basic human rights. See In: In: UNDP.INFOCUS: Bedouins in the occupied Palestinian territory. Spetember.2013.P.5.In: <http://www.undp.ps/en/newsroom/publications/pdf/other/Bedouins%20in%20the%20occupied%20Palestinian%20territory.pdf>

3. Settlements and the wall, unlawful destruction and forcible population transfer" p.35

4. Ibid

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6. Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA). Failing To Make the Grade. How the EU can pass its own test and work to improve the lives of the Palestinians In Area C.2012, P.2. Available from: [http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/aida\\_eu\\_public\\_report\\_final\\_web\\_corrected.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/aida_eu_public_report_final_web_corrected.pdf)

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9. <http://www.palestinemonitor.org/spip/spip.php?article7>
10. United nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs(OCHA). Area C of The West Bank: Key Humanitarian Concerns. January 2013. See Also in: B'TSELEM. Acting the Landlord: Israel's Policy in Area C, the West Bank. Report Summary, June, 2013 in:[http://www.btselem.org/publications/201306\\_area\\_c](http://www.btselem.org/publications/201306_area_c)
11. See in: Global protection cluster. Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). Protection Cluster, occupied Palestinian territory. Needs Assessment Framework,2012-2013. Also In: United Nation.Occupied Palestinian Territory. Consolidated Appeal.2013
12. See more in: UNDP.INFOCUS: Bedouins in the occupied Palestinian territory. September 2013. In: <http://www.undp.ps/en/newsroom/publications/pdf/other/Bedouins%20in%20the%20occupied%20Palestinian%20territory.pdf>
13. Based on International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 1" All people have the right of self - determination, By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development". Also a statement by Mr. Rober Serry, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process " In a volatile and rapidly changing region, the vision of the two -state solution and the achievements of the Palestinian Authority are elements of stability and progress that should not be lost but rather maintained and realized in full without further delay ...see UN resolutions including Security Council Resolution 605,and General Assembly Resolutions 1803(XVII),3175,3236,3156,31/186,32/161
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28. Jordan Valley Soldierly. Water rights. See more at: <http://www.jordanvalleysolidarity.org/index.php/info-maps-2/water-rights>
29. B'tselem. Water Crises. Villages not connected to a water network. 2011
30. Ibid
31. World Bank. West Bank and Gaza.Area C the future of the Palestinian Economy. Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department. 2013.P.10



32. Ibid. P.9
33. Reproductive role is used in gender studies for women role in Childbearing/rearing responsibilities, and domestic tasks done by women, required guaranteeing the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. It includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the work force (male partner and working children) and the future work force (infants and school-going children).
34. Area C is surrounded by Israeli settlements, which have the privilege to benefit from the natural resources in area C depriving the original inhabitants -Palestinians from their right to those resources.
35. Between 25-29 October 2009, eight teams of UNRWA social workers surveyed 5,200 families, including 510 randomly selected children.
36. UNICEF Monthly update 2010.in [http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF-oPt\\_April\\_Update\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF-oPt_April_Update(1).pdf)
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38. World Bank. West Bank and Gaza. Area C the future of the Palestinian Economy. Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department. 2013, P.34
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40. See: <http://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/west-bank-emergency>
41. World Bank. Stagnation or Revival? Palestinian Economic Prospects. Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. March 21.2012.
42. Israel's market was an open labour market to Palestinians. Palestinians used to work in the lower level of the pyramid of the labour force such as cleaning, construction, etc.. The low cost of the Palestinian labour force compared to the Israeli encouraged the Israeli market to use them. See also: Farsak, Leila. Palestinian Labour Migration to Israel: Labour, Land and Occupation. Institute for Palestine Studies, in Collaboration with Muwatin, The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy. 2009.
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44. Transportation became one of the main problems during and after the Second Intifada. The Israeli policy was to isolate the oPt as a measure taken to destroy the resistance. In general, the road networks connecting Area C to major West Bank cities are neglected and do not meet public safety measures. Israeli authorities have blocked development of the roads. It is a part of their evacuation and displacement policy. This reality has a direct effect on the daily life of inhabitants. The participants highlighted the risk they take because of the dangerous conditions of the roads especially that they have to pass through high and steep areas to get to their communities using unpaved and unlit roads. The problem is about freedom of movement, but interviewees specified it with the lack of transportation, which is one of the factors which limited their movement.
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48. Ibid
49. Based on the International Labor Organization definition, the employment in the informal sector comprises all persons who, during a given reference period, were employed in at least one informal enterprise, irrespective of their status in employment and whether it was their main or secondary job. The sector is not recognized either in the legal system or in its value. Women are more involved in this sector which is unpaid in most cases because it is a family business like agriculture. It is dominated with bad working conditions such as low wages, long working hours, lack of adequate and healthy infrastructure.
50. Equal access to jobs related to service sector such as education, health, administrative work in offices, food processing...Women do not apply for jobs that are traditionally known as "men's jobs" - such as construction work - because it is not accepted by the culture and norms in Palestine ...The project is titled: Reviving Earth Architecture in the Jordan Valley- Palestine. See more at: <http://www.unesco.org>
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# Chapter 5

## Gaza Strip

### 5.1 Background: Situation in Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated areas in the world with over 4,500 people per square km. The proportion of the Gaza population to the rest of the oPt is 38%,<sup>1</sup> with a high fertility rate at 5.6.<sup>2</sup> One in 5 persons in the Gaza Strip falls in the "youth" category, that is, the group between 15 and 24 years of age.<sup>3</sup> The 15 to 24-year-age group constitutes 22% of the total population, and the 0 to 14 years represents 44% of the total. The population pyramid bulge is slowly shifting towards the working age youth, i.e. those between 15 and 24 years of age.<sup>4</sup>

To date Gazans are facing major hurdles in their basic needs as a result of the continued policy of the Israeli occupation of imposing a complete closure on the Gaza Strip, which is aggravated by the political split between Hamas and Fatah. Pursuant to the Hague Convention and the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel has responsibility towards the welfare and safety of the citizens under occupation including those in the Gaza Strip. Although the Israeli army is not physically inside the Gaza Strip, the territory remains under Israeli control. Furthermore, the closure constitutes a violation of Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits collective punishment. In reference to the CEDAW Convention, the Israeli occupation has breached articles 2, 3, 10, 12, 14(2)(h), 15(4) and the General recommendation 19 on violence against women which demand the right of women to live with no discrimination.

In 2000 Israel started escalating its restrictions on the Gaza Strip causing deterioration in the humanitarian situation.<sup>7</sup> The roots of the humanitarian protection threats faced by the inhabitants are to a very large extent created by these policies. Since 2005, after the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the decline in the living standards intensified even further. Israel continued to control the airspace and maritime areas, prohibited the movement of ships and aircrafts, and restricted the movement of goods and services between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It limited movement to a few types of goods and only during specific periods. At the same time, actions of Hamas led government in the Gaza Strip has also partially contributed to the decline in the quality of services especially as a result of restrictions and control imposed on some activities of several human rights organizations involved in humanitarian assistance.<sup>8</sup>

In violation of International Law, Israel has pursued since 2006 a policy of comprehensive closure<sup>9</sup> and isolation of the Gaza Strip, not only shutting it off from the West Bank but also the external world. This prolonged closure has had severe humanitarian consequences for communities across the Gaza Strip such as severe shortage of food, electricity,

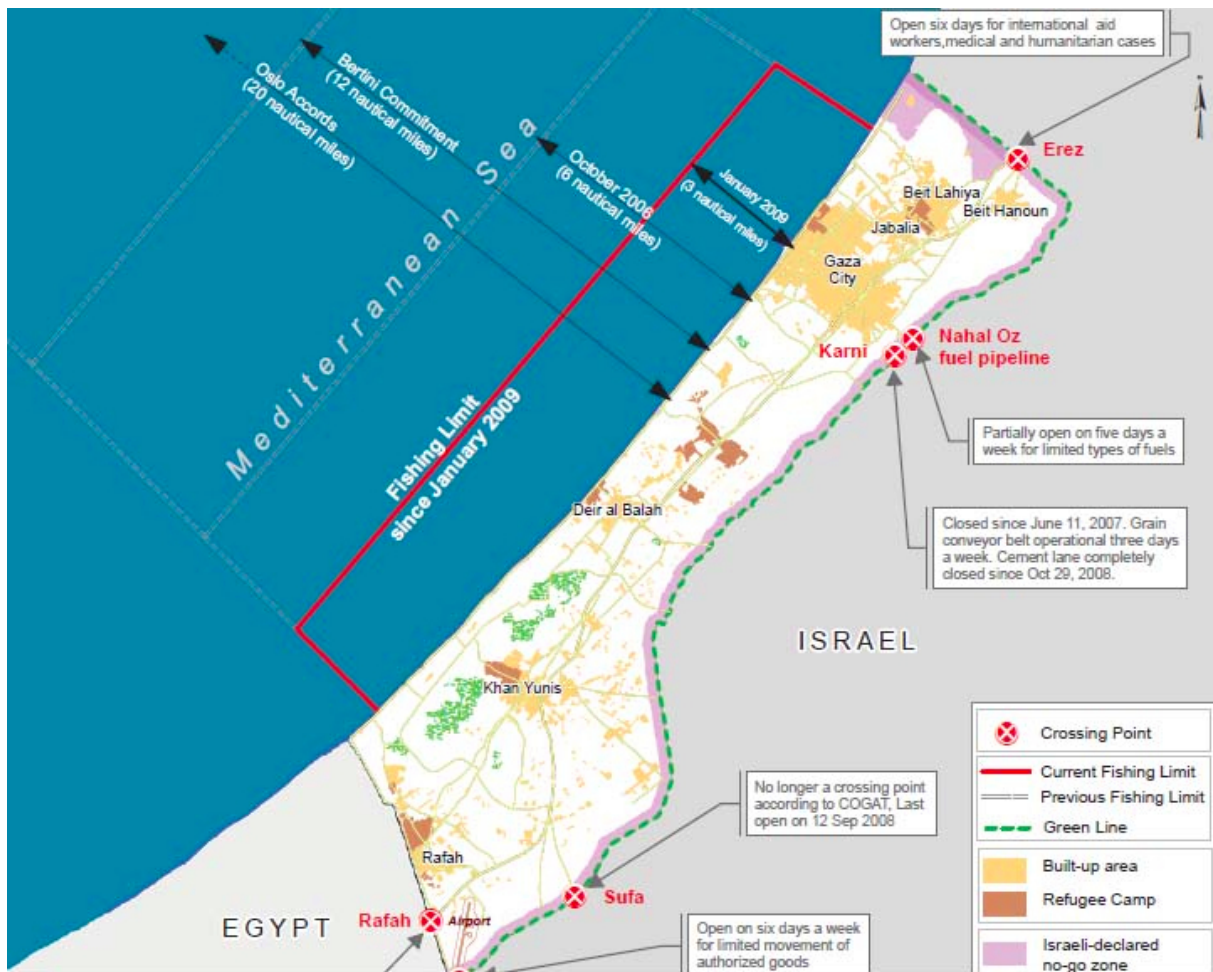


Figure 5.1: The map<sup>6</sup> shows the geographic outline of the Gaza Strip and an overview of the imposed restrictions of movement, including fishing limits

medicine, fuel, a ban from travel for medical treatment, decrease in health quality and services, and the most important aspect is the lack of personal security.

