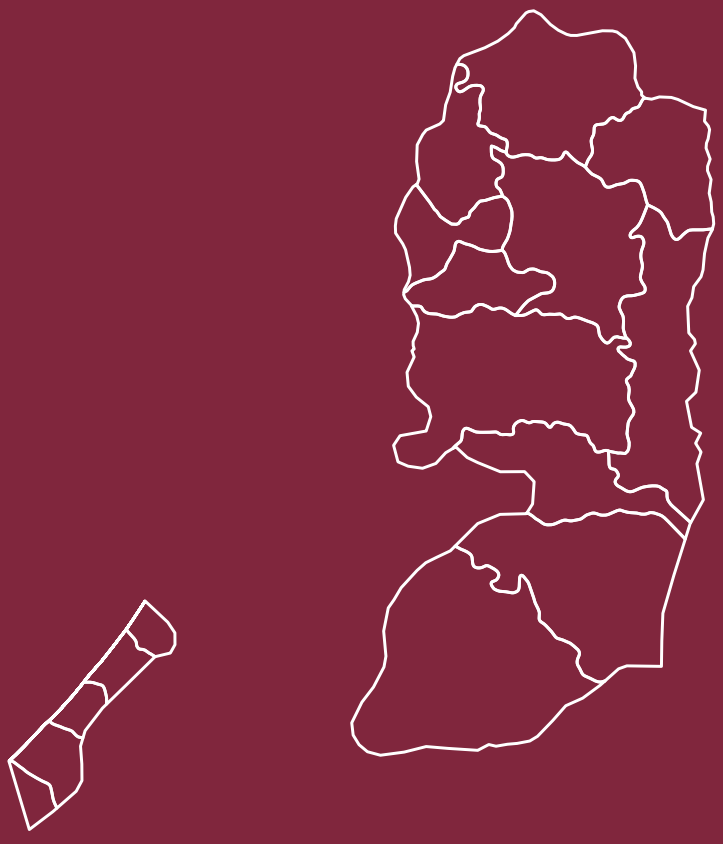
A people-driven blueprint for recovery in Palestine

Community perceptions on agency, aid and rebuilding in the West Bank and Gaza

Palestine | October 2026



GROUND TRUTH SOLUTIONS

AWRAD
مركز العالم العربي للبحوث والتنمية
Arab World for Research & Development

Belgium
partner in development

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Who we are

Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) is a pioneering research, consulting and development firm. Based in Palestine, AWRAD is one of the Arab region's leading firms, providing partners with a full range of consulting and technical services for sustainable development and institution building. With a diverse and dynamic team – including expertise in research, economic and institutional development, gender studies, and monitoring and evaluation, including third-party monitoring – AWRAD offers research, technical assistance and data collection and analysis across a diverse range of technical areas.

Ground Truth Solutions (GTS) is an international, non-governmental organisation dedicated to ensuring the priorities of people affected by crisis are systematically considered in humanitarian action and other global support systems, from individual responses to system-wide reform. Evidence and ideas gathered through rigorous research and inclusive dialogue enable crisis-affected communities to actively shape the decisions that impact their lives. Headquartered in Austria, GTS works globally as an independent advocate, collaborating closely with local partners who share our vision. To find out more about our work in Palestine please contact Samer Said or Meg Sattler.

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1 Introduction

The people of Palestine have, to many around the world, become a symbol of resilience and steadfastness in the face of occupation and genocide. The Palestinian concept of **sumud** is deeply engrained, representing endurance and a quiet, everyday refusal to disappear.[1]

But people in Palestine remind us that resilience should never be romanticised, particularly from the outside. It certainly should not be seen as a replacement for the need for accountability. Scholar Salim Tamari describes a 'yearning for the ordinary',[2] one that echoes through this report as people tell stories of their work toward restoring livelihoods, education and futures against indescribable odds.

This is our third year of working to understand community perceptions in Palestine. As AWRAD teams were talking to people across the West Bank and Gaza in August, Israeli military and settler attacks continued in the face of an agreed ceasefire; 1,334 people were reported killed between the ceasefire announcement and early September 2026.[3]

The brokered 'ceasefire' agreement shifted into its second phase in early 2026, which sketches long-term goals for Gaza's reconstruction and recovery, whereas the Palestinian Authority and so-called Board of Peace have been discussing basic service restoration and early recovery. UN experts have stated that the approach of the Board of Peace is the antithesis of a rights-based approach to reconstruction, and that its foundation contradicts basic principles of international law, including the right to self-determination.[4]

With the ambition of raising the voices of people in Palestine, reinforcing their agency and ensuring that their perspectives guide and centre any rebuilding and recovery efforts, we spoke with people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to understand what they expect from duty bearers, humanitarian and governance systems to ensure that reconstruction and recovery planning is informed and built on local priorities. Throughout these pages is a struggle between two realities: the agency and effort that sees people protect their families, manage their situations and try to plan for the future; and the imposed conditions that see those efforts hit a ceiling, time and again.

Decisions taken now must start by understanding what people living in Palestine are already doing, and what they feel it would take for them to regain control over their situations, and to transition from survival to a self-determined life.

Enough for me to die on her earth
be buried in her
to melt and vanish into her soil
then sprout forth as a flower
played with by a child from my country.
- Fadwa Touqan

2 Our research

Since late 2023, GTS and AWRAD have been speaking with people in Palestine to find out what they want from the international community, and what humanitarian aid looks like from their perspective. This work has focused on giving space to communities to share their views at scale, and has been used across the world for humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy, as well as by actors looking to better support community-led responses.[5]

This design of this research started early in 2026, soon after the October 2025 ceasefire in Gaza shifted into its second phase – which included plans to navigate governing a postwar Gaza[6] – with the objective of ensuring that the "messy middle" of reconstruction and recovery programming is informed by people's priorities rather than external agendas. Between March and April 2026, we held community consultation sessions with 107 people across the Gaza Strip, and a small group of expert academics and humanitarian workers in the West Bank. Insight from the discussions fed into the design of quantitative research that was then rolled out across the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

[1] National Library of Medicine. February 2022. "Everyday life in the face of conflict: Sumud as a spatial quotidian practice in Palestine."

[2] Institute for Palestinian Studies. 2013. "Normalcy and Violence: The Yearning for the Ordinary in Discourse of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict."

[3] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA). September 2026."oPt: Humanitarian Situation Report | 4 September 2026."

[4] United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. March 2026."UN experts condemn 'Board of Peace', call for a reparative, rights based approach to reconstruction in Gaza."

[5] Ground Truth Solutions. "Occupied Palestinian Territory."

[6] Council on Foreign Relations. February 2026. "A Guide to the Gaza Peace Deal."

This fourth report gathers insight generously shared by 1,098 people in Palestine between 10-24 July 2026, via face-to-face surveys and in-depth discussions with 65 people in five focus group discussions. It aims to understand how humanitarian and recovery mechanisms contribute to a dignified transition towards independent, self-reliant, and sustained recovery. This work aims to serve the people of Palestine by recognising their agency as actors with rights rather than just aid recipients, and it serves the international community by providing systematic evidence for humanitarian diplomacy.

About the process

Data collection started shortly after the United Nations and NGOs warned of the continued expansion of "yellow line" areas[7] in Gaza. At the time, this marked about 53% of the Strip as off limits to Palestinians and heavily restricted to aid workers[8], making living in the Strip more difficult and leaving Palestinians trapped in an ever-shrinking area.

In the West Bank, settler violence is on the rise, a leading cause of Palestinian injuries in the region,[9] accounting for 55% of all such cases in 2026.

Acute insecurity, restricted access, and institutional strain shaped both the conditions under which data collection was conducted and the realities people were navigating at the time.

Alongside rigorous risk assessments combined with close monitoring of the evolving reality, the team remained dedicated to collecting data to high standards of sampling, interviewing, and data management, enabling us to present robust evidence of what it is like to live in Palestine. All research activities were carried out with strong ethical safeguards to protect both researchers and respondents, ensuring dignity, confidentiality, and safety. It is now up to everyone to listen.

[7] The yellow line area is the demarcation line where the Israeli army withdrew to under the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire that came into effect in October 2025. The line divides Gaza into two zones: an eastern area under Israeli military control and a western area where Palestinians face fewer movement restrictions but are under constant threat of air strikes and forced displacement. Al Jazeera. January 2026. "'Yellow line', the de facto Israeli buffer zone shaping life in Gaza."

[8] UNOCHA. June 2026. "Humanitarian Situation Report | 26 June 2026."

[9] UN News. July 2026. "Israeli attacks on Gaza intensify amid surge of West Bank settler violence."

3 Key findings

- **The findings show an important distinction between Palestinian capacity and Palestinian control.** People in the West Bank exercise influence over how they organise their households, mobilise resources and respond to hardship, but considerably less over employment opportunities, movement and access, exposure to insecurity, access to land and markets, or the wider political and institutional environment. People in Gaza work hard to provide the basics for their families, but doing so comes at a heavy personal cost. Overall, people rely overwhelmingly on their own efforts, and express strong aspirations for greater Palestinian control over decisions affecting their future.
- **Functioning must not be equated with wellbeing.** Households in the West Bank have largely preserved the physical foundations necessary to continue everyday life, but economic security, adequate nutrition, specialised healthcare and opportunities associated with broader wellbeing are considerably more constrained. Psychosocial wellbeing is low. At the time when people should be focusing on recovery, in both the West Bank and Gaza people report a deterioration in conditions that enable coping and wellbeing. Coping is taking place not within a stabilising environment, but one that most people continue to perceive as worsening.
- **In both the West Bank and Gaza, people are calling loudly for jobs.** They see this as a primary catalyst if their situation is going to change from coping to recovery. This unfolds alongside severe labour market contraction. In the West Bank, unemployment figures doubled between 2023 and 2026. Alternative economic buffers provide minimal protection when employment is disrupted, as remaining savings contribute regularly as sources of livelihoods for only 5% of households and formal credit for approximately 1%.
- **Strong interpersonal bonds persist, but material depletion restricts capacity to convert solidarity into collective community action.** Household cohesion is described as strong by 89% and community belonging by 67% in the West Bank, yet strong support from community members drops to 27% and active engagement in public affairs to 28%. This reflects an erosion of material resources, mobility, and institutional space rather than a breakdown in social solidarity.
- **Basic household service access in Gaza relies on precarious, fragmented arrangements.** Severe material deprivation in Gaza still affects most households, with 86% unable to achieve financial stability, 76% lacking decent and safe housing, and 80% saying their physical safety is deteriorating.
- **People in Gaza need and are welcoming of aid, viewing it as necessary and meaningful but not transformative.** Many say it must be designed with longer-term solutions in mind and coupled with advocacy and solidarity. Direct aid, mostly food assistance, reached 85% of households in Gaza over three months. But people want to move beyond emergency survival with a stable livelihood.
- **Aid provision in Gaza is seen as opaque and unfair, making it even more difficult for people to use it to support their aspirations for a better life.** Although 59% agree assistance makes a meaningful difference, 80% report that aid organisations do not involve community members in decisions about who receives assistance, and 61% disagree that aid reaches those most in need.
- **Almost everyone in Gaza feels that decisions about the future of Gaza are being made externally, and are thus unable to influence them.** Overall, 78% view policy and decisions in Gaza as largely or fully externally driven, and 84% report having little or no involvement in decisions concerning their future. There is a sense that the international community is not neutral but siding against them.

Who we talked to

We spoke with 1,098 people face-to-face, and 65 people via focus group discussions

Location

45% in the Gaza Strip (495)

55% in the West Bank (603)

Sex

51% women (555)

49% men (543)

Age

37% 18-35 years old (408)

40% 36-54 years old (438)

23% 55+ years old (252)

Displacement

47% displaced overall (513)

100% displaced in Gaza (493)

3% displaced in the West Bank (19)

Current household size

51% have 1 to 5 members (528)

31% have 6 to 7 members (328)

18% have 8 members or more (202)

Household composition

73% have children within the household (805)

49% have chronic illness within the household (539)

23% have elderly persons within the household (253)

14% have a disability within the household (148)

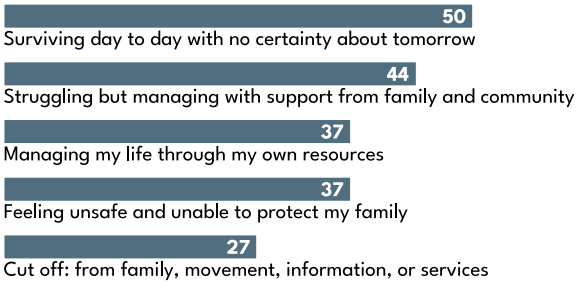
4 West Bank: From resilience to uncertainty

Since October 2023, Palestinians living in the West Bank have faced increasing restrictions, illegal evictions, and attacks.[10] Life under occupation has long been restricted and dangerous, with rights groups consistently describing everyday life under a 'tight grip', requiring navigation through a complex system of checkpoints, fences, walls and military bases.[11] People in the West Bank have experienced both a slow and a fast erosion of institutions, livelihoods and household choices. In recent months the level of control has increased such that one human rights report outlines 'the systematic "elimination" of the conditions that sustain Palestinian collective life.'[12] People's own descriptions of their lives provide a revealing entry point into the wider context, portraying everyday life as defined primarily by uncertainty and struggle, but sustained through personal, family and community resources.

Figure 1:

In your own words, how would you describe your life right now in the West Bank?

Results in %, n=603



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

Half of those surveyed (50%) describe themselves as surviving day-to-day with no certainty about tomorrow, while 44% report struggling but managing with support from family and community, as sudden closures and armed settler presence along routes make basic daily planning nearly impossible, obstructing access to employment, agricultural fields, and urban healthcare centres.[13] In focus group discussions, people describe how they cope with help from their community: a barber, displaced from Tulkarm camp, got a donation of barbering equipment and managed to set up his business again in his house; a woman in Hebron borrowed money for electricity. Participants in these discussions said aid alone is never enough, and that they endure thanks to a combination of their own efforts, community solidarity and external support.

Insecurity is prominent, with 37% of people feeling unsafe and unable to protect their families, and one-quarter feeling cut off from family, movement, information or services. Displaced people from Tulkarm told us they worry about protection and safety due to the instability caused by the occupation forces and settlers. Protection concerns are not limited to an actual attack – the fear of a possible attack, or of encountering a dangerous situation, can itself affect a family's behaviour. Several displaced people and especially women reported feared or actual harassment from settlers, noting a lack of repercussions because settlers are protected by the Israeli army. Men from a Bedouin community in Al-Eizariya report that the struggle to access basic services and the absence of a functioning justice system has increased tensions within households and communities.

> "Because of weak services and difficult conditions, violence has compounded, and tension inside homes has increased. When water wasn't available and I wanted to get water for the family just to secure the most basic necessities of life, there were always problems with my wife – she'd be tense and constantly shouting, which affected my relationship with her."
>
> — Man in Al-Eizariya, West Bank

Who we talked to

We spoke with 603 people face-to-face, and spoke with 38 people via focus group discussions

Sex

- 51% women (310)
- 49% men (293)

Age

- 38% 18-35 years old (228)
- 34% 36-54 years old (206)
- 28% 55+ years old (169)

Current location

- 26% Hebron (157)
- 14% Ramallah and Al-Bireh (84)
- 14% Nablus (83)
- 12% Jerusalem (73)
- 10% Jenin (64)
- 8% Bethlehem (47)
- 7% Tulkarm (40)
- 4% Qalqilya (24)
- 3% Salfit (16)
- 2% Tubas (14)

Current household size

- 62% have 1 to 5 members (375)
- 25% have 6 to 7 members (151)
- 13% have 8 members or more (77)

[10] UNOCHA. April 2026. "Fact Sheet: Movement and Access in the West Bank, April 2026."

[11] Amnesty International. "Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory."

[12] The Guardian. September 2026. "Israel accused of trying to 'eliminate' living conditions for Palestinians in West Bank."

[13] ACAPS. September 2026. "Palestine: Deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Area C, West Bank."

Participants also perceive that cases of early marriage have increased within their communities, as families marry their daughters as a form of "protection" or because they cannot afford to support them. Some men also marry earlier, in hopes of receiving aid, as the targeting criteria for some programmes are more inclusive of families than single individuals.

The difficult economic situation leads to isolation and embarrassment. Several women in Hebron speak of the isolation that comes from no longer being able to afford things that social occasions require, like clothing or gifts. Displaced people feel that the reason for the isolation they experience is their inability to afford transportation to visit people and access services, given how far away these are now.

> "Not having money affects your mental state. Because I have so little money I've become embarrassed to leave the house, and I prefer isolation. I'm afraid my children will ask for entertainment or things I can't provide. Whatever I do manage to save goes to the household."
>
> — Woman in Hebron, West Bank

At the same time, some indications of resilience remain visible: 34% describe managing through their own resources and 24% through faith and personal strength, while 16% explicitly describe themselves as living with dignity despite the circumstances. Notably, only 6% characterise their situation primarily in terms of dependence on humanitarian assistance. This reveals the coexistence of vulnerability and agency: people are navigating uncertainty and insecurity while continuing to draw heavily on their own capabilities, families and communities to sustain life and preserve dignity.

