

# Palestinian Private Sector: Gaza Calls

Courtesy of Dalia Association

Families, as they prepare their daily meals, are buying supplies as a donation for the people of Gaza. One package of rice for me, and one for you.<sup>i</sup> Other individuals are volunteering their time to arrange and package supplies. Supermarkets are not only facilitating these donations of supplies but some are also participating in the boycott of Israeli products.<sup>ii</sup> They say “Let’s stop funding the destruction of our brothers and sisters in Gaza.”

Banks have donated \$250,000 to relief efforts.<sup>iii</sup>

Everyone seems to be doing something within his or her means to support Gaza.



Ibrahim Salman Abubalimi, 55, female-Noor Mohamed Salama Abudebagh, 13, male-Ahmed Ramzi Mohamed Moueen Abdugadoos, 13, male-Maysara Anwar Sulaiman Derazeen, 6, male-Mohamed Anwar Sulaiman Derazeen, 13, male-Mohamed Abdelhameed Mohamed Shaat, 29, male-Rajaa Hemad Mohamed Aldoughma, 36, female-Sami Abdallah Ahmed Jouda, 18, male-Hamada Sulaiman Abuyounis, 25, male-Osama Salem Abdelrahman Shaheen, 27, male-Mohamed Kamel Ahmed Alnaqqa, 40, male-Kamal Kamel Ahmed Alnaqqa, 35, male-Ibrahim Omar Alhalaq, 40, male-Hussam Abdelatif Abdelatif Rady, 43, male-Mohamed Ibrahim Subhi Alaareir, 30, male-Issam Ismaeel Abushaqra, 42, male-Abdelrahman Ibrahim Abushaqra, 17, male-Mohamed Ahmed Akram Abushaqra, 17, male-Yaseen Mustafa Mohamed Alastal, 37, male-Walaa Mohamed Ali Alqayed, 15, male-Majed Samir Hussein Alnajjar, 19, male-Ghalia Mohamed Ahmed Alnajjar, 56, female-Ahmed Khalid Mohamed Alnajjar, 14, male-Hussam Hussein Samir Alnajjar, 7, male-Eman Salah Mahmoud Alnajjar, 23, female-Samir Hussein Samir Alnajjar, 2, male-Moataz Hussein Samir Alnajjar, 6, male-Oulfat Hussein Samir Alnajjar, 4, female-Reham Fayez Hussein Albareem, 19, female-Ameer Hamouda Khalid Abushahla, 3, male-Islam Hamouda Khalid Abushahla, 4, female-Baraa Salah Mahmoud Alraqeb, 11, female-Samia Harb Yousef Alnajjar, 50, female-Kafah Samir Hussein Alnajjar, 23, female-Ameera Hamouda Khalid Abushahla, 1, female-Khalil Mohamed Ahmed Alnajjar, 59, male-Rawan Khalid Mohamed Alnajjar, 17, female-Ikhlal Samir Hussein Abushahla, 30, female-Mohamed Samir Abdelaal Alnajjar, 25, male-Abdallah Aiesh Salman Armilat, 39, male-Abdelrahman Aouda Altalbany, male-Mamdouh Ibrahim Mohamed Alshawaf, 25, male-Eiyad Naser Abdo Sharab, 24, male-Mohamed Khalil Mohamed Albareem, male-Ahmed Sulaiman Ismaeel Abuyounis, 31, male-Mohamed Ahmed Matar Alabadala, 32, male-Yousra Salem Hassan Albareem, 65, male-Ibrahim Salman Qablan Qablan, 34, male-Abdelhameed Mohamed Abdelhameed Almaghreby, 31, male-Abdelmajeed Abdallah Abdelmajeed Aleidy, 36, male-Hamid Mohamed Ali Alsheikh Saleem, 30, male-Mohamed Rafic Saeed Alaareir, 30, male-Yousef Kamal Yousef Alwasifi, 22, male-Amro Abdelhakim Ibrahim Alsheik Khalil, 25, male-Shadi Kamal Ramadan Yaseen, 22, male-Mohamed Essam Deeb Abudalfa, 25, male-Mohamed Yaseen Saadie Siyam, 29, male-Essam Mohamed Saleh Shermali, 29, male-Mohamed Abdelnasser Ali Abuzainah, 20, male-Masaab Salah Salman Abuataata, 20, male-Ibrahim Aiesh Abed Abughanimah, 27, male-Waleed Saeed Naser Alaajla, 7, male-Abdelrahman Ziad Hassan Abuheini, 26, male-Rami Mohamed Sabhi Yaseen, 24, male-Naji Ziad Abdelrahim Abuamouna, 25, male-Emad Adnan Mohamed Abukameel, 20, male-Osama Essam Fawzy Ezam, 23, male-Mohamed Eissa Khalid Hajji, 24, male-Abdallah Ibrahim Abdallah Abulayla, 51, male-Sami Fathi Ahmed Alaareir,



