

SQUANDERED AID

Israel's Repetitive Destruction
of EU-Funded Projects in Palestine

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Euro-Med Monitor



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"It's the classic 'catch 22.' Palestinians need help to rebuild, but as soon as they start to get back on their feet, Israel knocks them back down. This vicious cycle must end."

Pam Bailey, international secretary of
the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor

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Executive Summary

Damage to European Union-funded projects in Palestine during Israeli attacks and other incursions is nothing new. However, following the union's move in **2015** to label Israeli settlement products, the number of EU-funded projects demolished or confiscated by Israel increased dramatically. In the first three months of **2016**, the number of demolitions per month, of either private property or Internationally/EU-funded projects, increased to **165**, from an average of **50** during **2012-2015**¹. The United Nations office for coordination of humanitarian affairs 'OCHA' has documented **120** demolitions against EU-financed buildings in the first three months of **2016**².

Euro-Med Monitor estimates that since 2001, the Israeli authorities have destroyed approximately **150** development projects, of which totally or partially funded by the EC and its member states, of what incurs the EU a financial loss of approximately **€58** million out of the total **€85** million worth of damage.

Euro-Med Monitor also estimates that since 2001, the total value of EU squandered aid money (development and humanitarian projects) amounts to **€65** million—of which at least **€23** million were lost during the **2014** assault alone.

In this report, Euro-Med Monitor analyzes the Israeli destruction of EU-funded projects and structures in the Occupied Palestinian territories (Opt) in the period between **2001 – May 2016**, using what limited public data are available; since this information is actively suppressed by European officials to avoid embarrassment. We challenge the legality of the destruction, discuss its "chilling effect" on the willingness of donors to continue the rebuilding of Gaza and examine the negative impact on the credibility of European bodies during negotiations for a possible peace.

¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/protection-civilians-weekly-report-10-16-may-2016>

² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/sharp-increase-west-bank-demolitions>

Methodology and Constraints

Since 2012, information on damage to EU-funded projects has been inaccessible to both the media and human rights institutions, much less the general taxpaying public. Why? "It might represent an embarrassment to the EU for not protecting its funded facilities properly," says Cécile Choquet, Researcher at the Euro-Med Monitor. Thus, most relevant data are classified.

The report relied primarily on field research, data collection and interviews with eyewitnesses, village councils, municipalities and relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies. Partial information has been made available only by several diplomats who asked to remain anonymous. Some other information

were gleaned from secondary sources such as credible media resources and reports of OCHA, in addition to the general evaluation made by Ministerial Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza.

Even the list of the destroyed or threatened projects remains confidential.

"The problem is that nobody wants to upset Israel for peace talks, says a diplomat.