In 2007, the political split between Hamas and Fatah started and led to an internal armed conflict. The Gazans were facing more threats to their own safety as a result of combined effect of the internal conflict and the continuous closure imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip. The closure and the split between Hamas and Fatah led to a complete geographic separation between the Gaza Strip and West Bank. It resulted in undermining social relations between families and communities in the two areas as well as impeding the pursuit of unified judicial and legislative policies and practices. Palestinians in the two areas are now subject to different legal systems such as the Personal Status Law and the Penal Code, which define the social relations of individuals both within and outside the family. On the other hand the international boycott contributed to the cessation of funding to the Palestinian Authority, creating a large proportion of public servants without salaries in Gaza.

In 2008 the humanitarian situation reached a critical phase during the war in Gaza, which was implemented and justified as a "security measure" by Israel. The war resulted in totally damaging<sup>10</sup> the infrastructure of the Gaza Strip and about 700 civilians died. The deterioration of the humanitarian situation continued until 2009 and reached its peak in the second war in Gaza in 2010. It continues to date. In the OCHA report for 2013, it is mentioned that 44% of Gazans are food insecure and about 80% are aid recipients.<sup>11</sup> The same report identified that a severe fuel and electricity shortage results in outages of up to 12 hours a day while 90 million litres of untreated and partially treated sewage are dumped in the sea each day and over 90% of the water from the Gaza aquifer is unsafe for human consumption without treatment.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, in 2014 -after the field visit of the present study had been completed- a third war in Gaza has left a death toll estimated by B'tselem to be 1,767 Palestinians, most of them civilians, of which 431 minors and 200 women and 64 Israeli soldiers, two Israeli civilians and one Thai national.

### 5.1.1 Humanitarian Interventions in the Gaza Strip

Despite the deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Gaza, international humanitarian interventions are circumscribed in the Gaza Strip as a result of the continuous international boycott on the one hand and the emphasis on relief rather than development on the other. The international aid is currently implemented through direct partnership with the non-governmental institutions in the Gaza Strip. There are some international and regional institutions such as Islamic Relief and the Government of Qatar that directly support the de facto government (Hamas). The Turkish government has also provided some relief aid to Gaza through UNRWA, in which it provided the equivalent of 70,000 tons of wheat flour.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, different UN agencies are implementing various projects in Gaza related to water sewage, women's rights and food security. According to OCHA, since June 2010 73% of UN reconstruction projects submitted to the Israeli authorities have been approved; dozens are pending approval for an average of 18 months.<sup>14</sup>

Before the outbreak of the Egyptian crisis, food insecurity was on the rise due to high unemployment, low wages and rising food prices especially after the closure of the tunnels that link the Strip with Egypt.<sup>a</sup> Since the tunnels were closed in June 2013 by the Egyptian government, the prices of some main food supplies increased (33% increase in the price of rice and 7% for oil).<sup>15</sup> The population of Gaza, even those who still maintain their

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<sup>a</sup>The underground tunnels between Gaza and Egypt have been vital in supplying residents with food, medicine, fuel and building materials starting from the year 2007. The tunnels were used for transporting goods as well as individuals.

income, are increasingly struggling to feed their families, and a wide sector of people began to lose their jobs slowly, both in the public sector and private construction sector due to the closure of the smuggling tunnels.<sup>16</sup>

## 5.2 Main Protection Challenges in the Gaza Strip

Based on the research results in the Gaza Strip, four important issues should be addressed before going into the analysis of the community's perceptions of the main protection challenges in the Gaza Strip.

First, The two main factors of the different protection challenges that have been addressed by the interviewees are basically consequences of the Israeli full closure imposed on Gaza Strip , adding to that the conflict between Hamas and Fatah.

Second, despite variations in population groups within Gaza, the identification of commonly experienced protection challenges perceived as directly and indirectly affecting all segments of society was similar for communities across the Gaza Strip: unemployment, electricity shortage, water contamination, decline in health services quality, freedom of movement. These priorities were identified across communities and regardless of gender and age.

At the same time, a gendered analysis shows a clear difference between men and women in relation to the prioritization of domestic violence and violence within the family. This issue emerged as one of the main protection challenges in the Gaza Strip but was, with rare exception, raised only by women (four men mentioned it ). This is an indication that women's issues are considered in the private sphere (family) and are not seen by men in general as a general protection threat in the Gaza Strip.

The fourth issue is the interaction and interdependence between a wide range of protection challenges mentioned by the community. These include closure and isolation of the Gaza Strip, continuous shortages in electricity, contamination of drinking water, unemployment, domestic violence and violence within the family, lack of access to inheritance for women, the political division between Fatah and Hamas, Israeli restrictions on fishing areas, lack of safety in tunnels, the high cost of housing, poor infrastructure in the refugee camps, child labour, the high fertility rate, the disappearance of public freedoms, weakness in the quality of education in schools and universities, and the spread of drugs, especially among young people.

Protection Threats mentioned in Gaza (no ranking) Identified by Gender	
Israeli Occupation	Men&Women
Israeli Closure	Men&Women
Violence against women	Women
Unemployment	Men&Women
Electric shortage	Men&Women
Low wages	Men&Women
Spread of drugs	Men&Women/Youth
Corruption and nepotism	Men&Women
Political division between Hamas, Fatah and Islamic Jihad	Women
Employment contract work for short term	Women
Early marriage	Mainly Women
Women rights in inheritance	Women
Absence of legal protocol for fisherman	Men
Delay in age of marriage	Men
smuggling goods through tunnels	Men
Lack of safety measures in tunnels	Men&Women
Child labour	Men&Women
Absence of public freedom	Men&Women
High fertility rate	Men&Women
Water Contamination	Men&Women
Long distance between health centres and the residency	Elderly Women
Lack of power to decide in the future	Men&Women

Two protection challenges were chosen as highest priority based on the frequency mentioned by the interviewees:

1. Unemployment
2. Domestic violence and Violence within the family

### 5.2.1 Unemployment

Most women and men perceive unemployment as the most important protection challenge -the harmful effects of unemployment are perceived as a daily threat and one, which prevents a dignified life.

Both poverty and unemployment are the reasons behind the weakness and desperation in society. (FGD women - Jabalya)

It is a daily struggle – we go through it every day and it affects every small detail in our lives. (FGD women - Al Meghraqa)

Research findings confirm that unemployment is not related to the lack of people with qualifications, on the contrary Gaza is abundant with qualified people but short in job opportunities.

My husband, my ten children, and I suffer from severe poverty and unemployment, although 5 of my children carry university degrees they do not work. Three of them are married and have children. (A group of women- Beit Lahia)

As reaffirmed by Mr. Munib Abu Ghazal, Director of Islamic relief in Palestine:

The problem in Gaza is not one of educational capacity or potential in the workforce. When we employ a fresh graduate in one of our projects, we find professionalism, energy and dedication. The problem is that the opportunities open to our young people are extremely limited.<sup>17</sup>

### General facts: on Unemployment in Gaza Strip

- Unemployment rate in Gaza reached 40.8% in the 1st quarter 2014.<sup>18</sup>
- Unemployment among females in the Gaza Strip reached 50.1% for the year 2012.<sup>19</sup>
- Female participation rate reached 20.5% compared to males' participation 68.5%.<sup>20</sup>
- The poverty rate among Palestinian individuals in Gaza Strip was 38.8%.<sup>21</sup>
- In the 1st quarter of 2012, the poverty rate among young people in the Gaza Strip reached 38.7% of the overall youth percentage of 29.8%.<sup>22</sup>
- 35% of Gaza's farmland and 85% of its fishing waters are totally or partially inaccessible due to Israeli imposed restrictions.<sup>23</sup>
- Based on the labour survey in 2013, the public sector employed 15.9% in West Bank and Gaza Strip, 40.5% in the Gaza Strip.<sup>24</sup>
- The UNRWA report finds that the private sector was particularly badly hit by the Israeli closure compared to the government sector. In the second half of 2010 businesses shed over 8,000 jobs, a decline in employment of nearly 8 per cent relative to the first half of the year. By contrast, the Hamas-dominated public sector grew by nearly 3 per cent during the same period.<sup>25</sup>
- In Gaza, 32% of men between 15 and 24 years participate in the labor force, but the rate is considerably lower for women in the same age group, 7%.<sup>26</sup>
- The situation is more serious for young women, whose unemployment rate is about 16 percentage points above that of young men.<sup>27</sup>

#### 5.2.1.1 The impact of unemployment on basic welfare of Gaza communities

As noted above, the intertwined nature of protection challenges emerges very clearly from the research. While unemployment is the most frequently raised challenge, it is regularly discussed with and in relation to a range of other challenges. The connection and impact between unemployment and the frequency of other issues such as domestic violence is widely expressed; domestic violence is understood in relation to the social and economic conditions and perceived as increasing simultaneously with the increase of unemployment. People perceive unemployment to be so closely entangled with other protection challenges that it is almost impossible to envision an end or reduction of any challenge without addressing the problem of unemployment. The primary impact of unemployment on basic needs can be classified as follows:

Deterioration in access to basic services, particularly to electricity and water, due to the high cost of both. Escalation in social problems.