This time, however, it seems that the group most capable of supporting Gaza is the private sector. Not only has the human suffering and the number of lives lost exceeded that of the previous military campaigns, but also the damage to infrastructure and private business. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimated that economic losses in Gaza from the 2008–2009 aggression totalled \$804 million.<sup>iv</sup> The Alternative Aid Center estimates that, as of August 3, the latest aggression has caused economic losses standing at \$1,590 million.<sup>v</sup>

Al Awda Co. in Deir Al Balah, which has been an important pastry factory for over 40 years, has been completely destroyed. The owner, Mohammad Al Telbani, had announced just days earlier that they would supply their trademarked Choco Sandwich biscuits to refugees in UN schools.<sup>vi</sup>

Assessing some of the damage during the temporary ceasefire on August 3, reporters noted that 175 of Gaza’s most successful industrial plants had been severely damaged. Prior to this latest Israeli military operation, the unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip was 47 percent and was only expected to rise with hundreds of production companies now unable to operate.<sup>vii</sup>



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.



The damage incurred during the attack has plunged the Gaza Strip into an even deeper dismal economic hole. Here is the role of the Palestinian private sector: To not only rebuild Gaza but also to enable a level of sustained economic activity and investment. How is this done?

A 2012 PalThink report attributed the economic conditions in the Gaza Strip to the Israeli blockade, effectively implemented since 2005, and frequent military incursions. For example, in 2007, 400 truckloads (\$8 million) of furniture made in the Gaza Strip were stranded, unable to be exported to Israeli and international markets. PalThink reports that the furniture industry that year was operating at less than 5 percent of its capacity due to these restrictions.<sup>viii</sup>

The question becomes: How can the Palestinian private sector use its leverage to increase the opening of these borders and invest in the human resources of Gaza? How does the private sector ensure that the materials and expertise needed to rebuild the private sector of Gaza successfully enter the Strip? Supplies for urgent humanitarian assistance are necessary and crucial, but we must find ways to support the construction sector in rebuilding the thousands of homes destroyed during the attack. How does the Palestinian private sector ensure that concrete reaches those who are trying to rebuild homes?<sup>ix</sup>

Responsibility falls first upon those companies with branches or factories in Gaza to support their counterparts. But responsibility falls more broadly on a unified effort on the part of the Palestinian private sector to use its influence and leverage to remove the border restrictions and invest in Gaza's human resources. In this way, we enable and support Palestinians in Gaza to build a resilient, vibrant economy that is integrated with the West Bank's private sector and that draws upon the strength of its people.

*Dalia Association is the first Palestinian community foundation established as a way to realise the right of Palestinians to control resources and sustain development for generations to come. Dalia's Gaza Fund Campaign is a way for private-sector companies to invest in grassroots civil society in Gaza. For more information, visit [www.dalia.ps](http://www.dalia.ps).*

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<sup>i</sup> Daoud Kuttab, "West Bank Palestinians Raise Money for Gaza," *Al-Monitor*, August 1, 2014.

<sup>ii</sup> Shawn Carrie, "As Relief Supplies Make Their Way to Gaza, Boycott of Israeli Products Spreads in West Bank," *Palestine News Network*, August 7, 2014.

<sup>iii</sup> Information provided by an UNRWA representative at a meeting of the Palestinian private sector, August 7, 2014. Reports from the meeting can be found at: <http://www.al-ayyam.com/article.aspx?did=244877&date;> <http://www.wafa.pna.net/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=181329;> <http://www.pal24.net/ViewNews.aspx?ID=37908>.

<sup>iv</sup> [http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_pcbs/PressRelease/Gaza\\_lost\\_e.pdf](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Gaza_lost_e.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> "Statistics on the Israeli Offensive against Gaza," Alternative Information Center, August 3, 2014.

<sup>vi</sup> Rami Almeghari, "Israel 'wipes out' Gaza Ice Cream Factory that Stored Vital Medicines," *Electronic Intifada*, August 2, 2014; Jodi Rudoren and Fares Akram, "Conflict Leaves Industry in Ashes and Gaza Reeling from Economic Toll," *The New York Times*, August 6, 2014.

<sup>vii</sup> Nigel Wilson, "Gaza Strip Rebuilding to Cost Billions of Dollars," *International Business Times*, August 12, 2014.

<sup>viii</sup> Reham Al Wehaidy, *Private Sector: Impact of the Gaza Blockade and Strategies to Cope with its Consequences*, PalThink for Strategic Studies, October 22, 2012.

<sup>ix</sup> Nicholas Casey, Jay Solomon, and Joshua Mitnick, "Cease-fire Brokers Grapple with How to Rebuild Gaza," *Wall Street Journal*, July 24, 2014.