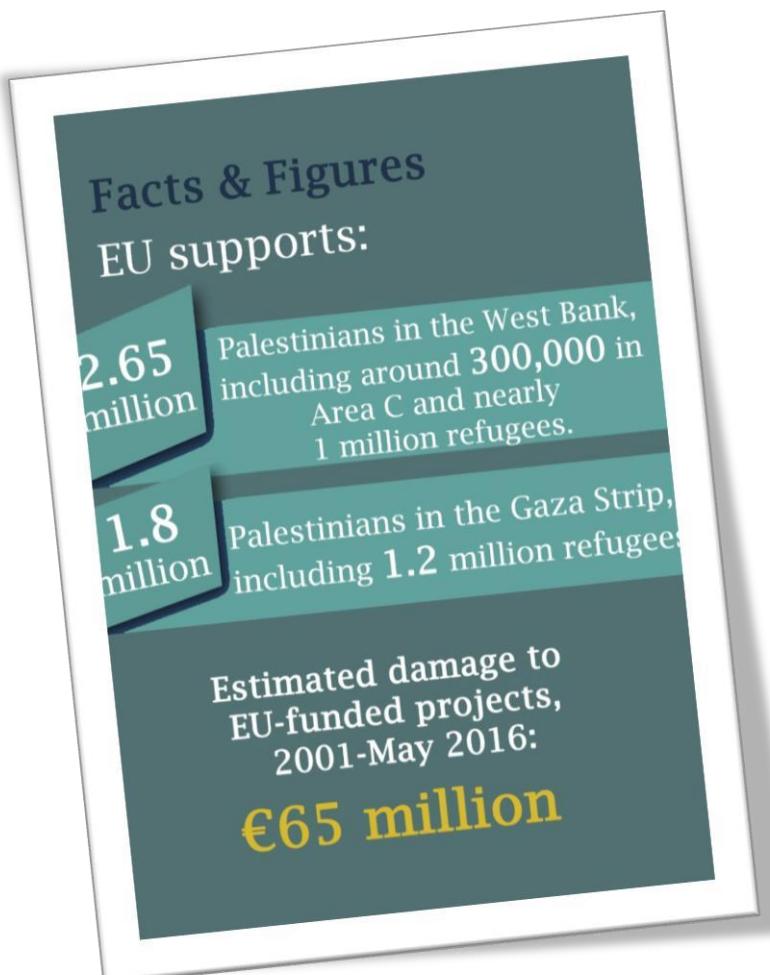
Background

EU policy on Palestine

According to EU officials, the union's highest-priority goal is the establishment of institutions for a future democratic Palestinian state—one that is independent, viable and able to coexist in peace and security with Israel. The EU has insisted it will not recognize any changes to the 1967 borders other than those agreed upon by both parties. Thus, the EU regards protection of the rights of Palestinians in Area C of the West Bank (under full Israeli control) as of paramount importance for the realization of a viable two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

EU-PA relations

Relations between the European Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) were established in 1975 as part of the Euro-Arab Dialogue. Since then, the later-established Palestinian Authority (PA) was



named a full partner within the European Neighborhood Policy, through which the EU works with its southern and eastern neighbors to achieve the closest possible cooperation. A joint EU-PA action plan finalized in 2013 set the agenda.

EU support of the Palestinian territories

The European Commission (EC), the executive body of the EU, is a member of the Middle East Quartet, which was formed to help mediate peace negotiations and to support Palestinian economic development and institution-building in preparation for eventual statehood. The EU is the biggest multilateral donor to the Palestinians, as well as the largest financial supporter of Palestinian refugees through the UN Relief & Works Agency (UNRWA). Moreover, the EU is a key donor to the World Bank-sponsored development projects in Palestine. Since 1994, the EU has provided more than €5.6billion of aid to the Palestinian Authority. These funds are channeled to the PA through several mechanisms:

1. Direct financial support: Since February 2008, the main form of EU support of the Palestinian territories is direct financial assistance to help the PA "honor its obligations to employees, pensioners and vulnerable families; maintain essential public services; and improve public finances," as well as to "maintain the viability of the two-state solution by sustaining the basic living conditions of the Palestinian people." Between 2007 and 2015, the union allocated more than €2.5billion³ for the Palestinian territories through the European Neighborhood Instrument, the plan that spells out implementation of its neighborhood policy. The monies are primarily channeled through a fund called PEGASE⁴. Guided by the PA's Reform and Development Plan, this funding mechanism is designed to focus on four priorities: governance, social development, economic and private sector development, and public infrastructure development. In 2015, the European Commission announced that "around one-third of the total value of PEGASE will be allocated to paying salaries, pensions and social allowances in the Gaza Strip.", In 2016, the EU support through PEGASE was renewed at a level of €170.5million⁵.

2. Humanitarian aid: Since 2000, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department has allocated €700million⁶ in assistance to help finance the basic needs of the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In 2015, the commission's humanitarian funding was €25⁷ million. In 2016, this support was renewed at a level of €82million allocated to UNRWA support.

3 <http://www.consulfrance-jerusalem.org/Que-fait-la-France-pour-les-territoires-palestiniens>

4 PEGASE stands for Mécanisme Palestino-Européen de Gestion de l'Aide Socio-Economique.

5 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/pdf/key-documents/palestine/20160219-aap-2016-palestine-part_1financing-commission-decision.pdf

6 http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/palestine_en.pdf

7 http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/palestine_en.pdf

3. Aid from EU member states: In addition to EU-level funding, member states such as Switzerland, Germany, the UK, France, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden actively support Palestinians through their own projects. For example, on 9 May, 2016, the Swedish government announced a SEK 65 million (€7 million) contribution to UNRWA⁸ to support Palestinian refugees in both Syria and the West Bank and Gaza. Likewise, France spent almost €394 million from 2008 to 2014, and another €40million in 2015 alone, on support of the PA and UNRWA. The French government supports academic and civil society institutions as well, through cultural activities implemented by the French consulate in Palestine.