Deteriorating external environment shrinks space for Palestinian agency

While people in the West Bank overcome their everyday life with little certainty about tomorrow, external conditions in the West Bank – such as legal measures, administrative controls, settlement expansion, movement restrictions, and violence – have been systematically degrading and restricting Palestinian agency across nearly all aspects of daily life.[14] These external conditions diminish Palestinian agency by replacing voluntary, self-directed decision-making with survival-driven coping strategies and involuntary displacement. Consequently, peoples' perceptions of change reveal a pronounced gradient between their personal and household circumstances and their wider environment. While their assessments of personal life and household living conditions are mixed, perceptions become progressively more negative as people consider self-reliance, independence and dignity, and particularly severe when they assess conditions in their communities and their physical safety.

For personal life, 36% reported deterioration, an equal 36% felt conditions were staying the same, and 28% reported improvement. Household living conditions show a somewhat more negative balance: 42% perceived deterioration, compared with 38% reporting no change and 20% perceiving improvement.

Displacement

3% of people were displaced 1-3 times (19)

Change in household size since October 7, 2023

16% have seen their household size decrease (100)

14% have seen their household size increase (82)

70% have seen no change in their household size (421)

Household composition

62% have children within the household (376)

48% have chronic illness within the household (248)

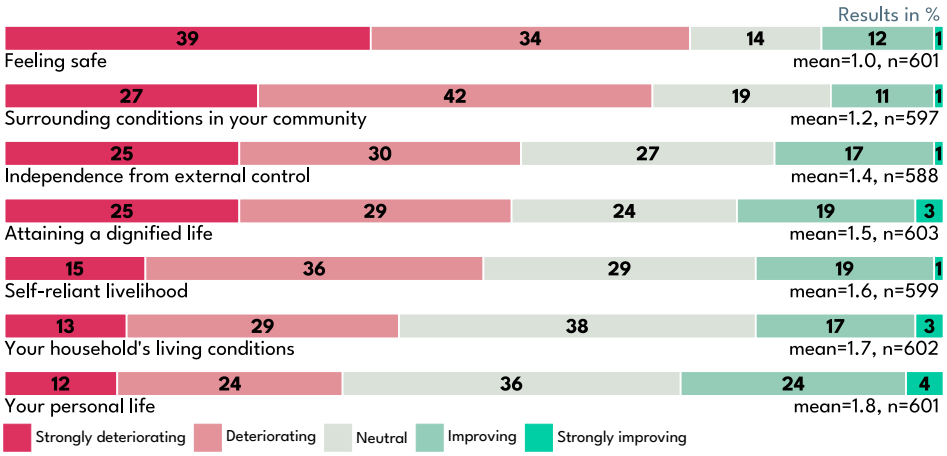
26% have elderly persons within the household (156)

16% have a disability within the household (93)

[14] ACAPS. September 2026. "Palestine: Deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Area C, West Bank."

Figure 2:

Do you believe that the following are improving or deteriorating?



Perceptions become considerably more negative when attention shifts toward economic autonomy and people's ability to shape their future circumstances. More than half (51%) reported that prospects for a self-reliant livelihood are deteriorating, while 55% perceived deterioration in their independence from external control. Similarly, more than half felt that prospects for attaining a dignified life were deteriorating, 25% significantly. In focus group discussions, participants said that the need for day-to-day survival and violence prevents them from thinking about the future, and displaced people feel returning home is a precondition to rebuild the future.

Ongoing displacement, loss of income, and rising living costs make the transition to self-reliance difficult without temporary support. People stressed the need for institutions to gradually shift from providing only consumable or in-kind assistance to supporting livelihoods; through job opportunities, small businesses, grants, vocational training, and providing the tools and equipment needed for work, in addition to connecting businesses and traders with markets. The deterioration is substantially more pronounced beyond the household. Seven in ten people (69%) perceived surrounding conditions in their community as deteriorating, 27% significantly. The most negative assessment concerns physical safety, with nearly three-quarters (73%) perceiving deterioration.

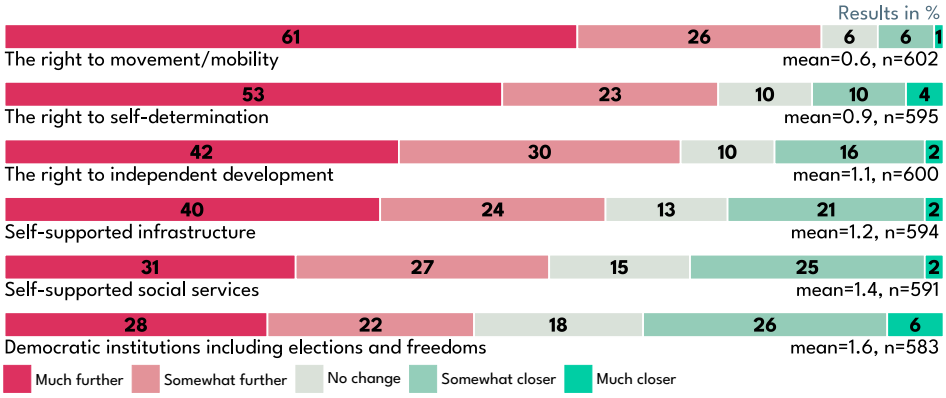
People feel things have gone backwards when it comes to mobility, self-determination and independent development. There are over 925 checkpoints, roadblocks, and gates that restrict travel across the West Bank, forcing people onto longer secondary roads and consuming tens of millions of labour hours each year.[15] Nearly nine in ten people surveyed (87%) believe society is moving further from achieving the right to movement and mobility, including 61% who believe it is moving much further away. More than three-quarters (76%) believe society is moving further from self-determination, while 72% perceive movement further from independent development.

> "We just hope to go back to the camp, back to our homes, and only from there can we start talking about our future. Our only concern now is securing our daily bread, day by day. A lot of us lost our source of income in the camp, lost our homes, lost everything we own, and now we have to start from zero, start rebuilding ourselves and our lives. So what future are you even talking about?
>
> Man in Tulkarm, West Bank

[15] ACAPS. September 2026. "Palestine: Deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Area C, West Bank."

Figure 3:

The following relate to Palestinian society at large. For each of the following, please tell me whether you feel Palestinian society is moving closer to or farther from achieving it?

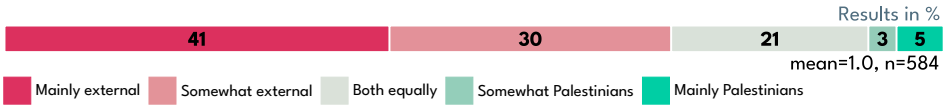


Perceptions remain predominantly negative, although less pronounced, for the ability to sustain Palestinian systems independently. Almost two-thirds (64%) believe society is moving further from self-supported infrastructure and 58% from self-supported social services. Assessments of democratic institutions, including elections and freedoms, are more divided: 50% think progress has slowed, but 32% believe the opposite.

The perception of declining self-determination is reinforced by people's assessments of who drives decisions affecting people's lives. Only 8% perceive decision-making as largely or fully Palestinian-driven.

Figure 4:

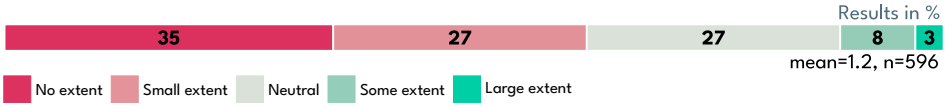
In your view, how much is policy and decision-making about people's lives in the West Bank driven by Palestinians themselves or external actors?



This perceived constraint on Palestinian control is mirrored in people's involvement in decisions about their own future. Nearly two-thirds (62%) consider people in their area to be not at all or rarely involved in decisions concerning reconstruction, governance and the forms of support they receive.

Figure 5:

To what extent are people in the West Bank involved in decisions about their future (including reconstruction, governance, and the kind of support they receive)?



The findings point towards an important distinction between Palestinian capacity and Palestinian control. People can exercise considerable influence over how they organise their households, mobilise resources and respond to hardship, but considerably less over employment opportunities, movement and access, exposure to insecurity, access to land and markets, or the wider political and institutional environment. The concentration of negative perceptions in dimensions most strongly shaped by the external environment is notable.

Agency within one's immediate sphere cannot translate into influence over the structures governing that sphere. Households are sustaining themselves within an environment

> "What matters is today's food, and we leave the rest for God to provide. No one in Palestine has a vision for the future anymore. We've started seeing young men with grey hair, and the features of someone in their twenties looking like someone over forty.
>
> Woman in Hebron, West Bank

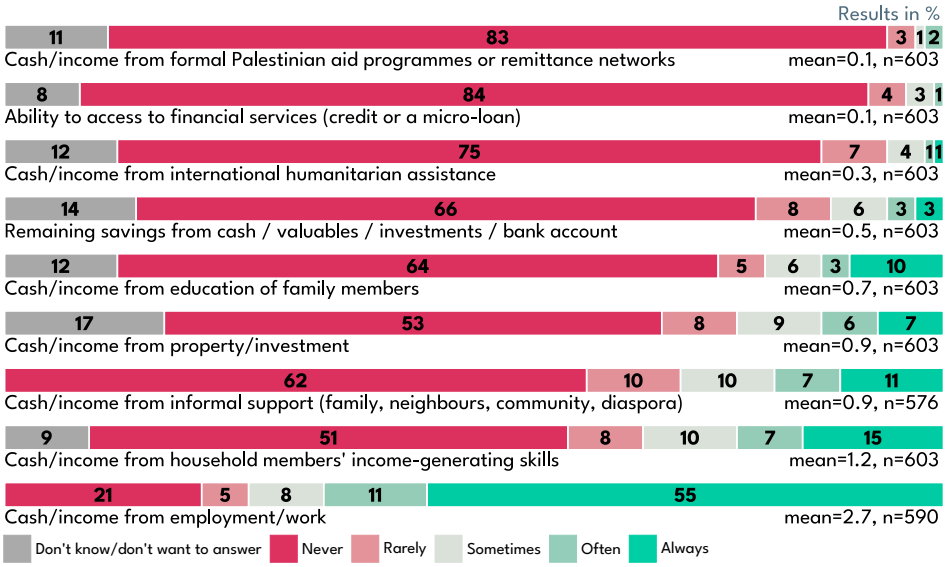
in which the conditions for security, autonomy and independent development are deteriorating and out of the control of Palestinians.

Work remains central, but economic buffers are thin

Employment remains overwhelmingly the most consistent contributor to a dignified livelihood. Two-thirds (66%) reported that employment or work contributes often or regularly to their household's dignified livelihood. This continued centrality of employment is striking against the deterioration of the West Bank labour market and since 7 October 2023, Israel has cancelled more than 140,000 work permits for Palestinian labourers.[16] Unemployment stood at approximately 13% in Q3 2023,[17] immediately before the war, compared with 29.5% in Q1 2026, while total labour underutilisation reached 32.3%.[18] Work remains the principal route through which households sustain dignified livelihoods at precisely the time when access to that route has become more constrained by a combination of macroeconomic shocks, physical movement obstacles, and the displacement of rural livelihoods.[19] In focus group discussions, many reported that their income is insufficient to cover the rising cost of living, driven by inflation and scarcity,[20] leaving little or nothing to save for the future. Men in Al-Eizariya also stated that even when people have jobs, they are not reliable as work is temporary and wages do not keep up with the costs of living.

Figure 6:

At the present time, how consistently do the following sources contribute to your household's dignified livelihood?



Who provides what?

Households feel responsible for meeting most of their own needs, even when the resources to do so are strained. For health expenses, where external support plays a complementary role, 72% still say they rely entirely or largely on their own resources.

[16] Al Shabaka. January 2025. "Israel's Exploitation of Palestinian Labor: A Strategy of Erasure."

[17] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. November 2023. "The Results of the Labour Force Survey Third Quarter (July–September, 2023) Round."

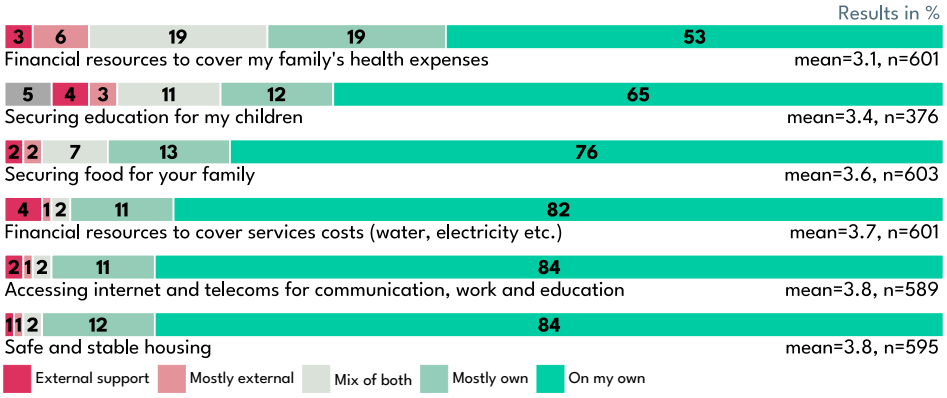
[18] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. May 2026. "The Results of the Labour Force Survey, in the West Bank First Quarter (January – March, 2026) Round."

[19] ACAPS. September 2026. "Palestine: Deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Area C, West Bank."

[20] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. September 2026. "The Consumer Price Index During August, 08/2026."

Figure 7:

For each of the following, please tell me whether this is something you manage on your own (with your own resources), with external support (international, government, other external sources) or a mix of both?



Even with various modes of support aiming to help people in the West Bank, the overwhelming majority report that improvements in their household situation result largely or entirely from their own efforts. Only 2% attribute improvements largely or entirely to external support.

Figure 8:

When you think about improvements in your household's situation, how much do you feel these result from your own efforts and those of your community, compared to support from external actors?



Figure 9:

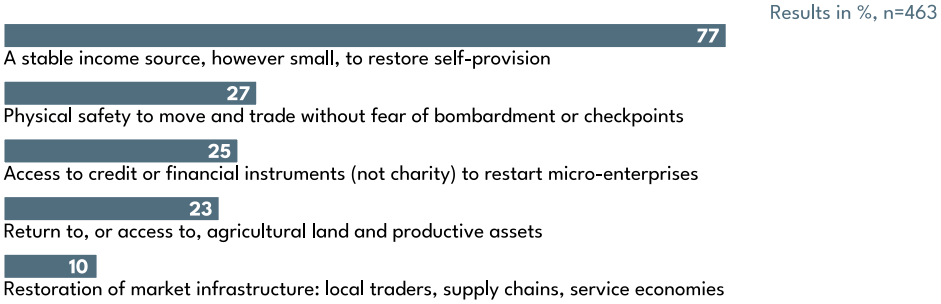
How much do you feel that your own actions can make a real difference to your situation?



The most frequently identified requirement is a stable income, however small, to restore self-provision, cited by 77%. Focus group participants reinforced this message, calling for more job opportunities. Some participants said that aid is needed to reach self-reliance, but they prefer income-generating programmes over being dependent on food parcels.

Figure 10:

In your opinion, what kind of aid/support/services would help you become self-reliant (live without help in the future)?



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

People also noted that prolonged dependence on assistance undermines families' ability to become self-reliant. They called for humanitarian assistance to be complemented by early recovery programmes, livelihood support, job opportunities, support for small businesses, and vocational training adapted to the circumstances of displaced families.

Other priorities for future self-reliance are physical safety to move and trade without fear of bombardment or being stuck at checkpoints (27%), access to credit or financial instruments to restart micro-enterprises (25%), and access (sometimes return) to agricultural land and productive assets (23%). When asked what needs to change in their lives for them to become truly self-reliant, the overwhelming majority again highlighted that securing employment and income is deeply intertwined with safety and security, as well as having opportunities to access economic development and projects.

> "We ask that security be provided so that we can move about freely, set up our own businesses without the occupation obstructing us, as our village is close to the wall, and that living conditions be improved so that we can work and be productive."
>
> — Woman in Jenin, West Bank

Some women and people with disabilities we spoke with highlighted the need for social support and fairness to enable them to access economic activities and income generating opportunities. While women are calling for greater participation in economic activities, reports indicate that due to frequent harassment along travel routes, some families restrict women from working, withdraw girls from school, or arrange early marriages as protective measures.[21]

> "We need a change in social customs and values, the provision of employment opportunities for both sexes, and the provision of a decent income for workers to cope with the high cost of living."
>
> — Woman in Hebron, West Bank

> "We need to establish factories to employ people with special needs and providing support and job opportunities so they can help their families."
>
> — Woman in Ramallah and Al-Bireh, West Bank

The central challenge emerging is clearly not an absence of effort or aspiration toward self-reliance, but a need to close the gap between strong household agency and the safety, economic opportunities and buffers required for that agency to produce secure and sustainable livelihoods.