With regard to the deterioration in basic services, research results indicate a close relationship between shortage of water and electricity because of the shortage of money and thus the inability to cover cost as a result of unemployment:

If the unemployment problem is resolved then the rest of the issues would be resolved too. If I were able to find a job, then I would be able to fill the water tank when water gets cut off, or even be able to use the generator to pump water to the tank when we don't have electricity. (FGD women- Al Shate Camp)

Some highlighted the correlation between high unemployment and the increase in social problems facing the community. They emphasized that the increase in the divorce rates is directly linked, inter alia, to the high rate of unemployment in the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, others highlighted the extent to which unemployment led to an increase in theft



and poverty levels. Following are some testimonials from some participants in the focus groups.

The problem of divorce is caused by unemployment and by those who stayed home after the split. (Woman in Jabalya Camp)

These days there are cases of theft caused by poverty. People don't have work (Woman in Beit Lahia)

My suffering is caused by severe poverty; I don't have a house, and all that I own are these four walls. I live on the sand. (FGD women- Al Meghraqa)

The most recurring and discussed issue by women in the context of unemployment was domestic violence. It is a deeply rooted social problem in the social and cultural system and as it is not solely caused by unemployment, it will be explored in a following section.

Once I witnessed an incident in which a woman told her husband that they ran out of sugar, so he hit her and submerged her head under water because he had no idea how or where to get money from. (Woman from Khan Younis)

The second most frequently mentioned problem perceived, particularly by the youth, as resulting from unemployment is the problem of drugs.

The problem is that (drugs) spread among girls; many girls take Tramadol<sup>b</sup> (drug) and this unfortunately leads to bigger ethical problems (Woman from Jabalya)

This problem affects the psychology of youths; it encourages them to trade in illegal substances and to steal. (Man from North Gaza-Jabalya)

### 5.2.1.2 Factors of unemployment

Despite the diversity of professions represented by interviewees, the factors of unemployment identified are similar. The effects of Israeli occupation policies vary from sector to sector, but the primary and underlying cause of unemployment is consistently related to Israel's continued control over the Gaza Strip. For example, the fishermen indicate that the main reason for their unemployment is Israel's control over the fishing water zones and the confiscation of fishing boats, while labourers and business people are more likely to emphasize Israeli restrictions on movement through land crossings.

Community perceptions note the following factors as creating or contributing to unemployment:

- Closure by Israel
- Lack of job opportunities and measures taken by the Hamas government to respond to the unemployment crisis
- Nepotism
- The split between Fatah and Hamas

Fishing communities, which represent one of the primary productive sectors in Gaza, highlighted two aspects of the closure, first, the control of marine waters and fishing zones:

After signing the Oslo Accords in 1994, the fishermen were allowed to use as far as 20 miles out to sea, but unfortunately after the closure and the war on the Gaza Strip the area was restricted to 600 meters only. It's very difficult to fish in this restricted area of water because there's only a little amount of fish. Added to that, there are daily arrests

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<sup>b</sup>Despite the fact that Tramadol is a legal drug which could be bought from pharmacies without any medical prescription. It is perceived as a drug problem by the community for the misuse by the people and mainly youths.

of fishermen by the Israeli navy vessels without any known reasons for the arrest – it happens even if they did not exceed the designated (permitted) distance.  
(FGD fishermen - Bait Lahia)

The second is that the closure of the external market has led to low sales especially with the competition from imports coming from Egypt through the underground tunnels.

The local market faces problems; they sometimes have to sell the fish caught for low prices because of the imposed closure, and because of the difficulty of concluding agreements with Israeli, West Bank, or Jerusalem companies allowing the export of fish and thus generating income and profit for the fishermen. (FGD fishermen - Beit Lahia)

The farmers in the Gaza Strip face similar problems. A discussion group of farmers indicated that the closure led to a drop in local production and they have competition from the Egyptian agricultural produce coming to the Strip through the underground tunnels, which is sold at lower prices than local products.

Moreover, farmers explained that Israel controls the "border zone" where most of the Gaza Strip agricultural lands lie, and hence they control the agricultural production close to the borders or, most of the time, they destroy it.

The second most frequently noted factor contributing to increased unemployment is the lack of job opportunities and inadequacy of measures taken by the Hamas government to solve unemployment. The research results indicate that people believe that the Hamas government<sup>c</sup> is not doing enough to respond to the unemployment crisis whether through job creation schemes or offering other alternatives or options.

The absence of a social security system or any government support for the unemployed and not creating job opportunities for them are the major causes of poverty  
(FGD women -Beit Lahia)

The unemployment increases due to the pressures caused by the political situation. For example, the vendors in the vegetable market are prevented from selling their products on grounds that they cannot sell on the main roads and they do not have a permit that allows them to use a stall in the market, [Wednesday Market] although the spot has been used for the market for a long period of time. Also, the taxes imposed on the vendors whose income is limited are an obstacle for them because their earnings cannot provide them with that amount of money [required for taxes]."(FGD women - Khan Younis)

The community's dissatisfaction with the government's role in the process of reducing the unemployment rate is also related to a third factor perceived as exacerbating the unemployment crisis which is the presence of nepotism<sup>28</sup> which is understood as the cause of a concentration of unemployment among certain groups of people.

Nepotism in the government hinders the equal distribution of job opportunities.  
(FGD women- Bait Lahia)

Lastly, and again closely related to the two previously mentioned contributing factors, interviewees point to the political split between Hamas and Fatah as exacerbating the unemployment crisis, particularly in relation to its effect on employees in the government sector.

One woman from al-Shate' Refugee Camp explained while crying:

My husband has been an employee in the Palestinian Authority since 2005 (an employee in the Palestinian Authority in Gaza in the 2005 earned 1500 shekels). [At the time], he took loans on his salary to build a house. We finished the outer structure of the house (not suitable for living especially in winter) and he does not have money to finish the house or to feed us. I have 5 boys and 2 girls (she cried while explaining in details her financial dilemma) and the institutions refuse to help us because he is an employee.

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<sup>c</sup>The term "Hamas government" is used by the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and Gaza to refer to the ejected Hamas leadership that is de facto ruling the Gaza Strip.

### 5.2.2 Domestic Violence and Violence within the Family

Domestic violence and violence within the family is perceived as one of the main protection threats facing communities in the Gaza Strip by the majority of women as well as a few men who works in human rights organizations. Despite cultural taboos limiting discussions about domestic violence and violence within the family in the public sphere, women in the study chose to raise this issue rather than to keep it. In contrast, only four men mentioned this protection challenge as one of the protection challenges facing the community in Gaza.<sup>d</sup>

#### General facts: on Domestic Violence and Violence within the family in Gaza Strip

- In a 2011 survey, 76.4% of married women have been subjected to emotional violence, 34.8% to physical violence, 14.9% to sexual violence, 78.9% to social violence and 88.3% to economic violence.<sup>29</sup>
- A domestic violence survey in 2005 shows that 49.7% of Gazan married women were exposed to psychological violence, 22.6% exposed to physical violence. While unmarried women aged 18 years and over reported exposure to psychological violence 53.5% and 24.6% to physical violence.<sup>30</sup>
- 66% of women victims of violence kept silent and did not declare being subjected to violence.<sup>31</sup>
- 0.8% of women seek help from women's organizations, while two-thirds of the women exposed to violence preferred to seek their family's support.<sup>32</sup>
- 35% of single women aged 18-64 were exposed to psychological violence, 49.7% to physical violence, 0.9% to sexual violence and 19.5% to economic violence.<sup>33</sup>
- Many studies lament the lack of available data documenting the true extent of non-political violence against Palestinian women and girls. Described as a "data vacuum, (UNIFEM, 2002).<sup>34</sup>
- In 2012, out of about 17,000 marriages that were registered in the courts of the Gaza Strip, 35% were cases in which the brides were under 17 years old. These marriages are concluded without the court knowing the girls' real ages. Meanwhile, about 2,700 divorce cases were registered in the same year, and in 25% of these the wives were underage - 17 years old.<sup>35</sup>

Women's discussions on domestic violence focused on two important points. Firstly, in explaining the reasons for choosing domestic violence as a main protection challenge in the Gaza Strip, the interviewees focused on various factors leading to domestic violence and violence within the family, emphasizing the correlation between the different protection threats mentioned in the introduction, including but not limited to unemployment, which all contribute to the increase in domestic violence and violence within the family. Secondly, women focused on the different types of domestic violence and violence within the family faced by women in the Gaza Strip. Women described different types of incidents that they have witnessed including sexual harassment, rape within the family, controlling women's movement and depriving women of the right to choose in marriage or work, arbitrary divorce, especially in cases of giving birth to girls, polygamy and so-called "honour killing."

<sup>d</sup>This indicates that men don't perceive issues related to family relations as a community priority and not as an issue to be discussed in public.

Women perceive a range of factors as contributing to domestic violence and, again, explain these factors as interrelated and difficult to separate from one another:

- The prevailing culture and norms
- Socialization
- Discrimination against women
- Discriminatory laws
- Early marriage and traditional marriage
- Unemployment
- Inheritance
- Political division between the Palestinian political parties
- Lack of self esteem

Women interviewees attribute the phenomenon of domestic violence as one which is tied, to the prevailing culture and norms; women cite the main reason for the phenomenon as the patriarchal customs and traditions that enhance the role and authority of the man and in turn marginalize the role of women. This is thought to allow men to practice violence in order to assert their control and identity. Men are raised to believe they are the protectors and the breadwinners of the family and women are treated as the property of the family. This is inextricably connected to the second most commonly cited contributing factor: socialization.