4. Common security and defense policy missions: There are two such missions operating in the Palestinian territories: a-EUBAM Rafah (EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah, launched in 2005), and b-EUPOL COPPS (EU Co-Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support, initiated in 2006)

⁸ <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/sweden-announces-us-8-million-contribution-emergency-supportpalestine>

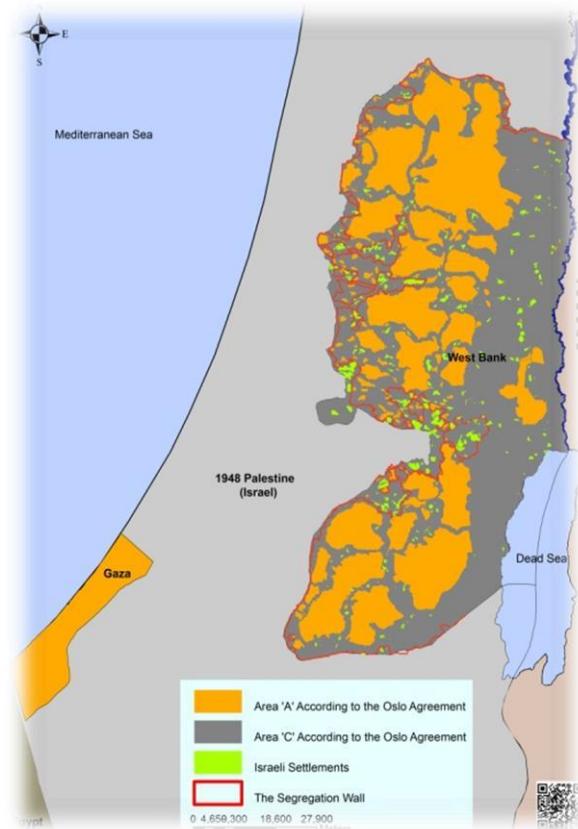
West Bank Demolitions

The West Bank is home to 2.65 million people. Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, the seam zones (located between the separation barrier and the 1949 armistice green line) and Area C (under full Israeli control) face ever-growing pressure from the Israeli occupation. Restrictions on movement and access, demolition of houses and other assets critical to livelihood, forced transfers and settler violence increase the population's socioeconomic vulnerability. Palestinians are separated from their land, families, schools, hospitals, workplaces and houses of worship due to restrictions on movement.

Administrative divisions

Following the 1995 Oslo II Interim Agreement, the West Bank (except for East Jerusalem) was divided into three administrative areas, each with distinctive borders and security controls:

- **Area A** is a relatively small percentage of the West Bank (18 percent), but includes the major Palestinian population centers. The Palestinian Authority is in control.
- **Area B** (22 percent) is under Palestinian civil control, but security responsibility is shared with the Israeli government.
- **Area C** is the largest portion of the West Bank (60 percent) and includes areas of strategic significance to Israel and its settlements. Thus, it is under full Israeli security and civilian control. It is the only contiguous area in the West Bank, effectively engulfing and separating the fragmented areas of A and B. Area C also encompasses most of the fertile, resource-rich land in the West Bank. All land-related civil matters, from allocation to the maintenance of infrastructure, is in Israel's hands. Therefore, even though education and health services are the responsibility of the PA, it is ultimately up to the government of Israel to approve construction of the necessary infrastructure. Between 2010-2014, only 1.5 percent of applications for building permits for Area C were approved by Israeli authorities.



Area C and international attention

Recently, the increasing destruction of civilian property in Area C, which has been taking place for several decades, has attracted international focus. Destruction of properties due to lack of building permits is particularly criticized as a deliberate and discriminatory violation of international law—especially the Fourth Geneva Convention provisions on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). As reported in the latest European Commission's implementing decision, "24 percent of the households in Area C are food insecure, due to demolitions of housing and sources of livelihood.

More than 70 percent of communities located entirely or mostly in Area C are not connected to the water network and rely on rainwater or on water tanks, at vastly increased cost." According to the UN, the destruction in Area C of infrastructure serving basic social needs, such as shelters, schools, clinics, and farms and animal shacks, results in "increasing humanitarian dependency," forced displacement and de-development of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territories.