> "None of us relies on humanitarian assistance alone to meet our needs. Yes, it helps, but there are always things missing. I mean, the box has sugar, oil, and rice in it, but if you want to cook you need a gas cylinder. So if you don't rely on yourself and stand on your own two feet, believe me, you'd starve to death. But at the same time, the presence of assistance or purchase vouchers does help people and eases some of their pain. It's just not enough.
>
> Man in Tulkarm, West Bank

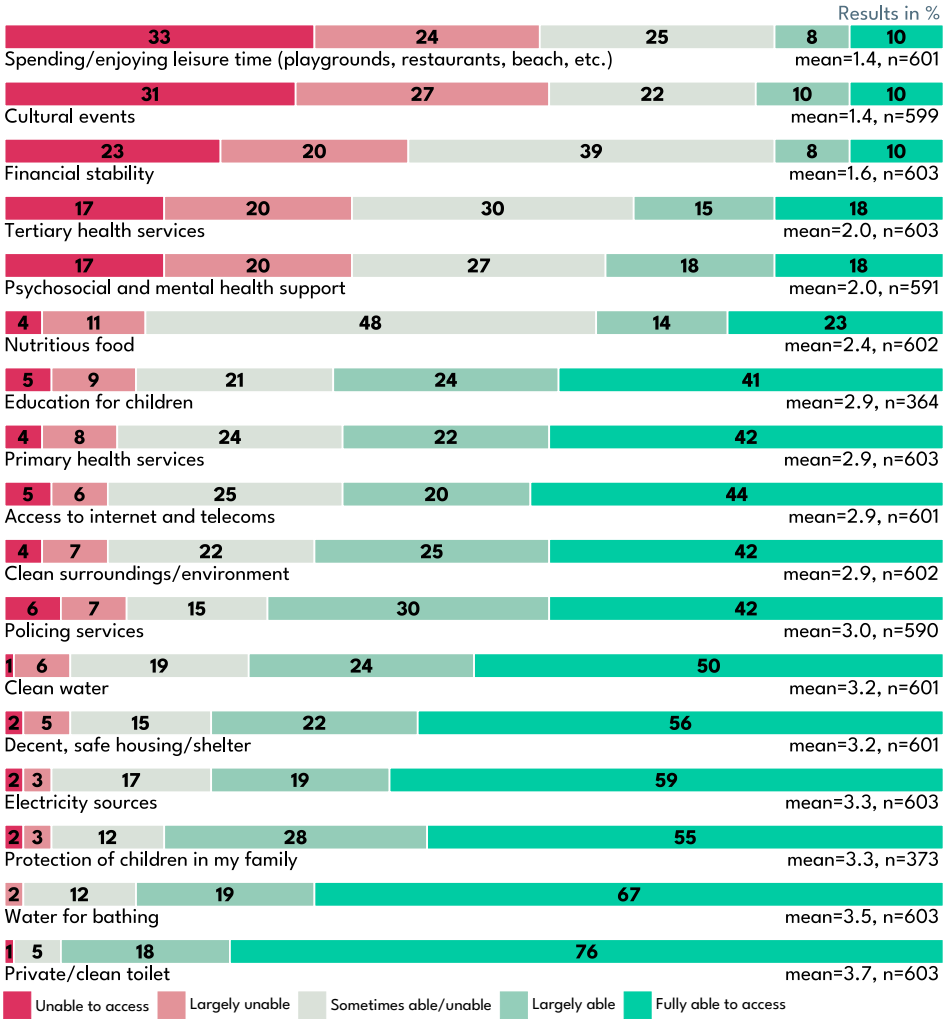
[21] Norwegian Refugee Council. April 2026. "Sexual Violence and Forcible Transfer in the West Bank. How The Exploitation of Gender Dynamics Drives Displacement."

Despite the pressures, households continue to maintain many of the foundations of everyday life. Most people, but not everyone are able to access water for bathing (86%), electricity (78%), decent and safe housing (78%) and clean water (74%). The main drivers behind such results are access restrictions driving up the price of essential services in the West Bank. As such, water access restrictions force communities to pay up to eight times the West Bank average for trucked water, compelling households to reduce consumption below recommended health standards and cut back on healthcare or food quality.[22] Displaced people from Tulkarm and members of the Bedouin community in Al-Eizaria – some of whom have previously owned their homes but now live in rented housing or tents – share what it looks like to not have decent housing:

> "There are a lot of people living without doors, without windows, with a zinc roof that doesn't protect you from the winter cold or the summer heat. There are people, I swear, in the Iktaba area. You could go and see for yourself – living inside a bus. Imagine that! The man turned a bus into a house. May God help them, that's all I can say."
>
> — Man in Tulkarm, West Bank

Figure 11:

For each of the following, please tell me how able your household is to access it.



Access becomes less secure as needs move beyond foundational household infrastructure and into community services. Around two-thirds report adequate access to policing services (72%), clean surroundings (67%), internet and telecommunications (64%), and primary healthcare (64%).

> "Alongside self-reliance, assistance remains indispensable. A tent only lasts about six months before it wears out, job opportunities and simple projects need to be provided for families in need, to help them cope with the high cost of living.
>
> Man in Al-Eizariya, West Bank

> "We need support for small projects for groups of young people, to provide them with work and income, and also projects for people who used to earn their living from [work in] Israel and lost that livelihood two years ago, with no one checking on them or asking after them.
>
> Woman in Hebron, West Bank

> "We need security so that people can develop their potential and their projects, whatever they may be, by reducing taxes on projects and licensing costs, and providing a suitable environment for this.
>
> Man in Nablus, West Bank

[22] ACAPS. September 2026. "Palestine: Deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Area C, West Bank."

A sharper deterioration emerges in dimensions requiring greater and more continuous economic resources or specialised provision. Only 37% report being largely or fully able to access nutritious food. Access to nutritious food remains constrained by affordability, limited variety, and market conditions; conditions that are largely dictated by wider power dynamics that mediate food access. While food is generally available, including through food vouchers, people report having to rely on a narrow range of cheaper staples and settle with what's available, often lentils and rice. There are people who have not been able to get nutritious food due to high prices, but also scarcity, and market conditions, with prices unstable and constantly fluctuating.

Psychosocial and mental health support is adequately accessible to only 36%. Tertiary healthcare shows a similar pattern, with only 33% reporting adequate access and 37% unable or largely unable to access services. Displaced people are living in difficult conditions and report feeling mentally exhausted. Several organisations have partnered with camp-based organisations to provide psychosocial support.

> "We all feel like we're mentally unwell and need psychological treatment. A lot of organisations used to come and hold sessions to help us decompress, and honestly, we really did benefit from them. You get a change of scenery and a chance to let it out. A lot of women used to come to these sessions when transportation costs were covered. But if the location is far and a person has to pay for transport themselves, they won't be able to attend."
>
> — Man in Tulkarm, West Bank

The distinction between functioning and wellbeing is critical. Just one in five report they are largely or fully able to access cultural events or leisure and recreational opportunities, with over half unable or largely unable to access either. Households have largely preserved the physical foundations necessary to continue everyday life, but economic security, adequate nutrition, specialised healthcare and opportunities associated with broader wellbeing are considerably more constrained.

The weakest results concern economic security and dimensions of broader quality of life. Only 18% report being largely or fully able to achieve financial stability, while 43% report being largely or fully unable to do so. People living in rented houses often face precarity due to financial instability. If they cannot pay rent, they will be left without shelter.

Households are continuing to function, but often drawing heavily on increasingly constrained resources. Material resilience carries costs that become more visible as the analysis moves from basic survival toward security and human development.

Managing movement restrictions and accessing basic services

Displaced people say they can access health centres and mobile clinics, but that the services they get are worse than before, or further away. Sometimes, medicines are not available.

Several women in Hebron say they prefer to take painkillers rather than pay for transport to health centres. Treatment costs are high, and health workers have also stopped keeping regular hours due to strikes and shortages of staff and medicine.

Access to health and other basic services is also impacted by movement restrictions imposed by the occupation. One displaced participant noted that these restrictions represent an additional factor that makes displaced families' daily lives even harder, and their effects are not limited to moving from one place to another. They also directly affect household members' ability to reach workplaces and essential services, such as health, education institutions, and markets.

> "It's dangerous, because I can't manage living in and adapting to a tent. A stone building is somewhat safer than living in a cloth tent, and because the occupation forces are present continuously, we have to wait until their vehicle leaves just to access even our most basic services.
>
> Man in Al-Eizariya, West Bank

> "Getting clean water is difficult for us. We're on a street that's essentially all rough, unpaved roads, and cars can barely get through, so we have to go into Al-Eizariya town itself to fill containers with water. It's hard for me to send my children [to do this] because they need to go to school, and when I can't get clean water I have to buy it, and prices are very high, we can't afford it.
>
> Man in Al-Eizariya, West Bank

"It was hard to reach doctors because of harassment by the occupation, and we would set out three hours before the appointment because of the rough terrain and the presence of the occupation. Sometimes we would have to wait until the occupation forces left."

— Man in Al-Eizariya, West Bank

Moving around is expensive. Many women in Hebron mention that access to services mostly depends on money – not because of to the cost of the service itself, but mostly due to the more frequent travel due to checkpoints, and more expensive transport.

Checkpoints do not only affect people's ability to move. They are also a source of humiliation. Many families depend on daily work in other governorates, so any road closure disrupts their entire day. This is not only about the economic impact; some people are searched at checkpoints on their way to receive medical treatment.

"I have a sick son, and I had to take him to An-Najah Hospital in Nablus. I passed through the Anabta checkpoint, and they stopped me and said 'give us your ID, where are you going' and they humiliated me and kept me standing at the checkpoint for two hours, with my wife and children in the car. After all that humiliation, how am I even supposed to go back to Nablus?"

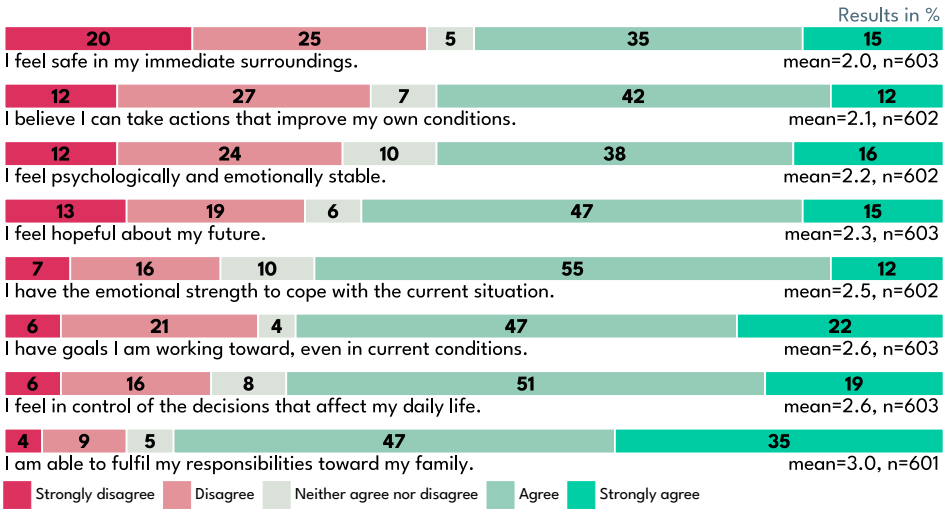
— Man in Tulkarm, West Bank

Functioning is not wellbeing

People continue to demonstrate substantial agency, responsibility and forward orientation, especially concerning family responsibility: 82% agree that they can fulfill their responsibilities towards their family. Seven in ten (70%) report feeling in control of decisions affecting their daily lives, and a similar proportion (69%) have goals they continue to work towards despite current conditions. Particularly those aged 18 to 35 years old (75%) are more positive about their working towards their goals than people aged 55 years or older (59%).

Figure 12:

I will now read you a list of statements about your living situation. For each, please tell me how much you agree or disagree.



A substantial majority (67%) also report having the emotional strength needed to cope

with the current situation, while 62% remain hopeful about the future. These findings point to meaningful resilience, but resilience is not uniform. Only 54% believe they can take actions to improve their own conditions, the same proportion report feeling psychologically and emotionally stable, and only 50% feel safe in their immediate surroundings. Feelings of safety are more negative among people living in camps, whereas people in camps feel significantly less safe (72%) than people living in urban or rural settings (43% and 52% respectively).

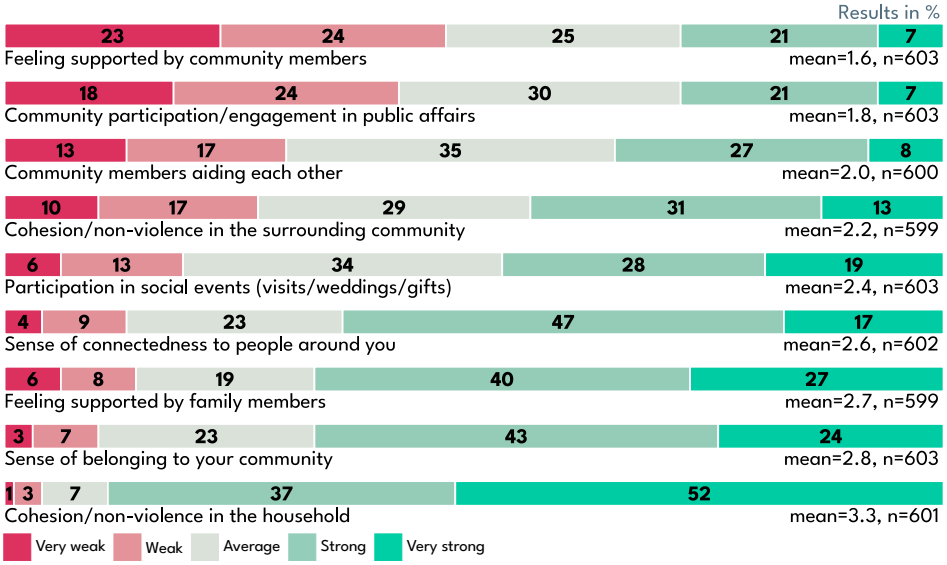
A distinction emerges between coping and feeling well. People are more likely to report possessing the emotional strength to cope than to describe themselves as psychologically stable. Resilience appears strongest in the spheres closest to people's direct influence and becomes more fragile as outcomes depend increasingly on external conditions.

Social cohesion and social capital

In an increasingly coercive environment, physical fragmentation and movement barriers contribute to the divide of extended families and weakening the traditional social networks that serve as vital sources of resilience and mutual aid.[23] Yet people we spoke with indicate that family provides an especially strong social anchor in their lives. Nearly nine in ten people surveyed (89%) describe cohesion and non-violence within their household as strong or very strong. These results reinforce the centrality of the household as a source of stability, responsibility, and social support. Relationships and identities connecting people to their communities remain comparatively durable. Two-thirds (64%) feel connected to the people around them.

Figure 13:

How strong or weak are the following in your household and surrounding community?



What appears weaker is the capacity to translate those bonds into practical support and participation. Only 44% describe wider community cohesion and non-violence as strong. While 67% report strong family support, only 28% report strong support from community members and 47% characterise community support as weak. Only 35% describe mutual assistance among community members as strong. Previous GTS and AWRAD reports show that mutual aid is critical for survival in Palestine, but is becoming incredibly strained.

The contrast also extends to participation. Although 67% report strong community belonging, only 47% report strong participation in social events and just 28% report strong community participation and engagement in public affairs, while 42% rate public participation as weak.

These differences may reflect an erosion of capacity, material resources, and space more than an erosion of solidarity. Belonging, connectedness and willingness to support others can persist even when households have fewer resources, less mobility, or fewer institutional and public spaces through which to act on those relationships. Society

[23] Health and Human Rights Journal. June 2026. "Well-being Under Structural Constraints of Political Instability in the Israeli-Occupied West Bank: A Cross-Sectional Study."

retains significant social resources: strong families, enduring belonging, interpersonal connectedness, hope and everyday agency. What appears more constrained is the ability to mobilise those resources into wider mutual assistance, participation and collective action.

Resilience should consequently not be romanticised or interpreted as evidence that external pressures are limited. People can remain resilient while the conditions requiring that resilience become progressively more difficult. The survey instead portrays individuals, families and communities actively preserving important sources of stability and social connection within circumstances that place increasing demands upon them.

Trust shaped by experiences and expectations

People demonstrate a selective rather than generalised pattern of trust across institutional and external actors. Trust is limited overall, with no actor identified as most trusted by a majority. UNRWA receives the highest level of trust, closely followed by other international humanitarian organisations, including UN agencies, WFP, INGOs and the Red Cross (44%). Trust is considerably lower closer to the community level: 26% identify people in their immediate community among those they trust most, while only 16% select Palestinian governance institutions.

Figure 14:

Who do you trust most to act in the best interest and in support of people in the West Bank (protect and advocate) based on your own experience and observations.