We live in a patriarchal society where a man beats and hits his wife, sister, and daughter to show them that he is in control and that he is the MAN. He considers them as his property and he has the right to control them as he wishes. (Social workers -Beit Lahia)

Research results show that the men's control and authority extends throughout the life cycle. Moreover, male control over women's freedom varies according to a woman's social status. Widows, for example, are more subject to violence from their families; even a widow's male children culturally have the right to assert authority over her. As mentioned by women in the research, widows, in Palestinian society, are the most vulnerable group. They are constantly subjected to unrestricted violence at both the family and societal levels.

People interfere in other people's affairs: my son, who is 14 years old, started having mood changes and psychological troubles since the death of his father and started treating me differently. People and relatives encourage him to take a stand against me; they want him to prevent me from going out because I am a widow. They have convinced him that in this way they can avoid people's gossiping and smearing my reputation. (A Woman from Jabalia)

Similarly, discrimination against women is perceived by the majority of women interviewees as strongly correlated to the tradition and the customs practiced in society:

Discrimination between girls and boys is shown in every aspect of life; a boy is allowed to go to the shop to buy things whereas a girl is forbidden. Even when it comes to eating; boys are given the best kind of food, and girls have to suffice with what is left: a male takes the drumstick and she can eat the wing, it does not matter. (A woman from al-Zaitoun)

There is discrimination between boys and girls. A young male is allowed to work and a young female is constrained by an unlimited set of rules imposed on her by her parents, husband, and brother. I witnessed many cases where young females were denied a lot of job opportunities with the excuse of mixed gender careers; and this can be classified as discrimination against women. (FGD women -Al Maghazi)

Moreover, women mentioned how the prevailing laws and procedures enforce the concepts of discrimination and violence against women.

Early marriage was also noted by some respondents as a factor contributing to domestic violence and violence within the family. According to this reasoning, in early marriages both females and males are ignorant and immature. Early marriage and domestic violence was also linked to the role of the family, society and prevailing customs in forcing mothers to accept the early marriages for their children.

If I could go back in time, I would refuse to let my daughter get married at 17; but the community, customs and traditions forced me to agree and, of course, it's young men aged 16 or 17 years old who marry a girl at the age 16-17.. (Woman from Zaytoon)

The threat is not limited to early marriage as separate from other factors; rather, as explained by the interviewees, early marriage also leads to a high fertility rate and this is seen as problematic given the prevailing economic hardships for households and communities across the Gaza Strip. High fertility was another factor which women linked to domestic violence and violence within the family.

The phenomena of this problem (early marriage) is the increase in child births, it ranges between 8-9 births [per woman]. In our case, women think: 'they give birth, God gives them life and the neighbours will raise them.'<sup>c</sup> (FGD women - Zaytoon)

Additionally, some women alluded to the prevalence of traditional marriages in Palestine as a crucial factor contributing to domestic violence. They explained that not knowing their partners and not accepting or respecting the other ultimately generates tension and problems. According to one of the focus group participants:

The idea of traditional marriage causes a lot of problems. It (domestic violence) happens because young men and women are married before they get to know each other, before even having the chance to talk to each other. That is why I am not married until now; I refuse to marry in such a way. I won't marry someone I don't know and wait until I become his lawful wife to get to know him. (FGD women - Jabaliya)

The cycle of factors perceived as contributing to domestic violence also includes economic factors: unemployment and depriving women from inheritance. Many indicators show that women, most of the times, resort to rationalizing the domestic violence directed towards them by their husbands as resulting from their unemployment:

The unemployment problem is basically behind many other family problems such as domestic violence. Unemployed men have nothing to do except violence, what can they do? They are under a lot of pressure, and there is nothing they can do to solve the problem. (FGD women- Khan Younis)

My husband used to work in Israel but now he is unemployed. We went through hard times, but recently, for about 6 months now, my husband has started taking training courses in the municipality and gets paid a little money. It covers some of the expenses but we are still short of money and this gets my husband very angry. I am patient and tolerate his anger and try to find excuses for him, he is suffering and feels helpless. (FGD women- Beit Lahia)

When an unemployed man has 5 or 6 kids that go to school and have needs and he finds himself incapable of providing them with their basic necessities; he eventually finds himself beating them, although that is the last thing he wants to do. (Man from Jabaliya)

Study respondents view the issue of unemployment as linked to increased domestic violence. The unemployment leads to an increase in males' free time, and thus husbands, brothers, or fathers spend most of their time at home depressed and feeling helpless. This situation and resulting feelings are understood to increase household tensions and hence the rate of domestic violence:

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<sup>c</sup>A Palestinian metaphor meaning that people have children without considering how they will raise them.

Men stay at home 24 hours, they misuse the internet and they start to fantasize things and they want their wives, who are busy with the housework, to fulfil their urges and this causes an increase in the tension between them. (Social workers - Beit Lahia)

Inheritance is the second economic factor linked to violence within the family. Many women pointed out that the society rejects women who claim their right to inheritance. Women are even subjected to death threats if they claim their inheritance and these threats can be carried out under the cover of so called "honour killings" They get killed under the cover of honour killing because they challenged the customs and defied traditions within society.

It shows clearly in the issue of inheritance. Women have no legal right to inheritance. I, personally suffer from this issue. My father died two years ago and my grandmother gave her and my father's share of the inheritance to my brother so that we the girls won't be able to take anything. In addition, women can't claim their inheritance fearing that their relatives will alienate them. (A woman -Al Zaytoun)

Depriving women of their inheritance leads to larger problems, not financial problems. They get killed under the cover of honour killing. (FGD women -Beit Lahia)

Even though there is a clear and specific law in Islam that gives men and women their rightful shares in inheritance, still traditions and customs prevail, as best put by a participant:

As for the issue of inheritance, there are restrictions and obstacles that can't be solved because of the traditions and the customs found in our society – these even sometimes overshadow religion and the Sharia itself. (Woman from al-Zaytoun)

The society is ruthless and merciless, it does not show mercy to girls if they resort to courts to claim their share of the inheritance – that is if they escape murder, imprisonment, beating or being prohibited to get married. (FGD women- Jabalia)

Interviewees mentioned two politically related factors linked to domestic violence. Firstly, division among political parties affects family relations; differing political affiliations within the family lead to internal disputes. Secondly, the split between the government of Fatah and the government of Hamas has exacerbated the Israeli-imposed policy of geographic fragmentation and separation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The political split between Fatah and Hamas is viewed as further contributing to an increase in the feeling of insecurity amongst Gazans and the escalation of domestic violence in Gaza.

Having various political affiliations within the same house along with the unemployment crisis places strains on relations within the family itself and contributed to an increase in depriving women from freedom of movement as one type of domestic violence.

Under the existing political situation in the Gaza Strip, some of the participants discussed the increase and spread of violence in general and not just on a family level. This in turn has increased domestic violence:

The spread of violence and crime causes many social problems, the most important one is the disintegration of unity within society, and particularly within the family, violence at home, in the street, among neighbours causes citizens to become insecure fearing for their life. (A man - Gaza City)

Responses show that the women lack of self-esteem and self-awareness increases violence by accepting it rather than fighting it:

Women have neglected their rights and did not demand and call for equal treatment. When they become able to claim their rights, they can seize them from men. Men can overpower vulnerable women only, and fragile women can only be strengthened by their inner desire for change, and with a lot of endurance and tolerance they can win their rights. (A group of women -Al Maghazi)

## 5.3 Main Self-protection and Coping strategies in the Gaza Strip

### 5.3.1 Unemployment - Strategies

Two issues regarding coping strategies adopted in response to unemployment emerge from the study results. First, coping strategies are markedly gendered. Women have different protection strategies; their responses are largely limited by what is culturally acceptable and by what can be done as complementary to their reproductive roles. Both women and men respondents note that this limits their ability to find jobs.

Men have more options and freedom to search for a variety of jobs, women on the contrary have limited options; they can only work in the government sector.  
(FGD men - Jabaliya Camp)

Another issue of importance is concerned with how interviewees define unemployment. Some interviewees who have their own business or are "self-employed," such as fishermen, who can only fish when there are sufficient fish to harvest, pursue strategies that respond to semi-unemployment or seasonal unemployment.

In terms of gendered differences in protection strategies responding to unemployment, study results indicate that women focus primarily on minimizing the impact of unemployment on the welfare of their families. Women seek different ways to manage diminished household budgets by trying to balance between the family income and debts so for instance, Refugee women sell food support received from UNRWA in order to pay household debts.

We try to balance between our income and our debts in order to pay back the debts of the month. Sometimes we sell things we own or we get as support, which we don't need such as the milk we get from the coupons through UNRWA  
(FGD women -al-Shate' Refugee Camp)

Another strategy pursued by women is to register for paid training schemes conducted by local organizations:

My husband used to work in Israel, but now he is unemployed. We have had some difficult times. Lately I registered in the municipality for a six-month training program; they pay us an amount of money that covers some of my family costs. But my husband is getting violent, I always rationalize his situation, he is unemployed, staying home, he feels helpless... (FGD women - Beit Lahia)

Women view this strategy as inefficient given its short-term nature; it is perceived as only helping people to adjust to the situation but not to solve it.

Because of the limitations on culturally acceptable work for women, women look for income generation opportunities that fit within the framework of their reproductive role such as pastry making, cooking, sewing and teaching (giving private lessons). Likewise, women also choose or prefer to find work that can be done from their own houses.

I do food and pastries and sell to the organizations and some families who order. I earn money from this work, but it is seasonal. It is not stable, sometimes weeks pass without any orders (Woman from al-Shate' Refugee Camp)

As noted by the woman above, while such income generating activities may serve to partially respond to the negative effects of unemployment, they do not generally provide a reliable, steady income. Fluctuations in demand render income intermittent; days or weeks may go by without any orders or sales.