EU position on Area C demolitions

In May 2012, EU foreign ministers opposed the destruction of aid-built projects in Area C, stating that the union would not only continue to provide assistance, but expected such initiatives to be protected. In 2014, the EU officially criticized Israeli settlement policies in East Jerusalem, and warned against further construction on disputed land, which often results in destruction of schools and other European-funded structures. In January 2015, the EU unanimously adopted a resolution opposing settlement-building in the occupied Palestinian territories. Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign policy chief, described the resolution as "a good and common basis for our common position and also our engagement in the Middle East peace process."

2001-2011: €50million in damage to EU-funded development projects

In 2012, following an inquiry submitted via Chris Davies, British member of the European Parliament, the Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy, Štefan Füle, released a list of projects funded by the EU or its member states that were destroyed or damaged by the Israeli military between May 2001 and October 2011. The list included 82 projects, of which 26 projects were in the west bank representing a loss of €49.2million, €30 million of which came directly from the European Commission.

2012-2015: Accelerating destruction

According to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), about 79 EU-funded structures were demolished in the West Bank's Area C and the Jerusalem region in 2012, and 54 more were destroyed in the first six months of 2013. Then came 2014 and Israel's war on Gaza, marked by mass demolitions that damaged or destroyed a number of EU-supported structures. Eighty-three UNRWA schools were among the targeted buildings.

The number of Israeli settlers in Area C has grown from 1,200 in 1972 to 310,000 today, in 124 settlements and 100 so-called outposts

The following year, Israel returned its focus to the West Bank, destroying 108 residential houses in Area C and East Jerusalem, as well as shops and other commercial premises. In a single week in August 2015, 63 houses were destroyed, leaving 132 Palestinians homeless. According to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), this brought the number of structures demolished between 1967 and 2015 to 48,488.

Israel on demolition orders

The office of the Coordinator of [Israeli] Government Activities in the [occupied] Territories (COGAT) has refused to comment on UN estimates related to Area C demolitions, saying only that "measures were taken against illegal building." In May 2015, the influential Israeli NGO Regavim issued a report accusing the EU of "financing hundreds of illegal constructions in Area C" and called on the Israeli government to destroy them. "We act because [the building of homes, etc. for Palestinians] steals our land," argued Ari Biggs, Regavim's director of international relations, in the Times of Israel. He believes the EU has transitioned from humanitarian assistance to "active cooperation to lay the foundations of a Palestinian state."

There even are some cases in which Israeli authorities have demolished Palestinian projects they had earlier approved.

Belgian-funded Palestinian electricity network

On 29 April, 2014, Israeli forces demolished several structures, including a mosque, in the Palestinian village of Khirbet Al Tawil, east of Nablus. Hundreds of soldiers deployed in the village around daybreak. They guarded six bulldozers that set about reducing to rubble buildings that were constructed "without Israeli permits. "However, such documents are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain. The following September, the Israeli army cut down the posts and power cables of the Belgian electrification project in the small village. The electrification project had been completed in 2004, in coordination with Israeli authorities, to improve the living conditions of the village's 200 rural and disadvantaged inhabitants. A total of 100 posts and other lighting supports were destroyed in the incursion, and 3.5 km of electric cables were cut. The government of Belgium estimated the cost of the damage at €55,000, condemned the destruction and announced that it will seek compensation for the loss. The Israeli ambassador was summoned to the Foreign Ministry of Belgium to receive this demand

Retaliation and punishment

According to the UN's Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Piper, the rising number of demolitions is likely a response to the recent wave of attempted stabbings of Israeli soldiers by Palestinians and a renewed commitment to promote the expansion of settlements in these areas.

A different reason for the increasing number of demolitions is cited by Moti Yogev, deputy of the Israeli religious nationalist party Foyer Jew: retribution for the labeling of settlement products by the European Union. "I do not doubt the hard line stance is partly the result of the unilateral action taken by Europe," Moti Yogev, who chairs a subcommittee of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense for the West Bank, told the French website Trt.

2016: More demolitions than ever

During the first three months of 2016, the number of demolitions was unprecedented. Israel has destroyed more houses and other types of infrastructure built with European assistance in the West Bank than during all of 2015. More than 120 buildings financed by EU donors have been demolished.