Results in %, n=553



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

Focus group participants who were displaced from Tulkarm camp explained that their level of trust in different institutions and actors has not been constant over the past two years, shaped by the experience of displacement and growing needs, and by each actor's perceived ability to respond to these needs in a tangible and fair way. Early in the displacement, there was a higher level of trust toward certain institutions, especially those that moved quickly to reach displaced people, register their needs, and provide them with services. While in Hebron, several women said that they do not trust any of the mentioned actors, citing broken promises or a lack of transparency.

The positive perception of UNRWA persists. People note that it had been present for a long time, that many of them were able to benefit from its services, and that it kept providing assistance despite facing funding cuts. They felt other organisations had been quicker to reduce presence and support. They also highlight UNRWA's transparency, compared to other organisations:

> "[At UNRWA] there was real, accurate data for every displaced individual, and all displaced people were able to benefit from all of its services. But there are some other institutions that were giving to a specific group of displaced people, and we don't know or understand on what basis they give to one person and not another."
>
> — Man in Tulkarm, West Bank

The pattern is somewhat different when people are asked specifically to identify the actors they trust the least to act in the best interest of Palestinians. Palestinian

> "All these institutions sugar-coat the harm; there is nothing tangible on the ground from them. There was a glimmer of hope, but now, after the war, it's all just talk and slogans that don't satisfy anyone's hunger.
>
> Woman in Hebron, West Bank

> "I don't put much stock in talk; I prefer to see what these institutions actually deliver on the ground. There used to be a little trust; now it has vanished entirely.
>
> Woman in Hebron, West Bank

> "I've lost trust in them to the point that I sometimes tell myself they're all collaborating with the occupation, and I feel they just collect our data and beg on our behalf while we see nothing.
>
> Woman in Hebron, West Bank

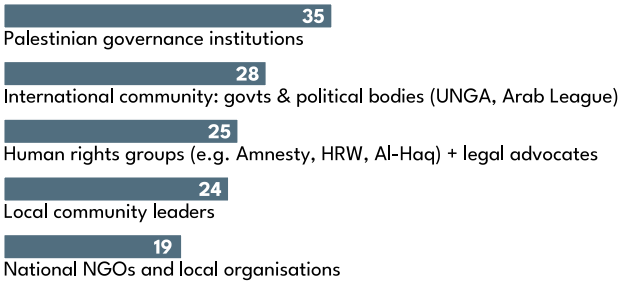
> "We've come to feel like a commodity or a trade for the government and other actors. They beg for money on the backs of the struggling people, and we see nothing from it. That's what has made us determined to remain in need rather than diminish ourselves before any party.
>
> Woman in Hebron, West Bank

governance institutions are most frequently identified, at 35%, followed by international governments and intergovernmental bodies (28%), human rights organisations (25%) and local community leaders (24%). Taken together, the findings point to a significant institutional trust deficit, particularly in relation to Palestinian governance institutions, but also to relatively limited confidence across the broader institutional landscape.

Figure 15:

Who do you trust least to act in the best interest and in support of people in the West Bank (protect and advocate) based on your own experience and observations.

Results in %, n=553



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

The comparatively low levels of trust in Palestinian governance institutions and local community leaders should be considered within the institutional and structural constraints under which Palestinian institutions operate. Fiscal pressures, limited institutional resources, constrained authority, and the wider political environment can restrict the ability of institutions to respond to public needs and expectations.[24] The survey cannot establish the reasons for people's levels of trust, and institutional constraints do not necessarily explain dissatisfaction with performance or representation. Nevertheless, the findings point to a substantial gap between the role Palestinians expect their institutions and leaders to play and the confidence that these actors currently command. This gap represents an important area for strengthening institutional responsiveness, effectiveness and public confidence.

The contrast between international humanitarian organisations and the wider international political community is notable. People appear to distinguish between actors with a visible operational role in providing assistance, services and protection, such as UNRWA, WFP and the Red Cross, and actors associated more closely with the wider political and diplomatic environment, including foreign governments and intergovernmental bodies. This distinction is important given the broader findings on external influence: people can place comparatively greater trust in international humanitarian actors when it comes to service delivery while simultaneously expressing concern about external control of foreign governments over Palestinian decision-making and the limited progress toward self-determination.

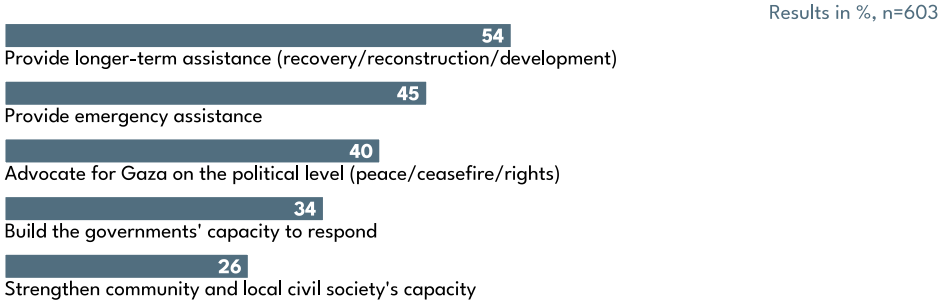
Community expectations clearly extend well beyond service delivery and immediate humanitarian relief. The most frequently identified expectation is longer-term assistance for recovery, reconstruction and development (54%), ahead of emergency assistance (45%). Four in ten (40%) expect international actors to advocate at the political level, including on peace, ceasefire and rights. One-third (34%) expect international actors to help strengthen government capacity, while 26% prioritise strengthening community and local civil-society capacity.

> "In the past we used to see flour being distributed, in real quantities. Now we no longer see any distribution, or know where the aid even goes.
>
> Woman in Hebron, West Bank

[24] Al Shabaka. December 2024. "Palestinian Clearance Revenues: Israel's Tool to Collapse the PA."

Figure 16:

What do you expect from international actors working in support of the West Bank?



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

People we interviewed also shared what they would like people making decisions about Palestine's future to hear. They emphasised the importance of ending the war and occupation as a perquisite to safety and security, alongside the granting of their freedom, rights and justice.

People also stressed the importance of improving economic conditions and employment, support humanitarian aid and social welfare, coupled with an emphasis on education and opportunities for youth, as well as reinforcing governance and leadership within the region.

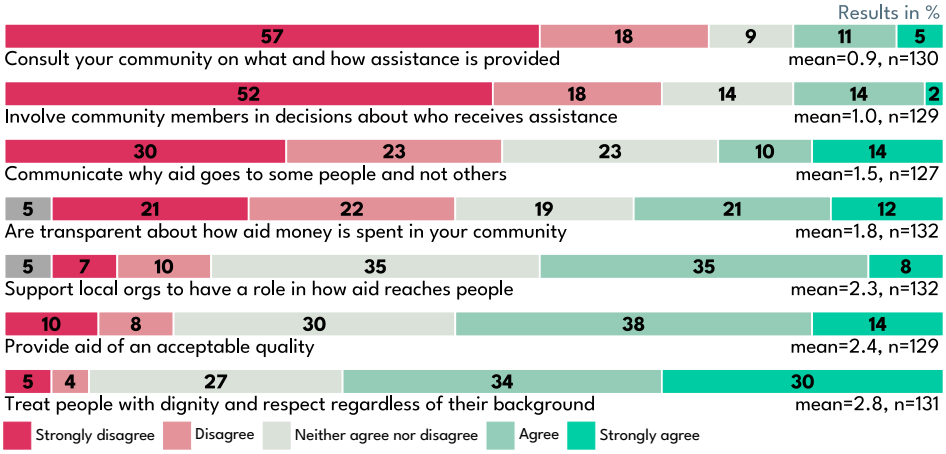
People continue to expect international actors to help address urgent needs out of necessity, but they also look to them to support longer-term recovery and development, political advocacy, independent Palestinian institutions, and safer communities. International engagement is valued for its potential to protect people in the present while strengthening the institutions, capacities and conditions needed for greater Palestinian self-reliance, independence, and agency over time, whether or not that potential is being met.

A minority receive aid, to mixed reviews

The majority (79%) of people we spoke with in the West Bank have not received any kind of aid and support from aid agencies in the last three months. People who have received aid have indicate receiving food assistance (14%), cash assistance (8%), and healthcare, first aid or medicines (7%).[25] People cite receiving this support from mostly UNRWA (36%), international humanitarian organisations (31%), national NGOs (16%), and other sources (12%) such as charities and the diaspora.

Figure 17:

In your experience, do the organisations and authorities responsible for providing support in the West Bank do the following?



Despite the small percentage of people indicating having received some kind of aid and support (21%), people's assessments of aid itself is mixed. A slight majority (54%)

> "I want to ensure security and stability so that we may live a dignified life without relying on foreign aid, and to work towards achieving a just peace.
>
> Woman in Jenin, West Bank

> "I would like them to engage directly with citizens, listening to their grievances, standing up for the Palestinian cause, and enforcing laws to protect Palestine in a way that suits the Palestinian people.
>
> Woman in Nablus, West Bank

> "Work to support young people and build a well-rounded generation that enjoys its rights, such as education and employment Provide excellent infrastructure; our country is the best of its kind, but we need someone to manage it and work for its benefit, not for their own personal gain.
>
> Man in Tulkarm, West Bank

> "They must create job opportunities for people, provide them with genuine support, and take a holistic view of their needs, covering education, healthcare and employment, or create job opportunities for people and do away with anything else.
>
> Man in Hebron, West Bank

[25] Percentages do not add up to 100% as respondents could select multiple options.

agree that humanitarian aid has made a meaningful difference to people's lives in their community. More than half (52%) also agree that aid is designed to strengthen local systems rather than replace them. Survey respondents however do identify significant limitations in how assistance operates. Only 30% feel aid organisations are able to reach the people who need help most.

Focus group participants say aid is not distributed fairly, does not reach those who need it most, and that there is a lack of oversight. They say aid is distributed based on personal connections, known as "wasta".

One woman suggests aid should come from a single source rather than several, presuming that would make it more likely to be properly distributed to meet everyone in need.

> "People come at us hard when we distribute to a specific group. But they don't know, and they can't know things they're not told, like that what reaches us are small quantities compared to the huge need, and at that point we're forced to sort names and give it out first-come, first-served."
>
> — Man representing camp services in Tulkarm, West Bank

Disparity does not always breed resentment. One person said they are happy for others when they receive assistance.

> "When I know my neighbour got a coupon and I didn't, it brings joy and a sense of contentment, because at least it went to someone close to me, someone I know."
>
> — Man in Al-Eizariya, West Bank

While assistance has helped people to meet their needs, it has significantly diminished their dignity. Having to stand in line just to receive an eligibility coupon leaves people with bad feelings. Some displaced people struggle to accept being aid recipients. One person describes aid distributors humiliating people, especially in the Bedouin community.

> "There's a positive impact from assistance at the personal level, and it has made a real difference in meeting our needs as displaced people. But there's also a feeling of helplessness as a family, because these are items that we used to buy ourselves with our own money, and today we've become people who receive them as assistance."
>
> — Man in Tulkarm, West Bank

People call for greater transparency and accountability from humanitarian organisations. Displaced people emphasise the importance of using reliable and trustworthy sources to identify those in need. Women in Hebron call for an accountability and oversight committee, a free complaints hotline, and stronger monitoring of aid distributions. People ask humanitarian organisations to hold regular meetings with displaced communities, clearly explain programmes and eligibility criteria, follow up with recipients, and maintain regular contact to understand how their situation and needs evolve over time.

Concerns about aid do not translate into a majority view that assistance creates dependency. Fifty-eight percent disagree that receiving aid risks making people dependent on external support rather than building local capacity. This aligns with the wider survey finding that households overwhelmingly attribute improvements in their circumstances to their own efforts rather than external support.

> "It's distributed based on who you know, not on need.
>
> Woman in Hebron, West Bank

> "The guard is the thief. Everyone just wants to fill their own pocket, serving the interests of people they know, giving to their own acquaintances so as not to upset them and to stay in everyone's good graces, while we only ever hear about aid, and never actually see it.
>
> Woman in Hebron, West Bank

Figure 18:

The following statements are about aid and its effects. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each, based on your own experience and observations.



The most consequential finding concerns the limits of what aid can achieve. Nearly two-thirds (65%) agree that, even with significant aid, they doubt the situation can be substantially improved. This sits alongside, rather than contradicts, the finding that 54% believe aid makes a meaningful difference.

The distinction is important: helping people meet immediate needs and survive is not the same as transforming the conditions that shape their lives, enabling human development, and allowing them to thrive. Humanitarian assistance can make a meaningful difference by helping households meet essential needs, protecting consumption, sustaining access to critical services, and preventing further deterioration. It cannot create the conditions required for sustainable improvements in wellbeing and human development.

People therefore appear to view aid as valued, necessary and meaningful, but insufficient to transform the conditions shaping their lives. They expect continued emergency and longer-term assistance, while also looking to international actors for political advocacy and investment in Palestinian institutional and community capacity. External assistance is not presented as the foundation of sustainable self-reliance, but as something that can protect lives, preserve capabilities and sustain Palestinian agency through periods of crisis, while helping create the space for longer-term recovery and development. Ultimately, however, translating this agency into sustainable improvements in wellbeing requires broader conditions that enable Palestinians to build secure livelihoods, exercise greater control over their lives and futures, and thrive.

Across these findings, the distinction between support and substitution is critical. People continue to rely overwhelmingly on their own efforts, identify work and productive opportunity as the foundations of dignified livelihoods, and express strong aspirations for greater Palestinian control over decisions affecting their future.

The role expected of international actors is not simply to compensate indefinitely for deteriorating conditions, but to help create and protect the conditions in which Palestinians can sustain livelihoods, exercise agency, and shape their future with greater autonomy and dignity.

> “Receiving this kind of assistance can affect our dignity, and our sense of helplessness in front of our own family members.
>
> Man in Tulkarm, West Bank

> “Put us in the picture on everything you’re planning to do.
>
> Man in Tulkarm, West Bank

5 Gaza: From blockade to survival

Three years into attacks consistent with a genocide, people in Gaza are surviving under extreme constraints, sustained through a combination of household agency, family and community support, humanitarian assistance, and continued adaptation.

People describe lives characterised by insecurity, uncertainty and severe material pressure, as they continue to fulfill family responsibilities, pursue personal goals, mobilise resources and navigate disrupted systems to meet needs.

These findings require careful interpretation. In Gaza, subjective assessments are being made against a baseline of years of systematically imposed structural constraints that hindered the Palestinian economy,[26] that has now been fundamentally altered by conflict, displacement, and the destruction and disruption of livelihoods, infrastructure, and public services. Reporting that a household is "managing," can access a service, or relies on its own resources does not necessarily imply adequate living conditions or economic independence. Similarly, reliance on humanitarian assistance should not automatically be interpreted as dependency or preference. Households are combining multiple sources of support within an environment in which most conventional mechanisms of self-provision have been severely weakened.

Taken as a whole, the Gaza findings on the following pages tell a coherent story. People continue to exercise substantial agency, but they are doing so within an environment that offers increasingly limited opportunities for that agency to change outcomes. Households care for their families, pursue goals, combine resources, navigate humanitarian systems, and maintain social relationships. Yet they do so amid severe psychological strain, insecurity, disrupted services, depleted economic assets, and a livelihood system offering few reliable pathways to income.

This explains several findings that might otherwise appear contradictory. People can rely on humanitarian assistance and remain active agents. They can manage their lives while experiencing severe deprivation. They can trust humanitarian organisations while opposing external control over decisions affecting their future. They can value aid while believing it cannot substantially improve the wider situation. And they can retain family and community solidarity while having progressively fewer material resources through which to support one another.

The distinction between survival and recovery is central. Humanitarian assistance has become indispensable for many households because conventional systems of self-provision have been destroyed or severely weakened for a majority of the population. It can protect lives and preserve capabilities, but it cannot substitute for functioning livelihoods, markets, infrastructure, institutions, safety, and meaningful participation in decisions about the future.

People identify the foundations of sustainable self-reliance: income, economic opportunity, functioning markets, productive assets, safety, and the capacity to influence the systems governing their lives. The central challenge emerging from the Gaza findings is therefore not how to make people more resilient to prolonged humanitarian dependence. It is how to protect people through the present crisis while restoring the conditions in which their already considerable agency can translate into dignity, livelihoods, recovery, and greater Palestinian control over the future.

Everyday life defined by survival, uncertainty, and adaptation

The agency of people in Gaza is sometimes left out of global narratives that focus on attacks, hardship, and deprivation. In a context where everyone we spoke with reported being displaced at least once since October 7, 2023, many people tell us they are struggling but "managing with support from family and community", or "surviving but with no certainty about tomorrow." More than one third describe themselves as dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs (38%) or as feeling unsafe and unable to protect their families (36%). Only 10% characterise their current lives as living with dignity despite the circumstances.