Young women university graduates reported that they would give private lessons in their homes for children. While there is a demand for private tutoring due to the deterioration in the quality of education, the cost of private lessons is not affordable for most families.

After my graduation from university, I tried to find a job. As an alternative solution, I started giving private lessons in my home, but this solution was not sufficient. In the beginning it worked – I started to earn money, but with the increase in unemployment, families couldn't pay for the lessons, so I stopped (FGD women -Khan Younis)

Men, on the other hand, identified that one key strategy in dealing with unemployment is to work in the Rafah tunnels. According to the participants, working in the tunnels was financially very lucrative - despite the high rate of deaths. The recent, nearly complete closure of the tunnel network has also exposed the insecurity of this particular strategy.

My son started selling vegetables in the market with his father, but the police stopped them more than 4 times and confiscated their equipment – the stall, the vegetables and the scale. This is on top of imposing taxes that cannot be paid. As a solution, his companions convinced him to work in the tunnels and on his first day at work there he died in an accident. (FGD women -Khan Younis)

### 5.3.2 Domestic Violence and Violence within the Family - Strategies

As shown above, violence and violence within the family are perceived as arising from a range of factors including the dominant social, cultural and economic structures. However, the solutions or mechanisms identified by study participants for addressing this issue are limited.

Four strategies were suggested by study participants for dealing with domestic violence and violence within the family:

- Most women resort to silence, fearing further problems with their abuser (husband/brother).
- Most women and men who mentioned this protection threat suggest seeking assistance from reconciliation committees.
- Some women seek assistance from women's organizations.<sup>f</sup>
- Raising daughters' awareness.

According to women, most women who are subject to violence choose to remain silent as a means of protecting themselves from being abused by the family and subjected to further violence from the abuser as punishment for speaking out publicly.<sup>g</sup>

In general, men interfere in solving or putting an end to family issues; women usually cover up the problem and keep silent, fearing a family problem might lead to a divorce or killing. (Beit Lahia)

After the death of my husband, his family and my family forced me to marry his brother. He is mistreating me and he is not taking care of my children (his nephews). I can't do anything. I hope he will accept me and our life will be better in the future (Woman from Rafah)

Women widely perceive this strategy as a failure because it does not change reality; women are still victimized and continue to be subjected to domestic violence.

<sup>f</sup>Based on the research results, this strategy is limited to women

<sup>g</sup>Norms prohibit speaking in public about problems in the family sphere. Women resort to silence in such cases as a coping strategy in order to be accepted within the family and protected.



The second strategy for dealing with domestic violence, referring to reconciliation committees, is reported as a more successful strategy.<sup>h</sup> The interviewees who mentioned this strategy explained that it is adopted when the issue of violence in the family becomes known to the public.

As for the issues of harassment and moral behaviour, the role played by the reconciliation committees is positive. Occasionally they prevent crimes from taking place. (FGD women-Jabalya)

The elders (reconciliation committees) are always involved in solving disputes between families and they play an effective role in resolving family issues. (Social workers - Beit Lahia)

The effectiveness of this strategy is agreed on by the majority who mentioned it. It is most effective in solving family issues and particularly sensitive issues such as domestic violence, especially in the absence of sovereignty of law.

The authorities are trying to conceal these stories and never show the reality to the public. (FGD Women - Beit Lahia)

Only a small number of respondents mentioned the third strategy – referring women to women's rights organizations.

A woman came to me seeking help – she has always suffered from domestic violence and I sent her to a specialized centre that could assist in solving her problems through legal channels. (Social workers -Beit Lahia)

Violence is accepted by society in fact society does not try to change or decrease it, and that goes also for gender discrimination. Despite all the attempts made by women rights organizations, they've all failed. (FGD women- Almaghazi)

Amongst the men who mentioned domestic violence as a protection threat, it was suggested that the best and the safest solution to the domestic violence lies in the hands of women themselves. Men argued that women are responsible for raising awareness among their daughters and teaching them how to avoid problems that could lead to violence.

Women play a big part in solving the issue because they are closer to their married daughters. They need to educate them. Men usually take their daughters' side and resort to violence in solving the problems. Women are more peaceful and thus they have a positive effect on their husbands and daughters. (A man from Beit Lahia)

Generally speaking, both women and men point out that solutions to domestic violence and violence within the family are rare and strategies are primarily limited to reconciliation committees. The protection threat is rooted in the social and culture system. Most believe that to achieve any social change will require a stable political and economic situation which would help to eliminate the range of factors feeding domestic violence and undermining efforts to combat violence against women.

Women also recognize that the process of social change requires a long time before achievements can be reached:

The problems are related to customs and traditions, and these things are not easy to resolve -it needs a long time. (A woman-Zayton)

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<sup>h</sup>Reconciliation committees: They are structured within the Palestinian cultural and legal systems. Their credibility is derived from the fact of the absence of a state with a rule of law; this context existed before the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1993 and continued to be one of the main legal implementation bodies. They are known as the implementing bodies of customary law which is known as (Tribal law).

## 5.4 Community's Main Considerations on External Aid in the Gaza Strip

### 5.4.1 External Interventions related to Protection Challenges

The research findings show that the general evaluation and the level of community satisfaction with the external interventions in Gaza varied from positive to negative based on the participants' responses on the subject. It came as a result to the limited externally supported interventions in respond to the two main protection challenges: unemployment and domestic violence.

Most respondents expressed dissatisfaction with various external interventions including those related to the two prioritized protection challenges but also more broadly. The short-term nature of most programs and projects and the restrictive criteria set by donors on who receives assistance were among the most common criticisms related to low satisfaction. A majority of the respondents also linked their dissatisfaction to the widespread nature of nepotism and its impact on the process of distributing assistance by international, national and community-based organizations:

We thank God for everything, homes have their own secrets and usually we don't claim our need and poverty, but there is injustice in distributing the assistance from UNRWA. (FGD women - Beit Lahia)

That association<sup>i</sup> has no conscience, despite its huge funds. It distributes the assistance based on its own friends and relatives rather than directing it to those in real need. (FGD women - Beit Lahia)

Some respondents emphasize the importance of the general approach to the design of programs in a given external intervention; study participant responses demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding the difference between development interventions (perceived as more needed) and humanitarian assistance. The latter is sometimes explained as negatively affecting the community:

External support is shaped by the political agenda, and most of the donors' programs are relief and not developmental in their approach. Because of this they're not sufficient in solving the problems. They only help us to sustain ourselves in this difficult situation. This has led people to depend more on interventions. (A woman from Gaza city)

Regarding the few interventions discussed addressing unemployment, some respondents found the interventions to be partially effective though insufficient to solve the problem. Most felt that little work is being done to evaluate the services.

Regarding external interventions dealing with domestic violence and violence within the family, the research results show that most of the international interventions addressing this issue involved training on combating violence against women and awareness campaigns. Funds were directed from international agencies to non-governmental organizations.

Women who discuss the domestic violence protection challenge, generally express their dissatisfaction with the work of women's organizations in dealing with the problem. At the same time, they refused any interventions from the government in dealing with the cases of violence against women in general and domestic violence in particular, because they fear that this will only lead to an increase in violence against women because of the inadequacy of law and absence of the law enforcement that will help women to have other options.

<sup>i</sup>Name of institution is not mentioned for no clear approval was granted to publish their name.

### 5.4.2 Good Practice in Relation to External Interventions

Some interventions were seen as partially effective in responding to the unemployment protection threat. For example, the UNRWA and Oxfam programs providing food support through coupons. This intervention was seen as fairly adequate but not enough as it provides recipients' needs for less than a month.

Oxfam provides us with coupons for food supply every week , I can't imagine what will happen to me and my family if they stopped this project, it is the only support I have (FGD women - al-Shate')

On the other hand, some responses reflect the negative impact of projects on the community, such as the food basket project. The interviewees who mentioned this impact said that the project was stopped without any notice. This decision was taken based on complaints from some residents to the implementing agency's headquarters, reportedly with no investigation.

I used to take food support from [an international organization] but the organization stopped the assistance and they referred me to a shop to get some dairy support, this has affected me badly and caused a decrease in my income, it was the only assistance I received and I was fully dependent on it. (FGD women - Mighraqa)

On the other hand, in dealing with domestic violence, reconciliation committees were perceived as the most effective strategy to interfere in domestic violence. Interviewees mentioned that those committees are well respected in the community and their decisions are resounded and highly valued by the others.

## 5.5 Conclusions and Recommendations for the Gaza Strip

Research results clearly show that enhancing human security and achieving more effective humanitarian assistance is interconnected to significant changes in the political and economic spheres. The deterioration in Gazans' daily life is inextricably linked to the root cause presented at the beginning of the research -the Israeli occupation. Evidence from the daily experiences shared by participants in this study confirms the difficulty of achieving any effective humanitarian improvements without addressing the fundamental cause.

The data analysis has incorporated the comprehensive vision in which the inhabitants perceive the main challenges. They were able to correlate the challenges they face and show the interrelation between and among them. This reflects the deep awareness and recognition among the interviewees that the solution to any problem is connected to finding solutions to a series of other challenges.

Also it was clear from the results that a gender differentiation in choosing the top priorities of protection challenges does exist. Although it was noticed in Area C and East Jerusalem that domestic violence was not perceived as one of the top priorities, in contrast Gazan women asserted it as a main priority. The latter indicates the breadth and significance of the phenomena in Gaza.

Coping strategies the community seeks to adopt to deal with the threat has limited impact on two main protection threats indentified by this research. Nevertheless, and in spite of the limitations of the adopted coping strategies, three strategies were found to be rather helpful. Firstly, the reconciliation committees were effective and considered acceptable by the community when it comes to dealing with domestic violence. Secondly,

UNRWA's "food for work" was instrumental in dealing with unemployment. Thirdly, small business projects for women's economic empowerment<sup>36</sup> contributed to easing the ramifications of unemployment by giving women employment opportunities that helped ease the economic hardship of some families.