Southern Hebron

On 2 February, Israeli forces demolished more than 20 Palestinian buildings, including 10 EU-funded structures in Area C of the West Bank. The bulldozers arrived early that day in the villages of Jinba and Halawa, leaving some 110 people, including 60 children, homeless in one of the coldest months of the year and jeopardizing the future of thousands of others. The structures had been funded by the European Commission; others were co-financed by the governments of Denmark and the UK as part of UN programs.



"Tuesday's operation was the largest of its kind in a decade," reported the Israeli NGO Breaking The Silence. Media described children digging in rubble for their toys after the incursions. "Measures were taken in accordance with the law," COGAT claimed. An EU spokesperson told the French press agency AFP that, "the EU expects its investments in support of the Palestinian people to be protected from damage and destruction." The villages date back to the 19th century, yet Israel designated the area as a military firing range in the 1970s and ordered the villagers to leave, triggering a long legal battle.

West Bank farming project

On 29 February, 2016, Israeli authorities dismantled a Dutch-funded farming project in Area C near the Jordan River. The agricultural project, in which the Netherlands had invested €10 million, taught Palestinians how to use the land to grow crops. All of the project's infrastructure, including tools and sheds, was removed by Israel. Diplomatic sources argued the act was a form of revenge for the EU's decision to label products from Israeli settlements.

Journalist Jan Franke told Newsradio BNR, "Not much can be done against Israeli's decision to dismantle the project. There are many EU aid projects in the West Bank, and essentially all the projects and initiatives exist at the mercy of the Israeli army. They have the control there. If they say: 'We are going to dismantle, this is not allowed,' then you stand there empty handed."

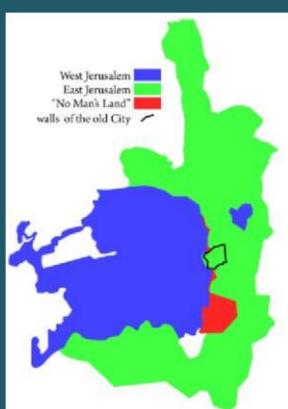
Zaatara Playground

On 12 April, Israeli forces demolished three Palestinian homes in the occupied West Bank village of Al-Walaja, near Bethlehem, and a children's playground in Zaatara south of Nablus. No prior notice was issued prior to demolition of the park, which was built in 2015 with around €54,000 donated by the Belgium government via the Municipal Developing and Lending Fund. Alexander De Croo, Belgium Minister of Development

Cooperation, and Didier Reynders, Minister of Foreign Affairs, condemned the demolition and demanded an immediate explanation. However, as of yet, COGAT has not responded.



East Jerusalem Demolitions



In 2015, the number of Israeli settlers in East

According to OCHA, 35 percent of the land in East Jerusalem has been confiscated for Israeli settlement use; only 13 percent is allocated for Palestinian construction. Much of the area is already built-up. In March 2009, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process noted that the demolitions in East Jerusalem "harm ordinary Palestinians, heighten tensions in the city, undermine efforts to build trust and promote negotiations, and are contrary to international law and Israel's commitments."

During 2000 - 2013, the Israeli authorities demolished 1,230 buildings in East Jerusalem⁹.

⁹ <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?tabID=512&lang=en&ItemID=1071&mid=3172&wversion=Staging>

Positions on East Jerusalem

Israel: Despite having signed the Oslo Accords, which subjected the future status of Jerusalem to negotiations, Israel unilaterally declared Jerusalem its Jewish capital and annexed it. On 17 May, 2015, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated that, "Jerusalem has forever been the capital of only the Jewish people and no other nation."

United Nations: UN institutions, including the Security Council, have consistently affirmed that East Jerusalem is an occupied territory and, as such, is subject to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The UN does not recognize Israel's proclamation of Jerusalem as its capital. General Assembly Resolution 63/30 (2009) stated that "any actions taken by Israel, the occupying power, to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem are illegal and therefore null and void and have no validity whatsoever" and calls upon Israel to "cease all such illegal and unilateral measures."

European Union: The EU believes that without Jerusalem as the shared capital of two future states, a sustainable peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians will not be possible. However, if current trends continue, this prospect is increasingly unlikely.

The EU has asserted it will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including those related to Jerusalem, other than those agreed to by both parties. It also has called for the reopening of Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem and for the Israeli government to cease all discriminatory treatment of Palestinians in the city. EU supports institution-building in East Jerusalem, notably in the areas of health, education and legal systems.