Who we talked to

We spoke with 495 people face-to-face, and 27 people via focus group discussions

Sex

- 49% women (245)
- 51% men (250)

Age

- 32% 18-35 years (159)
- 49% 36-54 years (242)
- 19% 55+ years (94)

Number of times displaced since October 7, 2023

- 19% 1-3 times (92)
- 31% 4-6 times (156)
- 22% 7-9 times (107)
- 28% 10 times or more (138)

Governorate of origin

- 36% Gaza City (180)
- 23% North Gaza (113)
- 23% Khan Yunis (111)
- 11% Rafah (53)
- 7% Deir Al-Balah (36)

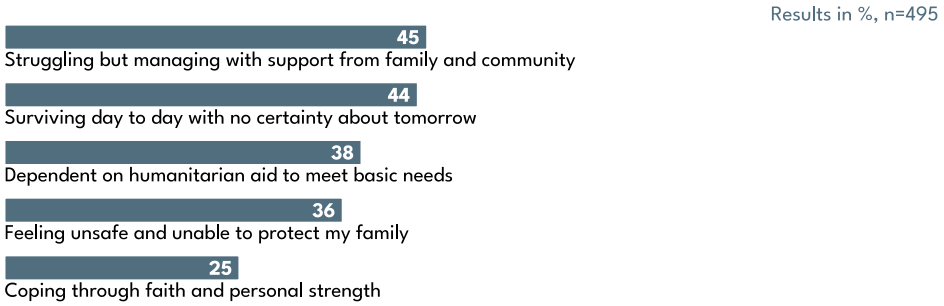
Current location

- 34% Gaza City (166)
- 33% Khan Yunis (161)
- 25% Deir Al-Balah (126)
- 8% North Gaza (42)

[26] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. July 2026. "Developments in the economy of the Occupied PalestinianTerritory."

Figure 19:

In your own words, how would you describe your life right now in Gaza?



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

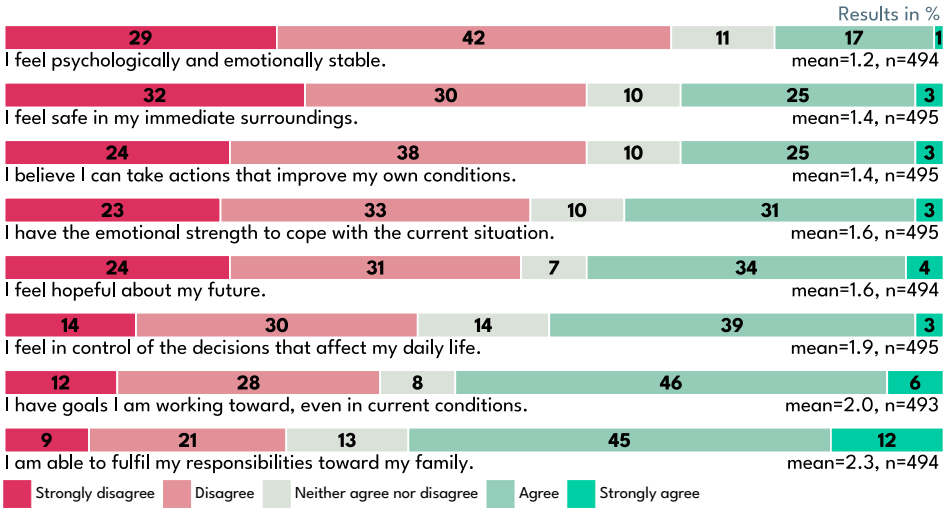
These responses are best understood as different dimensions of the same survival experience. A household may depend on humanitarian assistance for food or other essentials while simultaneously relying on relatives, personal resources, informal income, and continual household decision-making. Participants in focus group discussions described selling household items to meet basic needs, having to get by on debt and credit, and helping each other by hosting displaced family members.

> "From the very start of the war, we hosted displaced relatives from Gaza City and the north. At one point around 50 people from my husband's extended family and relatives were staying in a space of no more than 120m². People had to divide themselves up to sleep, both inside the house and in the yard around it. We suffered from stress, tension, and conflict among the children that affected the adults as well."
>
> — Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

"Managing" does not mean that needs are adequately met, but indicates endurance and continually assembling sufficient resources to sustain everyday life. Perceptions of 'coping' also vary.

Figure 20:

I will now read you a list of statements about your living situation, for each please tell me how much you agree and disagree.



People's assessments of their personal agency show how people are trying to push forward against the odds. More than half say they remain able to fulfill their responsibilities toward their families and continue to pursue goals even under current

Current household size

- 36% have 1 to 5 members (180)
- 39% have 6 to 7 members (190)
- 25% have 8 members or more (125)

Change in household size since October 7, 2023

- 31% have seen their household size decrease (152)
- 27% have seen their household size increase (133)
- 42% have seen no change in their household size (210)

Household composition

- 87% have children within the household (429)
- 50% have chronic illness within the household (248)
- 19% have elderly persons within the household (97)
- 11% have a disability within the household (93)

> "Honestly, we are not coping. We're not coping with the tents, with the heat, with this hard life – that's all a lie. We are not adapting. There is no coping. We are all under constant pressure and just trying to make it bearable for ourselves.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

> "We're lying to each other when we say we're coping. Not one of us is truly okay. This isn't a story of 'coping'. As a person, you can't even sit with your own thoughts. As soon as you finish your responsibilities for the day, you just lie down and fall asleep from exhaustion.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

conditions. Forty-two percent feel in control of decisions affecting their daily lives. Responsibility, purpose, and everyday decision-making have not disappeared. Focus group participants added nuance, describing how they needed to give up future plans:

> "I hold a general nursing degree, I graduated shortly before the war. I had planned to sit the civil-service employment exam, but the war prevented me from doing so. I tried to volunteer at a hospital but was unable to. Studying requires a quiet environment. The household was too noisy, and there was no lighting or internet. Even volunteering to gain experience was not possible. We are waiting for things to improve."
>
> — Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

The limits of this agency are equally visible. With a majority feeling unsafe, only 28% believe they can take actions that improve their own conditions – this shows that while people are doing what they can to take care of their families, the toil and hardship of doing so, or the need to accept lower living standards, feel immovable. Psychological wellbeing is particularly fragile: 71% do not feel psychologically and emotionally stable, while less than half feel that they possess the emotional strength needed to cope with the current situation. Hope remains present among 38%, but a majority (55%) do not feel hopeful about their future.

Focus group participants described how the war has affected them psychologically, and how this impacts their social relations – including having less time to maintain relationships with people as they are too busy with and exhausted from daily survival:

> "Before the war, a person was social. You dealt with workers, employees, tradespeople, and you were rarely without people around you. You actually saw people more than you saw your own family. And then suddenly you find you've lost everything at once. People you loved have passed away, and the home you lived in is gone in an instant. So naturally, this affects you deeply, psychologically, in all your social relationships, and even in the entire way of life you used to have; even if you wanted to live that way now, you simply couldn't."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

At the same time, people describe helping each other but also highlight the limits of generosity under difficult circumstances.

Survival as a collective family effort

Qualitative accounts from Gaza illustrate how putting food on the table has become a collective family undertaking. Children may spend hours waiting in lines for bread or meals from community kitchens, while adolescents search for pieces of wood, plastic and other combustible materials that can be used as fuel for cooking. Women often carry responsibility for preparing whatever food the household can obtain, while men queue for humanitarian assistance, search markets for available and affordable food, or pursue whatever work and income-generating opportunities remain. Children also help secure water, including by waiting for water trucks and carrying water back to the household.

These experiences give practical meaning to the survey findings on agency and self-reliance. Household agency in Gaza is a series of decisions and collective efforts. Food reaching the table may depend simultaneously on humanitarian assistance, community kitchens, market purchases, scarce income, collected fuel, water obtained from a truck, and the unpaid efforts of several family members. Reliance on aid and reliance on oneself are not contradictory. Humanitarian assistance may provide part of what a household needs, while families still carry

> "Everything has changed, in every sense. All our future plans collapsed. I had been planning to buy a car and enrol my children in private schools, but I am now barely able to raise them at all.
>
> Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

> "Now, between carrying water and sheer exhaustion, I don't even have time to ask a friend 'how are you?' I just tell him, 'leave me alone, I need to go fill water.'
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

> "People have been stripped of feeling for others and now only care about those in their immediate circle.
>
> Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

> "Honestly, a person shuts himself off after everything he's seen.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

much of the physical, logistical and emotional work required to turn fragmented resources into a meal.
Focus group participants describe the overwhelming feeling of being responsible for others' survival:

> "I am carrying the full weight of responsibility, from filling fresh water, to filling saline water, to sourcing food, to everything else. I arrive back at the tent exhausted and worn out, and I wake up in the morning to someone shouting: 'Get up, go fill the fresh water'. I am personally responsible for the daily needs of around 50 people."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

This form of coping also reveals the hidden costs of survival. Time that children and adolescents might otherwise spend learning, resting or socialising is redirected toward securing food, water and fuel:

> "Standing in line for the soup kitchen and for water ... these responsibilities and burdens have increased the load placed on children and have robbed them of their childhood."
>
> — Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

Adults devote substantial time to queues, markets and the search for assistance or income; and ordinary household tasks become complex daily operations.

> "We're up at 6 AM, racing for fresh water, then hot water, then heading out to get a bag of bread before it runs out, because the [WFP] programme only puts out bread for an hour before closing. Then we go back out again to look for soup kitchens but they're closed, so we go to other ones, and others still. By 1:30 PM, once we've caught our breath and gone looking for organisations, by 3pm we find them closed. Honestly, getting food from the soup kitchens, you should go and see with your own eyes the scene people go through to get food. Everyone is desperate to eat, and people end up crushing each other, spilling food on themselves. It becomes chaos, and humiliation, sheer humiliation. On top of the war, there's another war we're living through."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Parents step in to teach children at home, if schools or "learning points" are not accessible or sufficient:

> "Whoever designed these learning packets [used at the learning points] did so from behind a desk in the Ramallah ministry and it doesn't suit our situation in Gaza. I took charge of teaching my children myself. I downloaded electronic textbooks and hired a private tutor to teach the official curriculum, but this requires double the time, effort, and money, which isn't available to everyone."
>
> — Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

In Gaza, self-reliance may be less about living independently of assistance than about the extraordinary work families undertake to assemble the different resources required to survive.

> "All the burden now falls on me. My husband cannot go out in the sun because he has a prosthetic eye and a hand disability.
>
> Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

> "The children want an education partly because they want to escape the painful reality around them: carrying water and collecting food from the soup kitchen.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

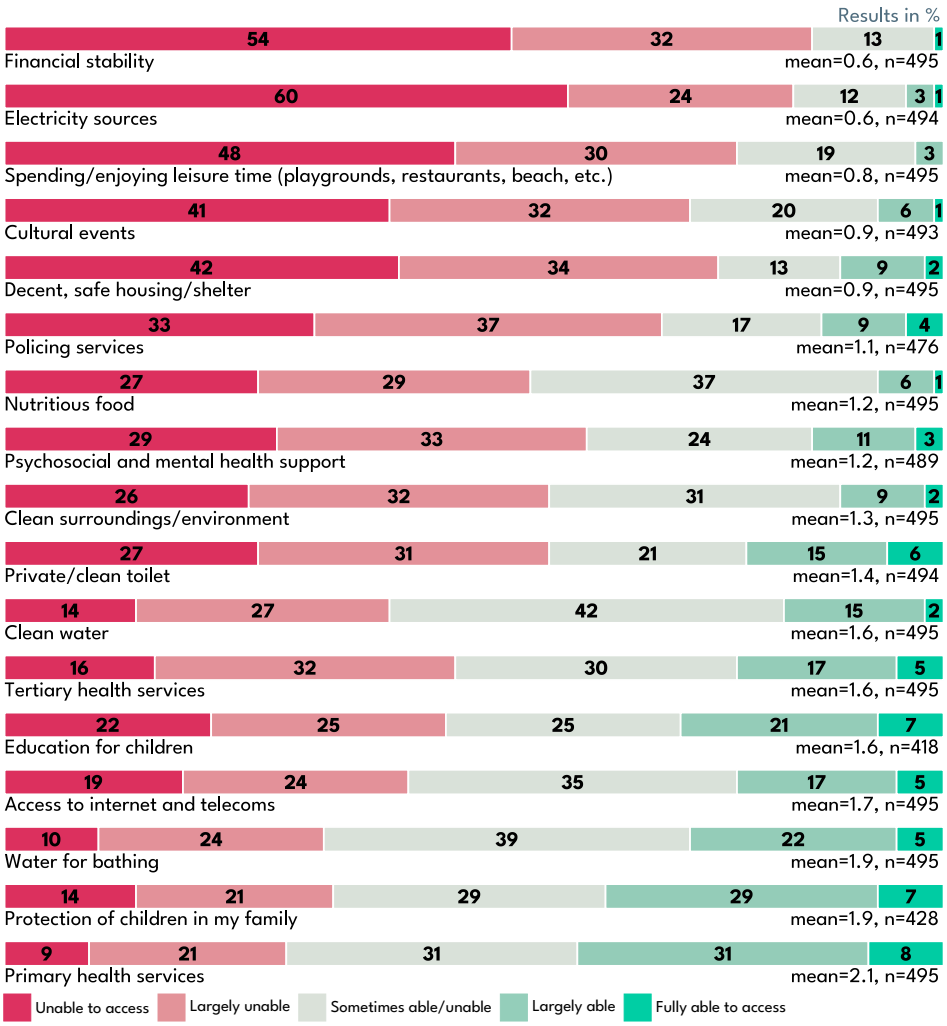
Household service access should not be confused with adequacy

Years of war and attacks have brought the collapse of education, healthcare and the economy, while access to food, water, shelter and other basic necessities has become a daily hurdle.[27] The material conditions within which agency is exercised remain severely constrained. Eighty-six percent report being unable or largely unable to achieve financial stability, 84% report inadequate access to electricity and 76% to decent and safe housing or shelter.

Leisure and cultural life have been curtailed, with 78% reporting inadequate access to leisure opportunities and 73% to cultural events. People explain how the lack of money affects their social relationships, as they cannot afford transportation, gifts or activities.

Figure 21:

For each of the following, please tell me how able your household is to access it.



The consequences of these constraints extend across many areas of everyday life. Participants in focus group discussions told us that limited electricity prevents children and students from studying, as they do not have light in the evenings, and improvised lighting can affect children's eyesight.

> "Our children have begun coming to turn on the flashlight at night. The light affects their eyes and their vision, so we stopped using it. We have had to get used to living with very little light. This is one of the things we have noticed."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

> "Prices are so high that even the smallest items, things for the children, cost at least 70 shekels. So I just end up staying home, it's easier that way.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

[27] Al Jazeera. October 2026. "How three years of Israel's genocidal war have changed Gaza."

Displaced people living in tents described how not having decent housing impacts people's privacy. Teenage girls need to go outside to change clothes, if male relatives are in the tent. The lack of privacy can also lead to tensions between neighbours:

> "Sometimes there are disputes. I am sleeping in my tent and my neighbour is sleeping in his tent, yet I suddenly find myself involved in his affairs."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Constraints extend across other essential dimensions of everyday life. Seventy percent report inadequate access to policing services and 62% to psychosocial and mental health support. More than half report inadequate access to a private and clean toilet (58%) and nutritious food (56%). Access to tertiary healthcare is also limited, with 48% reporting inadequate access.

A displaced man in one of the focus group discussions described what it is like to survive on one meal a day:

> "Today we've come to rely on just one meal a day; whoever eats breakfast can't afford lunch, and whoever eats lunch skips dinner. Anyone with children has no choice but to condition them to just one meal. We too have conditioned our children to a single meal, not by choice but by necessity."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Access to healthcare is hampered by several factors. Facilities are far away and require transportation that many cannot afford. Medicines are not always available and very expensive. Sometimes, access to healthcare depends on knowing the right people:

> "Sometimes the medication is available in the hospital but kept in the storage area and only released to people who have connections. A doctor or someone working inside the hospital can bring antibiotics, painkillers, or IV treatment from the storage area. People even reproach us for receiving medication through personal connections. This is what happens: if you have a connection, you receive treatment; if you do not, you are left without it."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Only 39% are largely or fully able to access primary healthcare, and 27% can access water for bathing. Only a quarter say they can access education for children (28%). Even when accessible, services are not necessarily reliable or adequate. Access may depend on temporary arrangements, humanitarian services, informal alternatives or repeated efforts to navigate disrupted systems.

Going to schools or "learning points" often require children to walk long distances. Many cannot afford the fees, or the basic supplies such as notebooks and pens. To cope, some parents teach children at home.

A household may succeed in obtaining water, food, shelter, healthcare or communications without receiving enough, accessing it consistently, or experiencing anything resembling pre-war standards. Survey results indicate household functioning as precarious rather than absent: people continue to secure some essential goods and services, but access can no longer be assumed.

Perceptions of change reinforce this picture. Eighty percent believe their safety is deteriorating, while 77% perceive deterioration in their ability to attain a dignified life and 75% in surrounding community conditions. Seventy-one percent report deteriorating prospects for a self-reliant livelihood, 69% worsening household living conditions and 68% deterioration in their personal lives. Coping is taking place not within a stabilising environment, but one that most continue to perceive as worsening.

