

SITUATION REPORT 2025- GAZA



Reflection of Gaza War on Person With and Without Disabilities



“Atfaluna Primisis before
and after”

Developed By

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Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (ASDC)

Atfaluna is a local Non-governmental organization established in **1992** in Gaza City in order to enable persons with hearing disability in the Gaza Strip to have their chance in life through education, rehabilitation, and job training and employment opportunities. From its establishment as a small school for persons with hearing disability serving 27 students, Atfaluna now serves more than **40,000 persons** annually through many services and training programs implemented within an inclusive approach. These interventions aim at providing equal opportunities for persons with hearing disability in the society.

ASDC provides inclusive emergency responses that align with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), under **article 11**, to take the necessary measures to protect persons with disabilities and involve them inclusively in all interventions. ASDC promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities in emergency response and work within inclusive disaster risk reduction plans and programs

Introduction

This report is a part of the ASDC's tools and mechanisms for identifying and prioritizing the community needs, where the identification of community needs comes in the first phase of the project life cycle. The results of the community assessment are used as the bases for designing the projects and interventions. This community engagement is a part of accountability mechanism that used within Atfaluna for identifying the locations for interventions, and to assess the beneficiary's views, needs and expectations. Atfaluna strategic plan, projects and intervention are built on a sustainable approach to strengthen the interventions and make sure that women and girls with disabilities have access to services across the Gaza Strip. The Atfaluna strategic plan were structured to mainstreaming safeguarding and the child protection within all the projects and interventions. This assessment has been conducted in coordination with Bitona for Community development.

Background

On the 8th of October 2023 Gaza Strip subjected to a catastrophic humanitarian situation in the lives of the people living in Gaza, the official reports show that more than **48,000** Palestinians were killed in Gaza, most of them are women and children, more than **111,000** were injured, including children and women, many of them were serious injuries and might have a long term disability that needs further intervention to be familiar with the new cases **More than 1.9 million Palestinians in Gaza were displaced** where they have had to leave their homes in Gaza due to the ongoing air strikes targeting their homes which were completely, partially damaged or their houses at risky areas with a potential to be targeted by bombardment where hundred thousands of housing units were totally destroyed or severely damaged, and the displaced Palestinians sought shelters in public schools, mosques or at other places. Once ceasefire is announced in **January, 2025**, more than **650,000** families returned to the northern area of the Gaza Strip.

The war in the Gaza Strip has had a devastating impact on the livelihoods of its residents, both with and without disabilities. The Palestinian economy experienced a significant downturn, with real **GDP per capita** dropping by **33.4%** across the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). In Gaza specifically, this decline was even more pronounced, with a staggering **84.9%** decrease, leaving its per capita GDP at just **5.2%** of that in the West Bank

This economic collapse has severely undermined living standards, leading to widespread poverty and unemployment. **Source: ILO.** Persons with disabilities have faced compounded challenges during this period. Prior to the conflict, approximately **21%** of households in Gaza had at least one member with a disability, amounting to around **58,000 individuals**. The hostilities have exacerbated their vulnerabilities, with reports indicating that **At least one quarter or 22,500 of those injured in Gaza by 23 July** are estimated to have **life-changing injuries that require** rehabilitation services now and for years to come, according to a World Health Organization (WHO) analysis of the types of injuries resulting from the ongoing conflict in Gaza. **Source: ACAPS.** Individuals with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by this nutrition crisis. The Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children's hearing screening assessment 2023–2025 results showed an alarming risk of an increase in hearing disability in the Gaza Strip, as it is estimated that **35,000 children and adults** will be at risk of permanent or temporary hearing loss. **A WHO report** indicates that malnutrition is expected to worsen across the Gaza Strip due to the severe shortages of food, water, and essential health and nutrition services. An alarming **90%** of children under two and **95%** of pregnant and breastfeeding women are experiencing extreme food poverty, consuming no more than two food groups per day, often with minimal nutritional value. Additionally, **95%** of households are reducing both meal frequency and portion sizes, with **64%** surviving on just one meal per day. More than **95%** of families have also reported prioritizing food for young children by cutting back on portions for adults.