“ The European Union set out its position in a statement of principles last December. A two-state solution with Israel and Palestine side by side in peace and security: a viable state of Palestine in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, on the basis of the 1967 lines. A way must be found to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both Israel and

Palestine

- Catherine Ashton, Former High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union

E1 zone

E1 is a zone located in Area C in the West Bank, northeast of Jerusalem and west of Israel's largest settlement, Ma'ale Adumim. The land is recognized as Palestinian by both the EU and UN. Israel's seizure of the area jeopardizes the future of a contiguous Palestinian state.



E1: The center of action

Around 2,800 Bedouins reside in 18 residential areas in the hills to the east of Jerusalem. More than 85 per cent of them are refugees. The communities have all lost access to land due to settlement expansion, most have demolition orders pending against their homes, none have access to the electricity network and only half are connected to the water network. Over 200 families were re-located from the area in the 1990s, some by force. Of these, more than 85 per cent report they had to abandon their traditional livelihoods. Over the years, European countries

have warned Israel not to build in this area, known as E1, since it would create an urban bloc linking Jerusalem and the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, disrupting plans for a contiguous Palestinian state. Then, in December 2012, the Palestinians sought UN recognition as a non-member observer state. Netanyahu responded by zoning E1 for 3,000 Jewish housing units. The EU Foreign Affairs Council expressed "deep dismay and strong opposition" to the plan, as it would "seriously undermine the prospects of a negotiated resolution to the conflict" and "could also entail forced transfer of the civilian population."

Jabal Al-Baba

On 8 April, 2014, Israel seized three EU-funded humanitarian-aid projects on the edge of a settlement-construction zone that the union views as a "red line." Three shelters were dismantled in the Jabal Al-Baba neighborhood, which lies in the E1 corridor of the West Bank, linking the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim to Jerusalem. Under Israeli law, these structures can be demolished after a 21-day comment period, during which residents have the right to appeal to the court. However, the authorities did not wait for the legal process to run its course; instead, they returned to Jabal Al-Baba and collected the stop-work orders they had distributed just hours before, reported Al-Jazeera. Once the shelters were taken down, there was no need for further legal process; at that point, the Israeli Civic Administration has the right to confiscate whatever remains, without prior notice. All three shelters were prefabricated caravans, built for families left homeless after severe storms hit the region in December. They were financed by the EU's humanitarian aid arm, DG ECHO, and some were provided by the French development agency, Action Contre la Faim (ACF).

Sole elementary school for Bedouin community



On 21 February, Israeli forces demolished an elementary school and seized all of its contents in the Abu Al-Nawwar Bedouin community, east of Jerusalem. Local eyewitnesses said more than 130 soldiers in about 30 military vehicles stormed the Bedouin community during the predawn hours, proceeding to demolish the elementary school, which housed six classrooms for first and second graders, and seize all of its contents—including desks and chairs.

Abu Al-Nawwar, which was built with European funding, is the sole elementary school for the community. A spokesperson for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development issued a statement condemning the demolition. The statement asserted that the project was located in an area considered by the European Union as "key to the viability of the two-state solution" and called upon Israeli authorities to "put an end to such operations that impact already vulnerable communities."

Mass Destruction in Gaza

Operation Protective Edge

During the war, more than 2,147 Palestinians, mostly civilians, were killed and about 10,000 were injured. The attack destroyed important infrastructure, including educational and health facilities, water and sanitation installations, and even entire neighborhoods, such as Shejaya and Khuza. EU-funded facilities that were damaged included UNRWA schools, wells, water networks, water reservoirs, hospitals and streets. Detailed Needs Assessment (DNA) and Recovery Framework for Gaza Reconstruction, made by Ministerial Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza on operation protective edge, documented a physical damage of \$1.4 billion to structures, assets and contents of buildings and \$1.7 billion in economic losses, which comprise lost revenue and unexpected operational costs due to the impact of the war.

2014 Israel-Gaza conflict

Between July 7 and August 26, the Gaza Strip witnessed the deadliest escalation in hostilities since the beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1967. Euro-Med Monitor documented the deaths of 2,147 Palestinians, including 1,743 civilians. About 500,000 people were displaced at the height of the hostilities and approximately 70,000 remain homeless as of May 2016. Public infrastructure, most of which was funded by the EU, suffered heavy damage—including educational, health and water facilities, and sanitation installations.