Notwithstanding the limited number of interventions that deal with unemployment and domestic violence, the efficiency of those interventions did not meet with the local community expectations. The assessment results of those interventions were either to negate the presence of any interventions or admit that they had a slight impact. The local community clarified that their dissatisfaction with the interventions was mainly due to the humanitarian and/or immediate emergency nature of the interventions offered, specifically, environmental catastrophes, war and floods recurring in Gaza.

The study reflected the discontent and the criticism of the local communities that were directed towards the intervention approaches adopted and utilized by the institutions. The criticism was mainly directed towards humanitarian projects, which were short-lived and lacked clear vision for long-term development goals or strategies. Many problems, especially domestic violence, were challenges that cannot be solely due to the occupation factor, however, the Israeli occupation contributed to the increase of these protection challenges. Any intervention must take into consideration in-depth analysis of the roots causes of the challenges. Hence, the humanitarian aid interventions do not help in decreasing the two challenges raised in the Gaza Strip. Thus, it critical to revisit and modify the short-term and short-lived relief approaches to that of long-term and sustainable development programs in order to comprehensively and professionally address the challenges.

Although some international and local interventions are directed towards women, they are rarely seen in the framework of social change. Projects should be designed to not only help meet the actual practical needs of women but also deliver towards improved protection i.e. advocacy towards ending domestic violence, yet it is fully understood that this requires a process-oriented approach in order to ensure tangible impact.

Finally, limited reliable and accurate statistics on the two challenges were found during the writing of the research. This problem has been further exacerbated in the absence and ability of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to operate under the Hamas government in Gaza.

**To enhance and support the external actors to direct interventions, the following recommendations and suggestions should be applied:**

- **Defining "community": Program development should be based on the different categories of the population.** Program interventions of external actors (international, national and local) should avoid treating "the community" as a homogenous and monolithic group. Gender and age dimensions should be at the core of program design and planning in order to ensure that interventions meet the diverse needs of the community and lead to better overall results for the community as a whole.

Thus a community assessment and monitoring is required prior to any humanitarian projects planning by donors. A local/national committee could be established to guide the decision-making process regarding the community needs including if the proposed intervention is feasible and how it should be implemented.

- **To learn from the local coping strategies and suggestions:** It is important to identify alternatives and resources available in addition to how the inhabitants could benefit. This would allow for a better understanding of what the most effective methods for development are on one hand, and strengthening these proposed interventions with the assistance of donors and NGOs, on the other. This is connected to the first recommendation on the importance of conducting an in-depth study in order to examine the community needs and the techniques they use in directing the support.

The bottom-up approach should be applied in all planning processes by external actors. Inclusiveness and decision-making of community members from the beginning -in the planning phase, and not only the implementation phase, is essential in that ensures ownership and thus a higher probability for successful impacts. In order to realize this, strengthening local institutional capacities in planning, monitoring, and other related Results-based Management skills coupled with gender mainstreaming techniques and the application of the Human Rights Based Approach, should be prioritized and incorporated into donor agendas.

It is important to work on the two programs that were addressed by the community in dealing with the two main challenges, specifically, working with the reform committees through knowledge development; and empowerment, skills development, in dealing with cases of domestic violence from a human rights and women's rights approach. In addition and of high importance is the creation of job opportunities, particularly for youths in the Gaza Strip. A model youth project is UNRWA's "Jobs for Food" which can be replicated and scaled following an in-depth study on the impacts and potentials for development. The project was considered a success and thus it is recommended to take forward and benefit additional communities, not only in Gaza Strip but also in Area C and Jerusalem.

- **Long-term humanitarian intervention:** Any change requires interventions of a long-term nature, especially in the case of Gaza where the prolonged occupation has systematically undermined socio-economic development for decades. This means there is a need to establish the programs on two parallel levels: humanitarian-based programs, and development programs. If, for example, the program is designed with two different approaches, both dealing with emergency crisis such as the war on Gaza, then it should be efficient to continue working on the development aid at the same time. The activities will aim to strengthen the community's self-sufficiency, such as providing capacity building for government institutions (civil servants), empowerment of a non-governmental organizations and advocacy-based coalitions, and further strengthening already existing mental health (psychological and social) programs for families and individuals.
- **Social change should be at the core of external interventions:** Change in women's reproductive role will enhance their productive role and their integration in the public sphere and decision-making. Although it is beyond the Humanitarian Aid, but Humanitarian development Programs and strategic plans should be based on a framework for social change and ensure the application of a gender perspective firmly rooted in a feminist analytical framework of empowerment.

An in-depth longitudinal comparative study on Violence against women across the different political-economic and social phases in Gaza has experienced in the past decade would be helpful to more effectively illustrate how to work on achieving the social change.

## 5.5.1 Practical Recommendations arising from the Interviews in Gaza Strip

The following specific recommendations can be drawn from research results:

### 5.5.1.1 Unemployment

- Create job opportunities for young people.
- Networking with foreign institutions, including the assistance of donors, to assist in marketing handicraft products such as embroidery, abroad.
- Establish incubators to market women's products and enhance the quality of products to meet market standards.
- The government should encourage and protect local products by imposing restrictions and conditions on imports.
- Develop vocational curricula in line with the needs of the market in vocational and training institutes.

### 5.5.1.2 Domestic violence and violence family violence

- Enhance the knowledge and skills of the members of the reconciliation committees on human rights and women's rights and provide them with approaches for dealing with social problems, especially violence against women.
- Support the independence of the judicial system and work on opening specialized family courts to deal with cases of violence, inheritance and family matters.
- Establish and/or further develop already existing women's shelters to take into account the needs of women.
- Improve public spaces and support social clubs in refugee camps, and support creative/innovative activities for youth and children in parallel with awareness programs for the youth and children on women's rights and human rights.
- Undertake awareness campaigns through mosques, universities and schools.
- Develop and adopt legislations to combat domestic violence and family violence
- Design and implement programs including awareness campaigns and training on women's rights and human rights targeting both men and women.

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# Appendix A

## Interview Guide / Questionnaire

### A.1 Collection of Interviewee/Focus Group Data

### A.2 Before Starting the Interview

#### Casual Talk

Ensure that you have a casual talk about aspects completely unrelated to the interview.

#### General Introduction of the Study

1. **Thank you for your time.** We know you are busy with many other obligations...
2. **Who I am personally.** I am ..... of ..... organisation.
3. **Context.** This is an initiative from different organisations (DCA and its Palestinian partners) that is being carried out in East Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza by different teams.
4. **Goal.** The objective of this research is to understand how the different communities in Palestine address their problems and how other agencies (both government, local NGOs and internationals) can improve the way in which they can support you more usefully in facing these problems. (make sure this is well explained to avoid wrong expectations)
5. **What happens with this interview.** I will write our main conclusions so that we can learn from your ideas. However, we will keep it anonymous and will not include anyone's name in the findings. I should not take more than 1 hour and a half of your time.
6. **Do you have any question for me**

## A.3 Start of the Interview

### Intro

The main objective of our meeting is to understand in detail how you deal with the main problems you have and to see how other actors could support you better.

### Protection Threats - Problems as Perceived by the Community

Before we talk about strategies and support, I would like to start asking about the main protection threats / problems the community faces:(adaptation in Arabic to a natural word for "protection threat" that is not leading or difficult to understand)

1. We know that your community faces many different problems, but as we want to speak in detail about how to address them, etc, we would like you to choose **only** 2 problems to speak about today. **What do you see as the main problems in your community?**
2. You mentioned (repeat the problems mentioned) I wonder whether there is also a social, economic or political problem that we can add as a 3rd topic to discuss today.
3. Could you explain *why* are these problems more important than the rest?
4. Apart from these problems of the community, are there other important problems that affect *you personally* or your family even if they are not community problems?

### Coping Strategies Used by the Community to Address Problems

1. How do you or other persons in your community deal with these problems?
  - Problem 1...?
  - And problem 2...?
2. These strategies you have mentioned (repeat the summarized strategies to the interviewee) are your own way of dealing with the problems or many people in your community use them?
  - Strategy 1...
  - Strategy 2...
3. Do men (if interviewee is woman) use different strategies than the ones you women use?
4. Do women (if interviewee is man) use different strategies than the ones you men use?
5. These strategies (repeat summary of each strategy mentioned) solve the problem totally, partially or not at all?
  - Strategy 1...
  - Strategy 2...
6. Explain for each strategy *why* it was successful or not, and *what limits* it had
  - Strategy 1...
  - Strategy 2...

### External Support

1. Have you experience in your community with external support actions? (local NGO, Gov, internationals) Which ones and by whom?
2. What do you think of these actions and actors (repeat the actions/actors mentioned in the previous question)? Are they appropriate/inappropriate to help you? Why?
3. Is there any external protection action that you consider is having negative impact? Why?
4. Do you have any ideas on how external actors could help you better in the future in the 3 problems you mentioned? If so, who could help best in your opinion and explain how should they do it.
5. Do you have any ideas on how external actors could help you better in the future in general with any other important problem? If so, who could help best in your opinion and explain how should they do it

All other observations & comments that could be useful to deepen our understanding of the problems explained, strategies explained and help inform the plans and actions of communities, local authorities, NGOs, INGOs, donors, UN, etc. You can also include here any of your own ideas, suggestions and comments



## Appendix B

# Rationale behind Interview Guide / Questionnaire

The explicit explanation of the rationale behind each question has two objectives. Firstly, ensuring that the different local researchers understand the overall goal of the research so that they can effectively use probing. Secondly, to provide a transparent account of the process to the reader of the study.

## B.1 Before Starting the interview

### B.1.1 Casual talk

Ensure that you have a casual talk about aspects completely unrelated to the interview.

#### How to do it: guidance/tips

Firstly ask the person/s how was their day/week and listen to them genuinely. You can also improvise any subject for small talk to just enjoy sharing points of view about anything for pleasure. If you don't have ideas on what to talk about, some subjects you could for example choose are: mentioning that you like the decoration, asking where they bought a beautiful lamp, mentioning they have a good garden and asking who is taking care of it, the weather, recent news, their children, etc, etc.