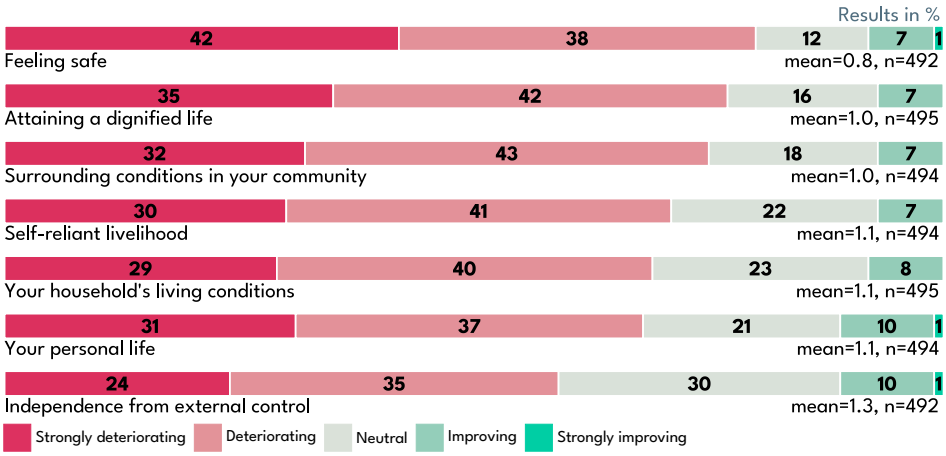
> "A woman in the camp went into labour and experienced bleeding. If she had not had a relative working at the hospital who was able to arrange an ambulance, the ambulance would not have come.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

> "Every day, the children are sent away [from the learning point], and we have to tell them, 'Please let them come back; we cannot afford to pay.' It is humiliating for the child.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

> "To avoid the shortage of stationery and the inability to keep buying notebooks, I bought a whiteboard and chalk and started using it to teach my children.
>
> Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

Figure 22:

Do you believe that the following are improving or deteriorating?



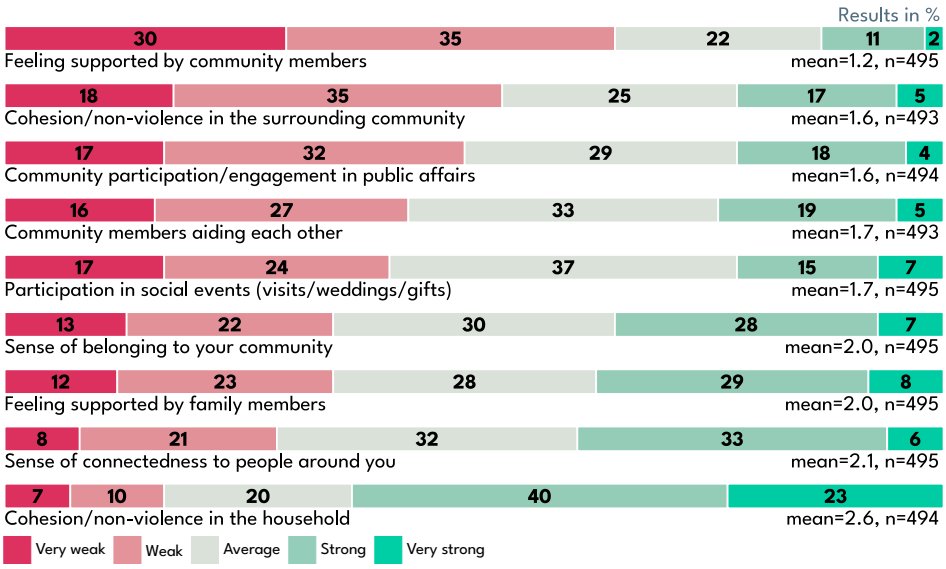
Social bonds persist, but solidarity is harder to translate into material support

Family and social relationships remain vastly important resources, but their strength varies depending how close they are to the household. Sixty-three percent describe cohesion and non-violence within their household as strong or very strong. Beyond the household, just 37% report strong extended family support, while 35% report a strong sense of community belonging and 39% strong connectedness to those around them. Participants in focus group discussions also described how the challenging environment affects relationships within their households:

> "To this day I feel like I'm dreaming. I don't believe this is reality, and I keep telling myself: this isn't real, what's happening doesn't make sense. This has also affected my relationship with my wife and children. I've become an irritable person about everything. Even now, we still can't quite believe we're living in tents; even the word "tent" has become hard for us to say."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Figure 23:

How strong or weak are the following in your household and surrounding community?



Community solidarity was reaching its limits in previous research rounds, as people told

> "We've heard of problems escalating to divorce and separation as a result of pressure and lack of privacy. While walking down the street I would often hear the sounds of family disputes.
>
> Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

us they continued to try to help their communities but their efforts were weakening or lessening due to lack of resources and exhaustion.[28] Nearly two-thirds (65%) now describe support from community members as weak or very weak, while 43% report weak mutual assistance between community members. Forty-nine percent describe community participation and engagement in public affairs as weak, and 41% report weak participation in social events. Wider community cohesion is also divided, with 53% assessing it as weak compared with 22% who describe it as strong. During group discussions, a woman described how difficult living conditions have led her to isolate herself from the community:

> "A person loses their sense of safety. Imagine living in a tent next to people you don't know, with no privacy, exposed to theft. I had a sack of flour stolen during the famine. So I chose to isolate myself and live in a place far from everyone, opposite an Israeli position near the "yellow zone," even though it is currently unsafe there. There has been gunfire, and someone in a neighbouring tent was wounded and no one went to check on or help them."
>
> — Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

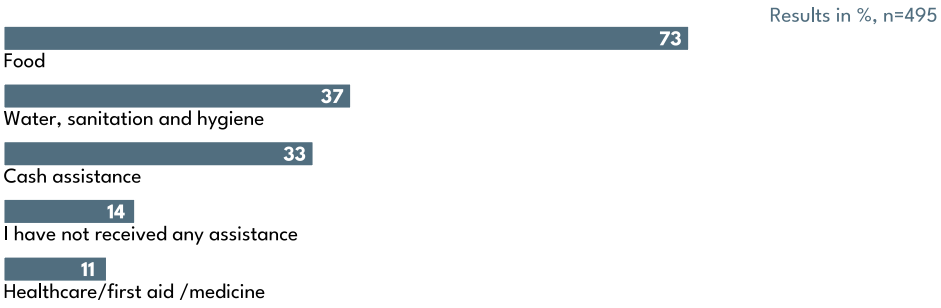
These findings do not indicate the disappearance of solidarity. Providing assistance to others requires resources, mobility, stable social networks, and functioning spaces for collective activity. When households themselves face acute material pressure, their capacity to convert social bonds into financial or practical assistance is inevitably constrained.

Humanitarian aid valued as integral to survival, but no substitute for livelihoods

Humanitarian assistance now occupies a substantial place within household survival strategies. Eighty-six percent report receiving at least one form of assistance during the previous three months. Food assistance is by far the most widespread, reaching 73%, followed by water, sanitation and hygiene assistance (37%) and cash (33%). Healthcare, first aid or medicine was received by just 11%, while 14% report receiving no assistance at all.

Figure 24:

What type of assistance has your household directly received from aid agencies during the last three months?



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

Among aid recipients, 88% identify international humanitarian organisations, including UN agencies, WFP, INGOs and the Red Cross, as the source from which they received the most support. Other provider categories account for much smaller shares.

[28] Ground Truth Solutions. September 2025. "'Save what remains of Gaza.' Community perspectives on aid, survival and humanity during the genocide."

Figure 25:

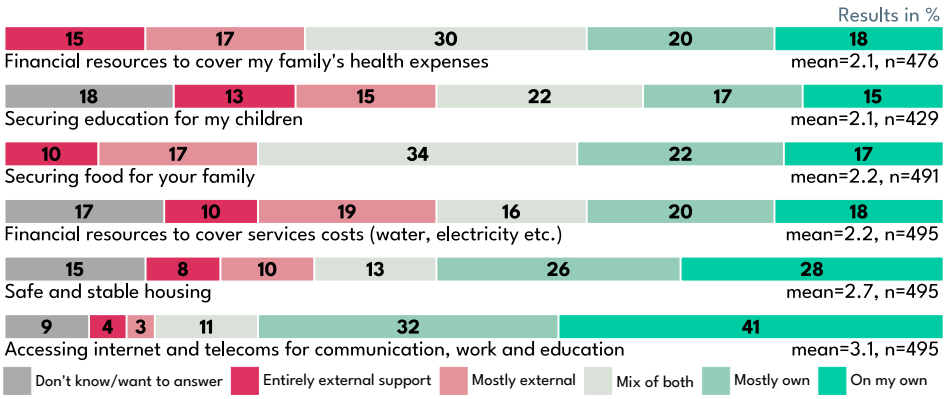
Who have you received the most support from in the last three months?



Yet humanitarian assistance forms only one part of a much wider survival economy. Households combine external assistance with their own resources in different proportions depending on the need.[29]

Figure 26:

For each of the following, please tell me whether this is something you manage on your own (with your own resources), with external support (international, government, other external sources), or a mix of both?



Seventy-three percent report primarily managing internet and telecommunications through their own resources, and 54% report primarily managing safe and stable housing themselves. For food, 39% rely primarily on their own resources, 27% primarily or entirely on external assistance and 34% on a combination of both. Health expenses show a similarly mixed pattern. When assistance is insufficient, several people report having to rely on debt and credit to get by.

> "The assistance lasts me 18 or 19 days, and the rest of the month I get by on debt and credit from the shops, and I still need the soup kitchen. When the soup kitchen closed about three months ago, it hit us hard."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

In a focus group discussion, a man described what it looks like to manage solely on his own resources:

> "My son stands in line at the soup kitchen every day; and the soup kitchen is far away. I stand in line for water every morning, the same routine, every day, and the same goes for bread. When it comes to lighting a fire, I have to collect nylon, plastic, or paper from the streets just so we can get by. I collect everything myself. We have to do this just to survive. Without assistance, nobody looks at us, and there's no money at all."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

[29] UN OCHA. June 2026. "Humanitarian Situation Report | 19 June 2026."

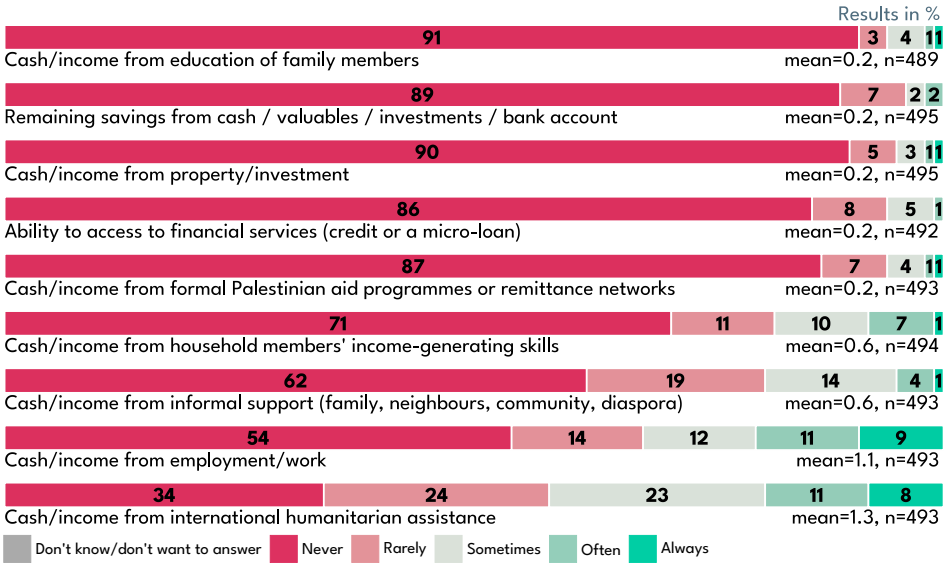
These findings demonstrate why self-reliance and humanitarian reliance should not be treated as opposites, but rather demand smarter strategies. A household may rely on humanitarian food assistance while using its own resources for communications, supplementing assistance through informal income, drawing on family networks and continually deciding how scarce resources are allocated. Agency can therefore operate through, around and alongside humanitarian assistance. People say that they need humanitarian assistance now to become self-reliant in the future, and restore feelings of dignity.

Equally important, responsibility for meeting a need does not mean possessing adequate resources to meet it. More than half of those surveyed may report primarily managing their own shelter, for example, while 76% simultaneously report inadequate access to decent and safe housing.

The livelihood data reveal why this distinction matters. Conventional sources of household economic security are largely absent.

Figure 27:

At the present time, how consistently do the following sources contribute to your household's dignified livelihood?



Around nine in ten people report no contribution to their livelihood of cash/income from education of family members (91%), property or investments (90%), remaining savings and financial assets (89%), formal Palestinian assistance and remittance networks (87%), or access to credit and microfinance (86%). Seventy-one percent report no contribution from potential income-generating household skills. In focus group discussions, participants described how they lost livelihoods and property, and their independence, due to the war.

> "Before the war I owned a carpentry workshop. I used to keep my money in the bank, go and say "I want 1,000 shekels," take it, and put it in a drawer, and my daughter would take out whatever she needed. Today, I can't manage to find even a single shekel for my child, there isn't even small change. There is simply no comparison between our situation now and before. We used to live in paradise, and now we're at the bottom of hell."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Employment remains the strongest conventional livelihood source, yet as Gaza's economy has been devastated by the war, with the destruction of businesses and local industries families are left with little income and sharply reduced purchasing power[30], whereas 54% of people we spoke with report that income from work never contributes to their household's dignified livelihood, while only 20% say it contributes often or always.

> "We want to depend on ourselves and reduce our dependence on assistance, but this does not mean that we do not need support now. If we had a genuine choice, we would choose cash assistance because it provides more flexibility and variety. We have dignity and prefer to work with our own hands.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

> "My life has changed completely compared to before the war. We used to rely on a monthly salary, but now I depend entirely on assistance, soup kitchens, or support from family and relatives, with no fixed monthly income.
>
> Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

[30] Al Jazeera. October 2026. "Gaza changed after three years of Israel's genocidal war."

The social fabric has also been stretched thin, as reciprocal support among households has largely collapsed, [31] people report that informal support from family, neighbours, communities or the diaspora provides minimal support (5%), while 62% report that this never contributes to their household's dignified livelihood, largely due to liquidity shortages, and cash becoming a commodity in Gaza's survival economy.[32] A displaced man during focus group discussions mentioned that support from the diaspora was there in the beginning of the war, but became absent after a while due to Isarel's restrictions.

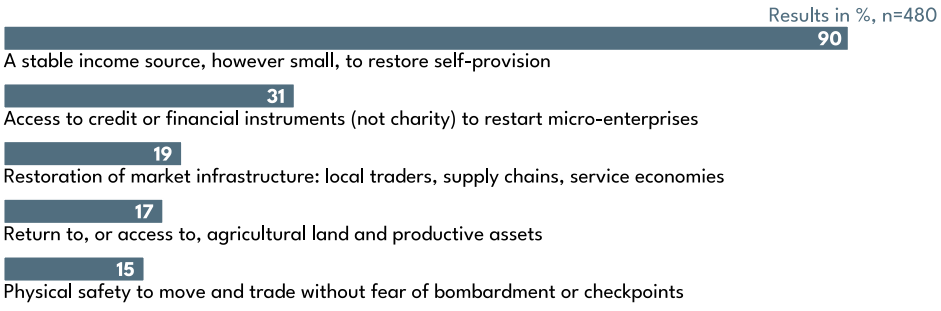
> "People from the diaspora stood by us at the beginning of the war and grieved for us, but after Israel imposed laws and restrictions on them, they stopped acknowledging us. Their allegiance to Israel became stronger than their allegiance to Palestinians. They stopped wanting to know us. At the start of the war, they used to send us money, but once Israel tightened restrictions on them, they stopped everything, because protecting their own interests became more important."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

International humanitarian assistance occupies a distinctive position within this depleted livelihood landscape, having become more economically relevant than many conventional household buffers precisely as those alternatives have weakened.

People are clear about what they believe would allow them to move beyond this situation. Ninety percent identify a stable source of income as something that would help restore self-provision, far ahead of access to credit or financial instruments to restart micro-enterprises (31%), restoration of markets and supply chains (19%), access to agricultural land and productive assets (17%), and physical safety to move and trade (15%).

Figure 28:

In your opinion, what kind of aid/support/services would help you become self-reliant (live without help in the future)?



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

People ask aid providers to rethink the way aid is provided, to better contribute to self-reliance.

> "Do not just give people a fish; teach them how to fish. Think about development projects that allow people to become self-reliant. For example, every area could have its own bakery. Instead of depending on one WFP bakery or one temporary fuel supply, each area could have a functioning one with fuel and workers. This would provide bread, create jobs, and reduce dependence on a single distribution system. There should also be safe spaces for women, children, students, and older people. These spaces should allow people to sit, talk, study, play, and change their surroundings in safety. The camps should be treated as protected and safe areas, with the involvement of relevant international and human-rights organisations, so that civilians can live with greater safety and dignity."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

> "Change the way of thinking, and think outside the box. The war has destroyed people's businesses, projects, and factories, and has set people back 100 years. In other words, instead of providing aid worth USD 20 or USD 80, provide diverse project opportunities. Shift from a purely relief-based role to a developmental role.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

[31] Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN). December 2025. "Beyond survival: why cash is key to Gaza's recovery."