Highest loss recorded in the DNA assessment was The Energy sector, which had \$58million worth of damage and \$924million in economic losses, largely as a result of the total destruction of the Gaza Power Plant, which then experienced exceptionally high operational costs resulting from the need to use fuel-fed electricity generators. In the transport sector, damage was \$42 million. The Water sector suffered \$33 million in damage and \$94 million economic losses, both of which further weakens a deteriorating and degraded water system. By normal, the EU funds 70% of water projects in the strip, by which, according to the unpublished CWMU estimations, the EU share of water sector damage amounted to more than \$20million.

UNRWA Pumping Station– Nussirat Refugee Camp

During the 2014 war, Israel targeted an UNRWA pumping station funded by the EU in the Nussirat refugee camp that served about 200,000 people. It was designed as part of a solution for the water crisis, in which diseases are spread due to underground water pollution. The airstrikes left the camp with 90,000 cubic meters of untreated or partially treated wastewater. Coastal Municipal Water Utility officials told a Euro-Med team that the facility had been hit previously by Israeli airstrikes and artillery, once during Operation Pillar of Cloud in 2012 and once in Operation Cast Lead in 2008. Each time, the facility was largely destroyed, and each time it was reconstructed with EU funding. According to utility officials, the 2014 damage was valued at about €358,000.



Emergency sewage treatment facility

In the 2014 war, Israeli airstrikes targeted water wells in different parts of Gaza City, leaving thousands of families without access to clean drinking water during the 51 days of assault. The sewerage system also was targeted, with Israeli warplanes hitting the EU-funded Abu Rashed sewage pumping station in the northeast. The sewage plant serves half of Gaza City and was badly damaged, with an estimated loss of €110,000. About 25 million liters of raw sewage

spilled into the sea, resulting in an increased likelihood of disease.

The World Bank hopes to rectify the situation with the proposed €38.53million North Gaza Emergency Sewage Treatment Project, designed to "mitigate the immediate and impending health and environmental safety threats to the communities surrounding the effluent lake at the Beit Lahia Wastewater Treatment Plant and provide a satisfactory long-term solution to the treatment of wastewater for the northern governorate in Gaza." However, the ongoing Israeli blockade and threat of new hostilities raises doubts about the viability of the project.

What next for aid in light of the prospect of more destruction?

Given the current stalled peace talks, and more generally the lack of progress on a proposed independent Palestinian state, some in Europe are questioning the wisdom of investing more funds in the oPt. This is particularly true in light of the austerity measures implemented following the debt crisis throughout the region and the wave of refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Caroline du Plessix, a French political scientist specializing in European policy and a proponent of a two-state solution, said IRIN newspaper: "There is no Palestinian state today. The question is: What are we funding? Are we helping Israel to maintain the occupation, or are we truly helping the Palestinians build their independence?", Caroline continued: "The EU member states are more aware today that their money has not led to the creation of an independent Palestinian state."

The United Nations, the EU and countries that finance reconstruction projects, particularly in Gaza, understandably are concerned that any new investment will prove futile if the underlying causes of the conflict are not addressed. "We fear that all we help to rebuild is going to be destroyed again," said a European diplomat in charge of development aid to the occupied Palestinian territories¹⁰. "We need a fundamental change in the situation so that we do not repeat what continues to happen."

¹⁰ <http://origin.francophone.sahartv.ir/news/le-r%C3%A9gime-sioniste-d%E2%80%99isra%C3%AB-d%C3%A9truit-ce-que-le-monde-construit-13702>

Recommendations

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor urges the EU commission and member states to:

1. Investigate and publicly report on all destruction of or damage to structures built with funding from the UN, EU or member states on Palestinian land.
2. Use meetings with Israeli authorities to articulate a clear and consistent European position on demolitions and destruction of EU-funded projects.
3. Demand compensation from Israel if any further projects funded by the UN, EU or member states are destroyed.
4. Continue to invest in Palestinian development, but substantively penalize the Israeli government when UN- or European-funded projects are targeted.
5. Undertake a more active and visible implementation of EU policy on the oPt.



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Israel's Repetitive Destruction of EU-Funded Projects in Palestine

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