#### Don't do:

Avoid going to the opposite extreme asking too much or sounding artificial.

#### Objective/s

1. Show respect.
2. Put at ease the interviewee and allow him/her to observe you and feel that he/she can be comfortable with you and decide he/she wants to really answer your questions meaningfully.
3. Ensure we don't start disregarding something important recent event that is affecting the interviewee.

## Rationale

1. Meeting somebody and starting immediately with an interview may send the message that you do not care about the person, but only about your interview. Even if we came for a professional purpose (interview) we are still dealing with persons. Showing that you care about them as persons -not only interview subjects- is not only a question of basic respect, but it is also felt by the interviewee and it determines his/her will to really explain to you his/her story in detail, or to just give you superficial answers (or not answer at all). ... and it will also make the interview more pleasant for him/her and for you.
2. We will ask questions that are conceptually difficult to answer (what are your main problems?) and need reflection. When we meet a person, we need to give him/her a little time to separate from the things they were doing today and gradually concentrate on the aspects we would like to discuss with them.
3. In some cases we arrive to a community in a moment that something important has happened to that person (or the community) that very day or week. He/she might be very worried about something serious, or on the contrary, he/she very happy for great news. If you don't give him/her the chance to speak about it before the interview, you are at a big risk of being insensitive. Additionally, the interviewee can be distracted thinking about that recent event and you would easily misunderstand why he/she is not paying attention and have little chance of addressing the situation if you don't know what is happening.

## B.1.2 General Introduction of the Study

1. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. We know you are busy with many other obligations ...
2. (WHO I AM PERSONALLY) I am ..... of .....organisation.
3. (CONTEXT) This is an initiative from different organisations (DCA and its Palestinian partners) that is being carried out in East Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza by different teams.
4. (GOAL) The objective of this research is to understand how the different communities in Palestine address their problems and how other agencies (government, local NGOs and internationals) can improve the way in which they can support you more usefully in facing these problems. (make sure this is well explained to avoid wrong expectations)
5. (WHAT HAPPENS WITH THIS INTERVIEW) I will write our main conclusions so that we can learn from your ideas. However, we will keep it anonymous and will not include anyone's name in the findings. I should not take more than 1 hour and a half of your time.
6. Do you have any question for me?

## B.2 Start of the Interview

### B.2.1 Intro

The main objective of our meeting is to understand in detail how you deal with the main problems you have and how other actors could support you better.

Before we talk about strategies and support, I would like to start asking about the main problems your community faces... (start with question 1.a)

This small introduction is important to inform the interviewee that you are not focusing on the problems, but on the strategies and support. Of course we need to speak about their main problems, but because we want to focus on their strategies and on the support, not because we want a list of problems!

### B.2.2 Problems as Perceived by the Community

#### Objectives

This section has 2 objectives:

1. To answer research question 1: "What do affected people and communities see as the main threats and challenges to their safety and wellbeing?" i.e. as it is impossible to speak about all the problems a community has in 1.5 hours plus their corresponding strategies and external support, it is necessary to identify the 2 or 3 problems perceived as more pressing.
2. To establish the basis for the rest of the interview; by the end of this section, you should have identified 3 or 4 problems and memorised them, so that in sections 2 (strategies) and 3 (external support), the questions are referred directly to those specific problems. It is very important you memorise or note the problems they mention, as the rest of the interview will be based on each of these problems as if it was a natural conversation about these specific problems, how to deal with them and how they could get better support.

#### Rationale behind the questions.

The question "what is the main problem in your life" is a very difficult one to conceptualize and to answer for any person, especially in a context marked by many problems at many different levels. The goal is not to get a list of problems, but to capture 3 or 4 that especially worry the community (or individuals) and then to be able to discuss the related strategies and external support with deep qualitative detail.

### **Interview Dynamics.**

Because it is a difficult question to answer, the sequence of the first 4 questions gives several opportunities to the interviewee to answer and add detail gradually to what is actually the same question. The intended process is as follows:

1.a. The LR asks the question openly with total freedom,

1.b. After the initial surprise, 1.b gives a second chance to reflect and invites the interviewee to consider other problems he/she did not think of when taken by surprise.

1.c. By answering WHY, the interviewee is helped in the process of reflecting on the problems mentioned and adds qualitative explanations on why those 3 or 4 problems selected are important in his/her perception.

1.d. This question wants to ensure that problems that affect a marginalised minority or a part of the community (i.e. domestic violence) are not overlooked just because they are not perceived as "community problems" but as "personal problems".

Note that whereas 1.a and 1.d always need to be asked. 1.b and 1.c may become unnecessary in cases where the interviewee has been able to answer 1.a. in a very confident and thoughtful manner (i.e. really considering all kinds of problems and explaining proactively why he/she made those choices.



## Interview Questions

1.a We know that your community faces many different problems, but as we want to speak in detail about how to address them, etc, we would like you to choose ONLY 2 problems to speak about today. What do you see as the main problems in your community?

### Remember...

1. You don't need the interviewee to rank their problems! He/she has many problems, and we do not need problem number 1, but we just want to make sure that we speak about some of the most important. A good way of asking could be... "We know that you have many problems, but as we want to speak in detail about the strategies you use and support you receive, could you choose just two that are particularly important to speak about them today?"
2. Respect any problem given, but if they mention problems that cannot be treated because they are too general. How do you know if something is an answer is specific enough? Remember that we need to speak later about strategies and support, so the level of specificity is the level that allows you to speak later on in detail about strategies and support. For example if they say "Education" or "Israeli Occupation", it will be impossible later on to speak about strategies or support because these are too general concepts. So you need to ask the interviewee to be more specific. If for "Israeli Occupation" they specify that they mean "wasting time at checkpoints" that is specific enough to be able to speak later on about strategies and support. In the case of "Education", this is too general, but if they specify "shortage of schools" or "too expensive tuitions" that is specific enough to speak meaningfully later about their coping strategies and support.
3. Give time to reflect, this is a difficult question. You can say "please take your time"
4. Try to get enough detail, but do not stop too long in this question, remember that it is in the strategies and support that we need A LOT of detail. And then you will also have the chance to get more detail about these problems too if they are still unclear to you.
5. A good time estimation is that you should not take more that 20 minutes to ask from 1.a to 1.d. Most of your interview time should be spent in sections 2 and 3, getting detail about Strategies and Support

1.b You mentioned... (repeat the problems mentioned). I wonder whether there is also a social, economic or political problem that we can add as a 3rd topic to discuss today.

-Ask this question just to make sure that the interviewee has considered also other problems, and it is not just because you took him/her by surprise that he answered the first thing that came to mind, but if he/she is satisfied with what he/she has answered before in 1.a, do not insist on getting a 3rd problem

1.c Could you explain WHY are these problems more important than the rest?

-With this question we just want to add some quality information on why these problems were chosen and not others. It is enough with getting some detail; do not stay too long on this question.

1.d Apart from these problems of the community, are there other important problems that affect you personally or your family even if they are not community problems?

-With this question we just want to make sure that problems that typically affect just women or a minority in the community are not ignored because they are not considered "community problems".

### B.2.3 Coping Strategies used by the Community to Address Problems

#### Objectives

This section has one objective: To answer research question 2: "What do affected people and communities do to avoid or mitigate these threats and challenges?" in as much qualitative detail as possible.

#### Rationale behind the questions.

The difference between capturing a coping strategy in general terms or capturing it in detail is so important that will determine the difference between opening a chance to offer real support to these strategies or losing that opportunity. We do not want just the name of a strategy, but its specific process, limitations, success factors and contextual details that contain the elements that allow an external agency to understand how they can be complementary and how they can offer the kind of support that is actually needed by the community.

#### Interview Dynamics.

There are two dynamic elements to be aware of. Firstly, the questions will never be asked in abstract any longer, but referring to the specific problems mentioned by the interviewee in the previous section. It will be a conversation between interviewer and interviewee about the 2 or 3 problems chosen by the interviewer and the strategies used to cope with each of them. Secondly, as it is hard both for the interviewer and interviewee to remember each qualitative factor of a strategy, the questionnaire aims at helping both in gradually getting more qualitative elements as the interview moves from 2.a, to 2.b. 2.c, etc. . .

## Interview Questions

2.a How do you or other persons in your community deal with these problems?

- Problem 1...?
- And problem 2...?
- You should ask about coping strategies about EACH problem. FIRST let them explain freely in as much detail as they can and when they think you interest is maybe finished, THEN try to see if you can get more detail with probing questions (e.g. Could you give an example of that? what exactly do you mean by X? Could you explain why you do Y and not Z? So what happens after that? So what is the advantage of doing that? How you do that then?). Do the same with each strategy.
- Make sure you understand at least WHY, HOW and WHAT FOR for each strategy. In many will also be important to understand WHEN, or HOW OFTEN, or HOW MANY, you should decide what other aspects are important to prioritise, but always ask WHY, HOW and WHAT FOR.

2.b These strategies you have mentioned (repeat the summarized strategies to the interviewee) are your own way of dealing with the problems or many people in your community use them?

- PStrategy 1... -Strategy 2... -Strategy 3...
- Quantity. This question wants to understand if the described strategies are "individual" strategies, or if they are used generally by many people. We do not need to know how many, but it is important to determine if they are used by a few persons or if they are more general. The reason why we care about this distinction is because later on in the report and in advocacy it is very different to present a strategy as "a general strategy" used by many Palestinians or by a sub-group, or to present it as a great idea that somebody had individually, but that is not used generally. The policy implications to offer useful support are different in both cases.

2.c Do men (if interviewee is woman) use different strategies than the ones you women use?  
2.c Do women (if interviewee is man) use different strategies than the ones you men use?

This question (again asked about the 2 or 3 strategies they have mentioned) wants to understand if men and female have different strategies for the same problem or, on the contrary, everybody uses a similar strategy for the same problem regardless of being a man or woman. This is one of the questions that allows us to understand gender differences in coping with problems/protection issues.