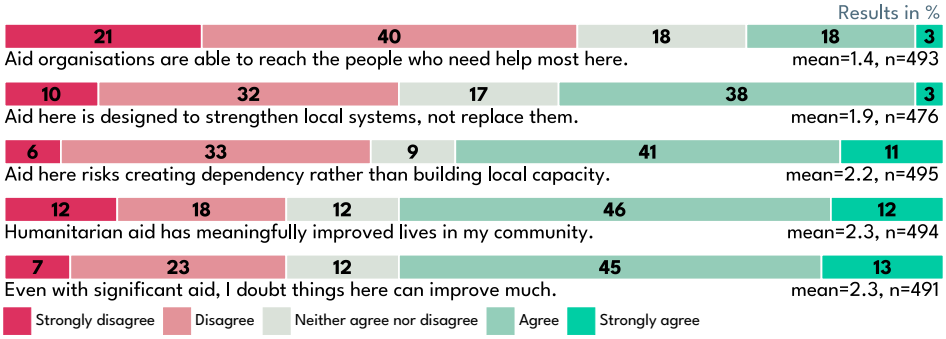
[32] The New Humanitarian. February 2025. "'Cash became a commodity': The liquidity crisis compounding suffering in Gaza."

The pathway toward self-reliance requires a realistic income, employment opportunities, and safety. The central challenge is consequently not to reduce reliance on aid in isolation, but to restore the conditions under which such reliance becomes less necessary.

People's assessments of humanitarian assistance reveal a nuanced picture of necessity, appreciation and dissatisfaction. A majority (58%) agree that humanitarian aid has made a meaningful difference to people's lives in their communities. Yet only 21% believe organisations are reaching those who need assistance most, while 61% disagree.

Figure 29:

The following statements are about aid and its effects. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each, based on your own experience and observations.



In focus groups discussions, participants indicated perceiving the aid system as unfair and difficult to understand, for example when it comes to targeting criteria.

> "There's no fairness in the system. For example, you'll find WFP providing cash codes to a married couple for three consecutive months, while a family of 12 gets nothing. Their criteria are inconsistent and seemingly random, and we don't understand how they operate. UNRWA's criteria, at least, are understandable, but WFP's criteria are unclear and confusing. For example, if you don't update your data every month, you don't receive anything, along with other issues related to communicating with them."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

The lack of transparent criteria can be easily perceived as favouritism:

> "Organisations should avoid favouritism between areas. People in southern areas and people whose homes were destroyed should not be excluded from projects simply because a project is limited to another area. Projects should be based on transparent needs assessments."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Among aid recipients, the strongest concerns relate to participation and accountability. Eighty percent report that organisations and decision makers do not involve community members in decisions about who receives assistance, and the same proportion report inadequate consultation regarding what assistance is provided and how. Sixty-eight percent report inadequate communication about why assistance reaches some people and not others, while 67% perceive insufficient transparency regarding how aid resources are spent.

> "There is no fairness in aid distribution. A person supporting just one family member is treated the same as someone supporting a family of 10.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Figure 30:

In your experience, do the organisations and authorities responsible for providing support in Gaza do the following?



People ask aid actors to engage with them more directly, and to better adapt assistance to their needs. They suggest regular field visits to tents and displacement areas to see people's real conditions. They also ask aid providers to better listen to and communicate with people – e.g. through camp representatives.

> "There should be a clear way to communicate with camp representatives. Each area or group of camps should have a central office where residents and community representatives can submit complaints and get responses. There should be a direct hotline and a physical complaints office. If someone submits a complaint, the organisation should provide a response within a defined period, like 72 hours. Organisations should also organise regular meetings with camp representatives, every three or six months, to review problems, criteria, and the implementation of assistance. Eligibility criteria should be published clearly so people know what applies to them, what documents are required, and why a household has or has not been selected."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

> "Attention needs to be paid to the quality of assistance and to understanding people's actual needs, with transparency in the criteria, genuine engagement and consultation with people, and delivery points located close to where people live. People should also be treated with dignity. Everyone stands in line for distribution, and problems and chaos arise, and some staff behave rudely, with no oversight over them. There's no point filing complaints. No one listens to us, so we need a direct hotline and a complaints office."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Experiences of direct delivery are somewhat more positive. Forty-three percent agree that people are treated with dignity and respect. Assessments of assistance quality are more mixed, with a large neutral middle.

Focus group participants shared many examples of how much trouble they go through to receive assistance – racing from one place to the next, standing in long lines with several family members, chaotic and dangerous scenes during distributions – and how these contribute to the feeling of humiliation.

> "Humanitarian organisations should form dedicated field teams that visit the camps and speak directly with people. They should follow up on people's conditions instead of relying only on old registration data.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

"Even the assistance we get from the World Food Programme, we practically lose our minds trying to get the aid or the coupon from them. The assistance has of course stopped, and for the World Food Programme we're constantly chasing connections, going back and forth. I now get it from the supermarket, and I pay 40 shekels for transport. I have to register every month, and if I miss it, I lose it. As for the cash codes or vouchers, I haven't received any."

— Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

"For bread, we now search for supermarkets that work with the World Food Programme. We race each other every morning just to get a bag of bread. I have seven household members, so I need two bags not one. I take one of my daughters with me to stand in line and get an additional bag at three shekels. I even explain to them that we need both bags and that we're not reselling them, and they tell me they're just following a set distribution system."

— Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

One man described having to sell part of the assistance in order to pay for transportation costs back from the distribution point:

"For the assistance I do get, I make the rounds of every organisation to try to get help, and I walk to the Al-Qudra supermarket. I walk there on foot, and on the way back I pay 30 shekels [for transport] so I can bring the coupon items (flour and oil); I sell part of it just so I can get back to the tent and pay for transport."

— Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Sometimes, people need personal connections to receive assistance.

"The services [such as psychosocial support] depend on who is present and who has connections. If someone has a connection with an international organisation and lives in our camp, services may be brought to that camp. Otherwise, they do not come. The people who receive these services are often those who are able to find them and bring them to their camp. There is no kindergarten in our camp for the children."

— Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

People often described that the quantity is not adapted to the household size, and often of poor quality.

"We judge assistance according to the number of people in the household and the household's actual needs. For example, if I receive a cash code worth 1,200 shekels, I calculate how to divide it. I might tell my wife: "Set aside 200 shekels for vegetables; manage with that and do not expect anything extra." We also need money for meat, a gas cylinder, and medicine. The gas cylinder may cost 100 shekels, and medicine may cost 200 shekels. The pharmacy has become a monthly expense, just like a supermarket. These expenses must be taken into account when deciding whether assistance is enough."

— Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

"Basically, if you have connections, you get the cash codes [from a UN agency].

Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

"Yesterday, we received a food parcel intended for one person. I swear that some of the cans of beans and chickpeas had already been opened or had been left in the sun and spoiled. People throw these items away. There is a bakery nearby that uses the excess rice and lentils as fuel. This shows that the assistance is not always reaching people in a useful form."

— Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Finally, aid sometimes misses the mark, and can even become a burden if not adapted to people's needs:

"An organisation came to provide health education and said that it would distribute hygiene parcels if supplies became available through the crossing. They spent about half an hour going around the camp and providing a health-education session. However, there was no real response from the camp because it was only talk, and nothing tangible was provided. People asked, 'How can you tell us to wash our hands and bathe properly when you have not provided us with soap or water?' We already know about hygiene. If you come every day for ten days just to give lectures, people will ask why they should attend. They are tired of lectures without practical assistance."

— Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

"There is also assistance that we are forced to accept. For example, if I receive a WFP parcel containing beans, rice, and lentils, I may already have those things at home and may not need them. I may need financial assistance, a mattress, blankets, or a water container instead. Organisations should look at each person's actual needs, especially after displacement. Some people sell parts of the parcel because they need cash, because they are afraid rodents will destroy the food, or because the parcel takes up space inside the tent and becomes a burden. This does not mean that people do not need assistance; it means that the type of assistance does not always match their needs."

— Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

"Assistance helped people get through the famine and served as a lifeline, but afterward it sometimes became a burden, because it piles up inside the tent and requires spending money just to buy large storage containers, since rodents and rats otherwise destroy it. Also, food products have since become more diverse and available in the market – vegetables and fruit, for example – meaning that assistance was really only meant to solve a temporary crisis."

— Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

People call for aid to be more transparent, with selection criteria clearly explained and rigorous monitoring and follow-up mechanisms in place to ensure that these criteria are applied consistently. They also call for accessible hotlines or other feedback mechanisms to report problems, and for organisations to continuously assess people's priorities and needs to ensure that assistance and services reach those most in need.

Perceptions of dependency require particular care. Fifty-two percent agree that receiving aid risks making people dependent on external support rather than building local capacity. What emerges is therefore a form of structural reliance: external assistance becomes increasingly necessary where alternative systems of livelihood and provision have weakened.

"

The food we get isn't enough, and we eat it against our will just to survive.

Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

This interpretation is reinforced by an apparent tension in people's assessments. While 58% believe humanitarian assistance makes a meaningful difference, 58% simultaneously doubt that the situation can be substantially improved even with significant aid. These findings are not contradictory. They distinguish between aid's ability to affect people's immediate lives and its capacity to transform the conditions shaping those lives.

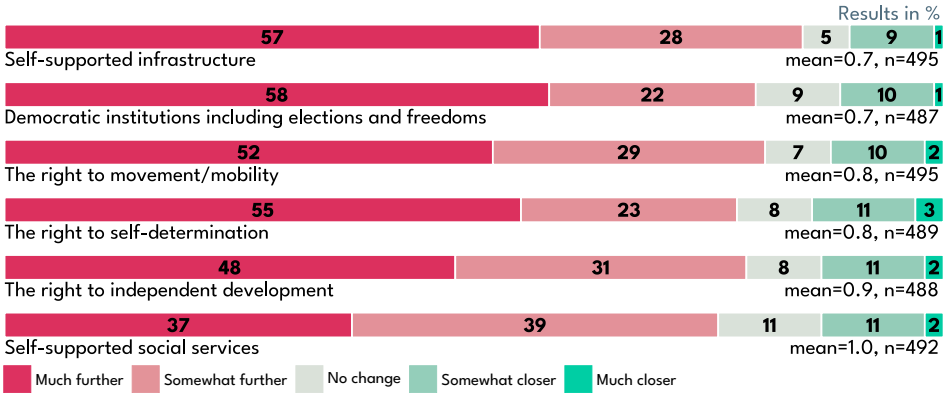
> "Assistance is not regular or transparent. It may be compulsory because people have no other option, but it is not a stable way of living. If the war ends and people can return to their work, they want to work rather than continue depending on aid."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Trust gap inseparable from wider context

Most people believe Palestinian society is moving further from every dimension of collective autonomy assessed. Eighty-five percent believe it is moving further from self-supported infrastructure, 81% from the right to movement and mobility, 80% from democratic institutions and freedoms, 79% from independent development and 78% from self-determination. Seventy-six percent perceive movement further from self-supported social services.

Figure 31:

The following relate to Palestinian society at large. For each of the following, please tell me whether you feel Palestinian society is moving closer to or farther from achieving it?

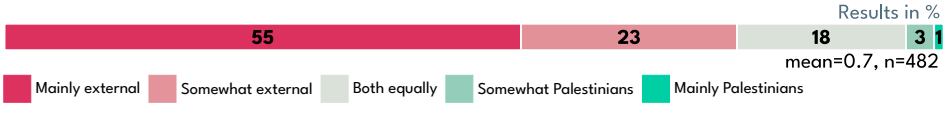


Concerns extend well beyond immediate humanitarian deprivation. They perceive deterioration in the physical, economic, institutional, and political foundations through which Palestinian society could sustain itself.

Perceptions of decision-making power are particularly stark. Seventy-eight percent believe policy and decisions affecting people's lives in Gaza are mainly or somewhat driven by external actors, including 55% who regard them as mainly externally driven. Only 1% perceive decision-making as predominantly Palestinian. Similarly, 84% report that people in Gaza are rarely or not at all involved in decisions about their future, including reconstruction, governance, and the forms of support they receive; only 4% report involvement to some or to a large extent.

Figure 32:

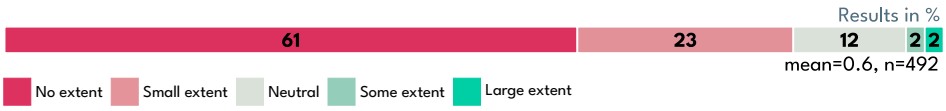
In your view, how much is policy and decision-making about people's lives in Gaza driven by Palestinians themselves or external actors?



> "When assistance arrives, it is usually lentils, pasta, or canned goods. People are exhausted and tired of receiving the same items repeatedly.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Figure 33:

To what extent are people in Gaza involved in decisions about their future (including reconstruction, governance, and the kind of support they receive)?

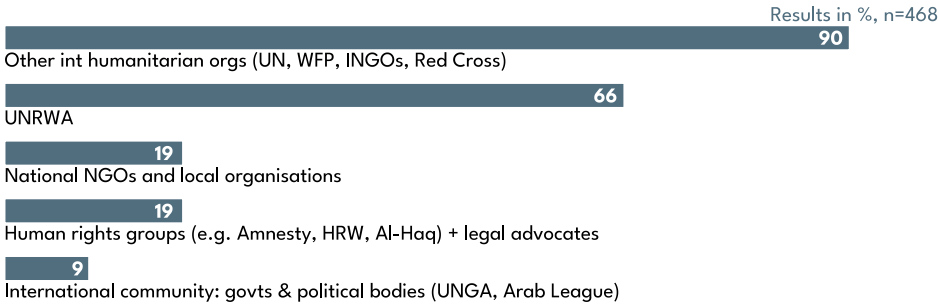


These findings highlight a further distinction between agency and power. Individuals continue to make decisions, care for families, mobilise resources, and pursue goals. But they perceive little influence over the structures governing reconstruction, assistance, economic recovery, and political life.

Trust reflects this institutional landscape. International humanitarian organisations including UNRWA are by far the most frequently trusted actors, even though some people perceive a decline in UNRWA's role over the past year due to funding cuts:

Figure 34:

Who do you trust most to act in the best interest and in support of people in Gaza (protect and advocate) based on your own experience and observations.



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

Only 9% identify the wider international community of governments and intergovernmental bodies among those they trust most. People therefore distinguish sharply between international actors providing immediate humanitarian assistance and the wider international political system.

Qualitative insights illustrate this skepticism of the international political system:

> "The international community sides with the powerful, and we are the victims. Palestine has become a bargaining chip, something people trade on and use to climb over others' backs."
>
> — Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

At the same time, local community leaders are the most frequently identified among those trusted least (49%), followed by Palestinian governance institutions (43%). They are perceived as corrupt, practicing nepotism and favouritism.

> "In the past, UNRWA used to provide financial assistance and other important services to families, but after the restrictions and limitations imposed on it, its role has become very limited, which has had a clear impact on people's lives and needs, especially given the difficult conditions they're living through.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

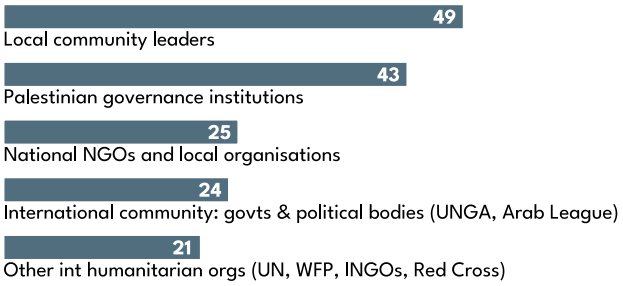
> "They [the international community] played no role, and we were always the weakest party – even when they made decisions, those decisions were never enforced or heard, such as peace council resolutions and the like; no country was able to do anything meaningful in our favour, such as boycotts or support for our cause.
>
> Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

> "There is favouritism and nepotism. A local leader may represent his own family rather than the wider community. A person who calls himself an initiator or community representative may take care of his relatives first. These people should be held accountable.
>
> Man in Khan Younis, Gaza

Figure 35:

Who do you trust least to act in the best interest and in support of people in Gaza (protect and advocate) based on your own experience and observations.

Results in %, n=468



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

Local leaders are also at times perceived as being disconnected from their communities, which hampers their ability to accurately assess community needs.