2.d. These strategies (repeat summary of each strategy mentioned) solve the problem totally, partially or not at all?

T-Strategy 1... -Strategy 2... Very often the strategies will be "partially successful" and we need to understand WHAT ASPECTS OF A PROBLEM THEY CAN SOLVE and what aspects they CANNOT SOLVE.

2.e Explain for each strategy WHY it was successful or not, and WHAT LIMITS it had

- Strategy 1... -Strategy 2... Ask for EACH strategy WHY it was more or less successful. Note that is equally interesting to understand WHY a strategy was successful and WHY it was NOT successful. We want the detailed causal elements that makes something useful or not useful.
- In the strategies that are successful ask WHAT LIMITS they have if they cannot solve the problem completely.

## **B.2.4 External Support**

### **Objectives.**

This section has two objectives related to research question 3: First, to understand "What do communities think of the actions taken by 'outsiders' in order to protect and assist them" and secondly, and more importantly, "how do communities think these actors could support them better."

### **Rationale behind the questions**

The sequence of four questions in this section is straightforward. We want to understand if somebody is supporting them, what they think of this support and why, and how this support could be better done. Ultimately we want the opinion of the community on how would they design a support program if they could do that.

### **Interview Dynamics**

The flow should be natural with no special aspects to be careful about. As always, make sure that when they give an opinion on a certain support, you can relate it to the main problems they have mentioned or the main strategies they have mentioned. Do not get this information in abstract, but connected.

### Interview Questions

3.a Have you experience in your community with external support actions? (local NGO, Gov, internationals) Which ones and by whom?

This question just wants to identify if there are external actors working in the community. "External" can be local NGOs, international NGOs, PA, UN, etc. Anybody who is not part of the community is "external". Do not worry about getting the names of all the actors if there are many, but get the main ones to understand later when they criticize some support or are satisfied with others, to be able to differentiate which ones they are happy with and which ones not.

3.b What do you think of these actions and actors (repeat the actions/actors mentioned in the previous question)? Are they appropriate/inappropriate to help you? Why?

Open question to understand the opinion of the community on the external support. Probing questions will be necessary to get detail on WHY in any opinion they express. Could you give an example of that? What exactly do you mean by X? Could you explain why you say Y? It is especially interesting to understand in deeper detail the behaviour of international actors and also if there are significant differences between local and international actors or all of them make the same mistakes (or success), etc. -Probing question: Would you continue to work with them? Why?

3.c Is there any external protection action that you consider is having negative impact? Why?

We ask directly if some external action not only did not help, but actually had some negative effect for the community. Again, WHY and detail is very useful

3.d. Do you have any ideas on how external actors could help you better in the future in the 2 problems you mentioned? If so, who could help best in your opinion and explain how should they do it.

This is the most important question of the section. Some people will not know what external actors could do, if so you do not need to push them, but others would have a good idea of what should be done. Then, it is important that you ask WHO should be giving support in their opinion (if they say anyone, is OK) and even more important HOW exactly. If you see that the answer becomes very unrealistic, you can help the interviewee by adding "knowing that the external actors cannot do everything and also have limited resources, what do you think they should prioritise and how?" -Probing question: any idea that could help you with the strategies that you already have?

3.e. Do you have any ideas on how external actors could help you better in the future in general with any other important problem? If so, who could help best in your opinion and explain how should they do it

This is the same question as 3.d, but giving them the chance to speak about how the external support could be better in any other important problem they face, not only the 2 or 3 we focused upon during the interview

## Feedback

Space for the opinion, suggestions or comments of the researcher that could be useful to deepen our understanding of the problems explained, strategies explained and help inform the plans and actions of communities, local authorities, NGOs, INGOs, donors, UN, etc.

It is possible that after the interview you understand many aspects related to protection problems much better and that you have some ideas on how the international community should be more useful. Your opinion is very valuable for us and we will take it seriously into consideration. We just want to have it separate from the questionnaire, and that is why we include a separate box in which you can express yourself freely and in as much length as you wish.

## Appendix C

# Ex ante expected added value from Interview Guide / Questionnaire

This exercise shows the expected link between the Questionnaire and the potential information that could be gathered, so as to ensure from the start that all questions are relevant for the purposes of the research.

### Problems as perceived by the community

1. “What do affected people and communities see as the main threats and challenges to their safety and wellbeing?” Research question 1.  
1.a + 1.b + 1.c
2. Why do communities perceive those problems as more important?  
1.c
3. Do Palestinians tend to perceive their individual problems as different from their collective problems?  
1.d
4. Are there individuals within the communities who are specially vulnerable and require specific support?  
1.d
5. Policy: Are problems in oPt generally homogeneous, region-specific, community-specific?  
1.a, 1.b, 1.c, 1.d
6. Policy: distinguish root problems and immediate problems as perceived by the community.  
Could be in any of the answers when the interviewee develops causality. In any case will need to be developed by the authors in the conclusions.

### Coping strategies used by the community to address problems

1. What positive strategies are communities using to protect themselves?  
2.a, 2.d
2. Are some strategies generally used or individual tactics? (policy implication: e.g. an individual tactic that is successful can be taken by an external agent in an awareness campaign to inform other communities; differently, if there is information showing that a certain strategy is used by most Palestinians this can be extremely useful for an external agent to offer direct support to the already existing strategy in those aspects that offer limitations).  
2.a, 2.b, 2.d
3. Are the strategies used exclusively by men? Exclusively by women? Common? (policy implications)  
2.c
4. What strategies are more successful?  
2.d, 2.e
5. Why are some strategies successful?  
2.d, 2.e
6. What are the main limitations to the strategies attempted by the community?  
2.d, 2.f
7. Why are some strategies not successful or partially successful? 2.d, 2.f

### External support

1. Opinion of the communities on the external actions  
3.b (3.a)
2. (Maybe) differences or commonalities between international actors and other actors.  
3.b (3.a)
3. Description of actions or approaches that are having negative impact and explaining factors  
3.c
4. What actors should be working in what according to the community  
3.d
5. How exactly should external actors support the community, what is their place according to the community  
3.d



## Appendix D

# Training concept for 32 local researchers

### Training objectives

The training is both theoretical and practical, and has three main objectives:

1. The trainee learns how to do qualitative research at community level with high quality standards. By the end of the training, the trainee knows how to practically use an interview guide, how to design it, and how to transcribe interviews meaningfully. This part of the training directly equips the trainee with the skills needed to participate as one of the researchers in the L2GP research.
2. The trainee also learns about the whole cycle of qualitative research -not only field research- from design to data analysis and report writing. This part of the training equips the trainee with the remaining fundamental skills needed to undertake qualitative research in the future.
3. The organizations that contribute to L2GP in Palestine are strengthened in their research capacity both for their own research needs or to offer services to third parties. Additionally, the participants are associated to the prestige of a quality research effort.

## Training sequence

The training has five different phases, some mainly theoretical (in a classroom) and others mainly practical (in the field).

### Overview

1. Theoretical training & exercises (5 days)
2. Practical accompaniment to the field (2 days)
3. Reflection on practical problems (1 day)
4. Full field research (6 days).
5. Training on data analysis and structuring of a study (1 day)

### Description

1. Theoretical training & exercises (5 days). This phase takes place in a classroom during the first five days. The main theoretical aspects will be explained through a very participatory approach combined with lecture and practical exercises. Please see the contents in page 2 of this document.
2. Practical accompaniment to the field (1 day). Immediately after the theoretical training, the trainees go in teams of two into the first two days of research. During these two days real research is done, but one of the trainers will be accompanying each research team in at least two full interviews.
3. Reflection on practical problems (1 day). After the first two days of research, all the researchers will stop the research to meet again all together for one day in the classroom. During this day we will discuss the practical problems that the researchers encountered in their first interviews, doubts, how to overcome obstacles, how to improve the interviewing techniques, etc.
4. Full field research (6 days). The researchers go again to the field in teams of two, this time with no accompaniment, to complete the rest of the research. This phase should not be mainly perceived as "training" as by now the researchers are supposed to know their job well enough. However, important skills will undoubtedly be acquired from peer learning (the teams of two allow learning from each other) and by the experience gained through the accumulation of interviews in different contexts.
5. Training on data analysis and structuring of study (1 day). The researchers finish the job once they have carried out their interviews and sent the transcripts. They will not structure or write the report, something that the trainers will be doing. However, at the end of the process and once the report is ready, we will invite all the researchers to explain to them the process that transforms the transcripts into a structured study. Among other aspects we will discuss which part of the collected information was useful and which not and why. Why we structure in a particular way and not another so as to achieve clarity, rigor or advocacy purposes, etc.

## Training content (theory & practical exercises)

### Module 1 (5 initial days)

1. L2GP: protection in Palestine and goals of the research.
2. Geographical sample, stratified category sample and mitigation of sample bias.
3. Designing an interview guide.
4. Using an interview guide.
5. Conditions of an interview: time, place and context.
6. Differences between interview and focus group.
7. Open questions and leading questions: advantages/disadvantages.
8. From guide to reality: language and attitude.
9. The value of gestures.
10. The fundamental art of probing.
11. Ethics and respect
12. Beyond methodology: addressing human beings: trust, incentives, expectations.
13. Likely obstacles and how to overcome them
14. Sensitive aspects: how to treat them
15. Giving quantitative weight to a qualitative study.
16. Gender: not just a word. Technical implications.
17. Advantages of working in teams of two
18. Taking notes.
19. From interview to transcript.
20. . Practical exercises (for all aspects)

### Module 2 (1 day at the end on the study)

1. Treating large amounts of information to transform them in a meaningful study.
2. How to structure a study
3. Main obstacles found
4. What information was relevant and what not. Why.
5. Formulating hypotheses with different degrees of certainty.
6. Ensuring rigor
7. Ensuring clarity
8. Ensuring we take into account our reader(s)
9. Differences between an academic study and a study to influence policy
10. Main findings
11. How to use a study for advocacy



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