> "There are shortcomings in the health sector, in fund transfers, and in corruption, because there's no oversight in this area, including the issue of corrupt traders, since traders now manipulate the market with no oversight over who grants trading permits. Leaders also don't go out among the people to understand their suffering and make decisions accordingly. They are disconnected from the public, as shown by the education file, when they created learning packets that are completely unsuited to children's needs. All of this reflects a lack of awareness of what's actually happening, so leaders need to go out among the people to understand the suffering directly, with follow-up on those working in the field."
>
> — Woman in Deir al-Balah, Gaza

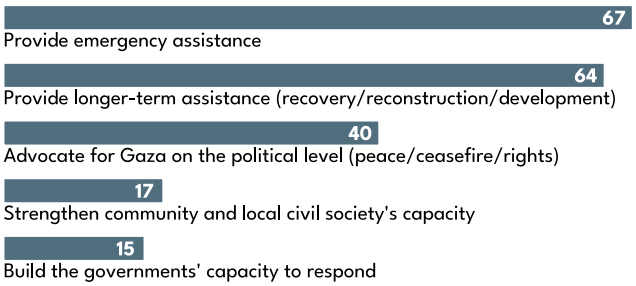
These findings should not simply be interpreted as a preference for international over Palestinian institutions. Trust is being expressed within an environment in which international humanitarian organisations control or channel much of the assistance available to households while Palestinian institutions and local structures have considerably less capacity to provide material support or influence wider outcomes. Trust under these conditions reflects experience, resources, and institutional capacity, as well as legitimacy.

Expectations of international actors reinforce this complexity. Emergency assistance remains the leading expectation (67%), but is closely followed by longer-term recovery, reconstruction and development assistance (64%). Forty percent expect political advocacy on peace, ceasefire and rights, while smaller shares identify strengthening community and civil-society capacity (17%) and government capacity (15%).

Figure 36:

What do you expect from international actors working in support of Gaza?

Results in %, n=495



Note: Percentages in the graph do not equal 100% as respondents could choose multiple options

Focus group participants also highlighted the ask for longer term and more sustainable solutions, starting with the end of the war, which they say is needed so that they can stop focusing purely on survival and meeting immediate needs. Next, they ask for the crossings to be opened so that goods can enter, and for people to return home to rebuild their lives. They want aid actors to help strengthen the local economy, invest in education and health services, and provide a safety net for vulnerable people like older people, people with disabilities and others who cannot work.

People's expectations span survival, recovery and political action. International support is expected because it is indispensable under current conditions, but the longer-term aspiration reflected across the research is movement toward circumstances in which Palestinians can sustain livelihoods, rebuild institutions and exercise greater control over their lives.

6 Gaza and the West Bank: Different realities, shared constraint on Palestinian agency

The findings from Gaza and the West Bank should not be read as a comparison of which population is more vulnerable, more resilient, or more dependent on assistance. The two contexts differ fundamentally in their material conditions, institutional environment and the reference points against which people assess their lives. The findings reveal a clear, common underlying pattern: Palestinians continue to exercise considerable agency in sustaining their households and families, even while they have progressively less control over the wider economic, institutional and political conditions shaping their lives and future. It is this agency, and not narratives of need and deprivation, that must be harnessed in planning for Palestine's future.

Different baselines shape how people understand their lives

In the West Bank, 50% describe themselves as surviving day to day with no certainty about tomorrow, compared with 43% in Gaza. Meanwhile, 45% in both locations describe themselves as struggling but managing with support from family and community. Taken without context, these results could create the impression that experiences of insecurity and survival are comparable, or even more pronounced in the West Bank.

The wider findings demonstrate why such an interpretation would be inappropriate. Subjective assessments are made relative to profoundly different objective realities and expectations. In Gaza, the reference point for what constitutes "managing" has been transformed by extensive displacement, destruction, livelihood disruption, and dependence on humanitarian systems for basic needs. Indeed, 38% of survey respondents in Gaza explicitly describe themselves as dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs, compared with only 6% in the West Bank. Ten per cent in Gaza describe themselves as living with dignity despite the circumstances, compared with 16% in the West Bank.

In the West Bank, households retain considerably greater access to housing, electricity, water and other basic services, yet face deteriorating economic conditions, mobility constraints, and uncertainty about whether existing livelihoods, services and institutions can continue to function. The findings capture different positions along trajectories of insecurity and deterioration, rather than a common objective standard of welfare.

Agency persists in both contexts, but means different things

Across both Gaza and the West Bank, people resist a simple characterisation as passive recipients of circumstances or assistance. Family responsibility, personal effort and household decision-making remain prominent, while people consistently identify their own actions and resources as important to sustaining everyday life.

Yet what self-reliance requires differs substantially between the two contexts. In the West Bank, households overwhelmingly report managing food, housing, utilities and communications primarily through their own resources. This reflects a household economy that, despite severe pressures, continues to operate substantially through income, expenditure and existing assets and services.

In Gaza, self-reliance is much more fragmented. Households combine humanitarian assistance, remaining income, family support, market purchases and continual practical adaptation. Qualitative accounts illustrate how an apparently simple household outcome such as preparing a meal can require children to queue for bread or water, adolescents to search for fuel, adults to seek assistance or available work, and family members to combine these resources into food for the household. Agency in Gaza is often expressed through the organisation of survival itself.

Reliance on humanitarian assistance does not imply an absence of agency, just as reliance on one's own resources does not necessarily imply economic security. In both contexts, the survey points to a difference between who carries responsibility for sustaining everyday life and whether the conditions exist for that responsibility to translate into sustainable self-reliance.

The strongest convergence between Gaza and the West Bank appears when people

look beyond immediate coping toward what would allow them to become sustainably self-reliant. In both contexts, stable income overwhelmingly emerges as the central requirement: 90% in Gaza and 77% in the West Bank identify a stable source of income as most important to future self-reliance.

People also identify other criteria that would support them to become self-reliant, such as access to finance, productive assets, functioning markets, mobility and physical safety. The precise constraints differ between Gaza and the West Bank, but the underlying message is similar: people do not primarily lack the desire or capacity to provide for themselves; they lack sufficient enabling conditions within which that capacity can operate sustainably.

The findings suggest an important distinction between coping through one's own efforts and sustainable self-reliance. Households may demonstrate extraordinary capacity to manage scarcity, without possessing the economic security required to escape it.

Humanitarian assistance can be essential without being transformative

The role of humanitarian assistance differs considerably between the two contexts. In Gaza, aid has become embedded within household survival strategies, with 86% receiving assistance during the previous three months and food assistance alone reaching 73% of those surveyed. In the West Bank, humanitarian assistance plays a much smaller role in everyday livelihoods.

People in both locations distinguish between the immediate value of assistance and its capacity to change their wider circumstances. Aid can help households consume food, access services, and withstand shocks without restoring employment, mobility, safety, productive assets, or institutional capacity.

This distinction is especially important in Gaza. Reliance on humanitarian assistance expressed in community preferences should not be interpreted as an aspiration for continued humanitarian provision. When asked what would enable future self-reliance, people overwhelmingly identify income and the restoration of productive economic opportunities.

A shared gap between Palestinian agency and Palestinian control

The most important point of convergence emerges when moving from people's immediate lives to the wider structures shaping Palestinian society. In both Gaza and the West Bank, assessments become markedly more negative as the lens moves outward from the household toward safety, livelihoods, institutions, mobility, self-determination, and control over the future.

In the West Bank, 71% believe decisions affecting people's lives are largely or fully externally driven. In Gaza, this rises to 78%. Similarly, 62% in the West Bank and 84% in Gaza report that people are rarely or not at all involved in decisions about their future.

Palestinian agency remains considerably stronger than Palestinian control. People continue to make decisions, sustain families, mobilise resources, maintain social relationships and imagine different futures, without the ability to influence the economic, institutional and political structures governing those futures.

Making agency possible

Gaza and the West Bank tell different but connected stories. Gaza demonstrates what agency looks like when many of the ordinary foundations of everyday life have been profoundly disrupted; the West Bank demonstrates how agency operates as economic, institutional, and political space becomes increasingly constrained and uncertain. The severity and form of deprivation differ, and direct numerical comparison can obscure more than it reveals.

What connects the two contexts is not a common level of need, but a common relationship between capacity and control. Across both contexts, people perceive the structures required to convert that capacity into sustainable livelihoods, dignity, institutional development and self-determination as increasingly constrained.

The findings shift attention from whether Palestinians are sufficiently resilient to whether the conditions exist for Palestinian agency to translate into meaningful control over

livelihoods, institutions, and the future. Humanitarian and development assistance can protect capabilities and prevent further deterioration, but sustainable recovery ultimately requires an environment in which those capabilities can once again be exercised through functioning economic and social systems rather than continually mobilised to compensate for their absence.

Advocacy messages

West Bank

1. **Protect the space for Palestinian livelihoods before coping becomes crisis.** Palestinians in the West Bank continue to rely overwhelmingly on their own work and resources, but employment, financial stability, mobility, and economic opportunity are increasingly constrained. The priority is not simply helping households cope with deterioration, but protecting and restoring the conditions that allow them to remain economically self-reliant.
2. **Preserve Palestinian institutions and services as foundations of resilience and self-determination.** The survey shows substantial household and individual agency alongside declining confidence in the wider institutional and economic environment. International support should protect Palestinian systems and strengthen their capacity to provide services and social protection, rather than allowing their continued weakening to be compensated for through increasingly externalised forms of assistance.
3. **Address the structural drivers of insecurity, not only their humanitarian consequences.** People perceive pronounced deterioration in safety, community conditions, dignity, mobility and self-determination. Humanitarian and development assistance can mitigate these pressures, but cannot substitute for action on the restrictions, violence and political and economic constraints that are narrowing the space within which Palestinians can determine their own futures.

Gaza

1. **Do not mistake survival for recovery, or humanitarian reliance for a preference for dependency.** Gazans are combining humanitarian assistance with extraordinary household, family and personal effort simply to sustain everyday life. Aid remains indispensable, but the objective must be to restore the livelihoods, markets, infrastructure, services and productive assets that allow people to move beyond continuous humanitarian survival.
2. **Restore the conditions for dignity and self-reliance, not simply the capacity to endure.** Eighty-nine percent identify a stable income as important to becoming self-reliant, while conventional sources of livelihoods, savings, assets and finance are largely unavailable. Palestinians in Gaza do not lack agency; they lack an enabling environment in which that agency can translate into secure livelihoods and a dignified life.
3. **People affected by the crisis must have meaningful power over the decisions shaping recovery.** Eighty-four percent report little or no involvement in decisions about their future, while 78% perceive decisions affecting their lives as predominantly externally driven. Reconstruction and humanitarian action should therefore not only be accountable to Palestinians but create meaningful space for Palestinian participation, institutions and communities to shape priorities and decisions.

Gaza and the West Bank

1. **Palestinian agency is strong; the space in which it can operate is shrinking.** Across Gaza and the West Bank, people continue to sustain families, mobilise resources and pursue their futures. The central challenge is not a deficit of resilience, but the widening gap between Palestinians' capacity to act and their

control over the economic, institutional and political conditions determining what those actions can achieve.

2. **Shift the conversation from resilience to the conditions that make self-reliance possible.** In both Gaza and the West Bank, people identify income and economic opportunity as central to sustainable self-reliance. Assistance should protect people through crisis, but policy must also safeguard livelihoods, mobility, productive assets, functioning institutions and access to markets so that Palestinians can convert their capabilities into sustainable lives.

3. **Humanitarian assistance can protect lives, but it cannot substitute for rights, institutions and self-determination.** Across both contexts, people recognise the value of international support while expressing deep concern about safety, external control and limited influence over their future. The measure of success should therefore extend beyond how effectively Palestinians are supported to cope, toward whether the conditions are being created for them to live with dignity, sustain themselves and exercise meaningful control over their own future.

7 Methodology

This study comprised both qualitative and quantitative data collection activities. Both activities and their respective tools were designed by AWRAD and GTS and informed by the findings of the community consultations carried out prior to this work.

The development of this research was guided by the following research questions:

1. How are humanitarian conditions and needs in Palestine evolving, and how are people coping and recovering?
2. What policy and community factors enable or constrain people's recovery?
3. How relevant and sufficient is humanitarian assistance and other support in enabling Palestinians to revive their livelihoods and reclaim their lives?
4. What livelihood sources are emerging in Palestine, and to what extent can people access, own and control them in ways that build sustained self-reliance?

Qualitative data collection

For this round of qualitative data collection, we relied on the use of focus group discussions (FGDs) with communities in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank. A total of 5 discussions were held with individuals from different backgrounds, including: men, women, displaced and non-displaced individuals. All sessions were facilitated in Arabic using structured but flexible guides that allowed participants to enrich the research, articulate their own priorities and critique existing humanitarian responses.

Sampling

We carried out a total of 5 focus group discussions with:

Geography	Men	Women	Total
Tulkarm	10	6	16
Hebron	0	11	11
Jerusalem	11	0	11
Khan Younis	12	0	12
Deir Al Balah	0	15	15
Total	33	32	35

Quantitative data collection

Sample design

The target population were adults aged 18 years and above living in Gaza and households throughout the West Bank. Gender quotas were used to ensure an appropriate balance between males and females. Interviewers alternated between male and female interviews according to quota requirements.

Gaza: Due to the lack of availability of recent population data from Gaza, we used population estimates from Real Good Research's GazaNowPop (Leasure & Alaa El-Din, 22 June 2026), dated 9 June 2026, which provides Gaza Strip population estimates derived from telecom subscriber counts (1.3M+ users), UNOSAT tent mapping, and building damage assessments. Estimates are produced on a 100-m grid, with a total estimated population of 2.1 million. Based on these population estimates, a bespoke sampling frame from Real Good Research (Dooley et al., 22 June 2026) was used to create Enumeration Zones (EZs) of 300–700 people each, suitable for use as Primary Sampling Units (PSUs). EZs, serving as primary sampling units, were selected via PPS sampling, stratified by governorate, excluding areas behind the yellow line. Within the 56 sampled PSUs (first sampling stage), individuals were randomly selected for interviews using a random walk approach (second stage). PSUs for which the target sample size was not met were substituted with replacement PSUs, drawn together with the initial sample. The planned sample size was 504 interviews in total, with 9 interviews per PSU.

West Bank: The sampling frame is based on the latest available population estimates and locality classifications provided by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), which classifies communities as urban, rural, or refugee camp localities across the West Bank's governorates. Based on these population estimates, the West Bank was divided into three geographic strata: North, Middle, and South West Bank, with the sample allocated proportionally to population size and, within each stratum, proportionally to the urban, rural, and refugee camp population. Communities, serving as primary sampling units, were selected via PPS sampling, stratified by geographic area. Within the sampled 75 communities (first sampling stage), a random starting point was identified using major landmarks (public squares, markets, schools, clinics, mosques, churches, and other recognisable locations), and an individual (second stage) within households were then selected (using first upcoming birthday method or a Kish grid) along a systematic route using a fixed interval. In multi-household buildings, only one individual was selected according to a predefined procedure to ensure randomness and avoid clustering within buildings. The planned sample size was 600 interviews in total, with 8 interviews per PSU.

Weighting

The overall results are weighted using design weights, reflecting the stratification and proportional allocation described above. No raking or post-stratification weighting techniques were applied, due to the absence of detailed, reliable demographic data on the population in Gaza.

Coverage and exclusion

Gaza: For data collection, only areas within the yellow line were accessible, which cover 99.5% of Gaza's population, based on the NowPop population estimates. No areas within the yellow line had to be excluded from data collection.

West Bank: The coverage rate is estimated at approximately 95 percent of the adult population residing in the West Bank. The study excludes East Jerusalem, Palestinians held in prisons, Bedouin populations with highly mobile residence patterns, and a limited number of communities where access is restricted due to security or military constraints.

Precision of estimates

The margins of error are based on calculations using the "survey" package in R, specifying the exact survey design as outlined above:

Gaza: For Likert questions, the margin of error ranges from 1.5 to 5.4 percentage points; rescaled to the original 0–4 scale, this corresponds to a margin of error of 0.06 to 0.21 points.

West Bank: For Likert questions, the margin of error ranges from 1.1 to 4.7 percentage points; rescaled to the original 0–4 scale, this corresponds to a margin of error of 0.05 to 0.19 points.

Note that precision varies from question to question, depending on the sample size for each question, as some questions are follow-up questions asked only of a subset of the total sample.

Challenges and limitations

Gaza: During data collection, some interviews took place outside the boundaries of their assigned EZs. For the final analysis, exact GPS points were used to determine the correct EZ for each interview and to assign correct weights, based on the population estimate for that EZ. Together with replacement PSUs, the total number of PSUs used was 65. Single PSUs where only one interview took place were excluded from the final analysis. The total sample size was 586, slightly under the planned number.

West Bank: Movement between and within communities presented significant difficulties due to checkpoints and access restrictions. Researchers experienced delays

when traveling to and between areas, including Nablus, villages east of Ramallah, and Tubas. In some villages, restrictions and the closure of access gates prevented researchers from remaining in the area for extended time and required them to return on another day. Fieldwork was also particularly challenging in communities that are frequently exposed to settler attacks or heightened security risks, including villages in the Nablus area and east of Ramallah, which affected the timing and accessibility of some activities. Finally, some respondents perceived the questionnaire as relatively lengthy, requiring researchers to explain the purpose and importance of the study and encourage participation while respecting respondents' decisions. Despite these challenges, the field teams continued to implement the data collection process in accordance with the established sampling and quality assurance procedures.





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