Methodology and Sampling

In order to assess the current situation of persons with and without disabilities in the context of the current challenging circumstances and emergency situation, we used a mixed-methods approach that include both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. This comprehensive strategy ensures a thorough understanding of the challenges and priorities of families and individuals, regardless of disability status.

Surveys: Structured surveys were conducted to a representative sample of **456 parents and individuals, both with and without disabilities**. Including, **63%** with disability, or household includes at least one member with a disability. The survey covers a all Gaza geographical area, **including 18% North Gaza, 43% Gaza City, 19% the Middle Area, 14% Khan Younis, and 6% Rafah.**

Focus Groups: To triangulate and validate findings, and to collect comprehensive in-depth data, **3 focus group** discussions were conducted: one with representatives of Organizations led by Persons with Disabilities (**OPDs**) and community leaders, one with parents of children with and without disabilities, and one with persons with disabilities. These discussions explored personal experiences and challenges in detail, providing a depth understanding of the berries, priorities and needs.

Semi-Structured Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with service providers, community leaders, and representatives from disability organizations. These interviews developed to collect in-depth insights into the challenges, current situation, and needs of persons with and without disabilities

Objectives

The needs assessment was developed to assess the needs, and priorities of conflict-affected individuals, with and without disabilities, during the current war in Gaza 2025. The report assesses various critical aspects, including shelter conditions, medical care, financial and livelihood needs, psychological support, exploitation and abuse, accessibility and inclusion, in addition to access to education and protection. This assessment is a key tool used by ASDC to identify the most urgent community needs, with a focus on persons with disabilities (PwDs) and their families, who are the most vulnerable groups due to the challenges they face in accessing essential services and emergency interventions. The report emphasizes the impact of the current conflict on the lives of families, both with and without disabilities, and outlines their priorities to guide effective interventions aimed at alleviating their suffering during these challenging times

Impact of the war on the CSOs

Many CSOs have lost access to their facilities due to heavy bombardments, displacing their staff and halting essential services. The war has crippled infrastructure, affecting CSOs' ability to provide healthcare, education, rehabilitation, and social protection services. The ongoing violence has also disrupted coordination efforts between local and international humanitarian actors, further complicating aid delivery.

According to recent assessment by The Palestinian NGOs Network (PNGO), 20 CSOs have been destroyed, while an additional 18 organizations suffered severe damage that rendered their facilities unusable. Among the affected organizations, several rehabilitation-focused CSOs that provide critical support for people with disabilities have faced direct attacks on their premises. These organizations play a vital role in physical therapy, assistive device distribution, and psychosocial support, making their destruction a significant blow to vulnerable populations. The loss of these services has left thousands of people, particularly those with disabilities, without essential care.

The rehabilitation sector has been one of the hardest hit, with at least five major organizations specializing in disability services sustaining irreversible damage. One of those organizations is Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, which received severe damages during the war.

The destruction not only disrupted the vital services provided but also threatened the future of inclusive interventions and support for persons with disabilities in the Gaza Strip. These CSOs had been providing medical rehabilitation, speech therapy, and vocational training for individuals with disabilities, services that are now largely unavailable. The destruction of rehabilitation centres has also worsened psychosocial distress among individuals who rely on consistent therapy, creating long-term consequences for their well-being.

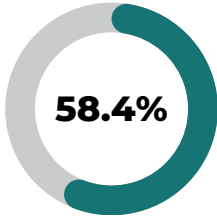
To mitigate these challenges, stronger international coordination and financial support are essential. Emergency funding, reconstruction assistance, and technical capacity-building efforts must be prioritized to help CSOs resume operations. Additionally, efforts should be made to establish temporary service centres in safer areas to ensure that rehabilitation and essential social services continue. The recovery of CSOs is vital for the long-term stability and resilience of Gaza's civil society, particularly for marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities

Analysis and Findings

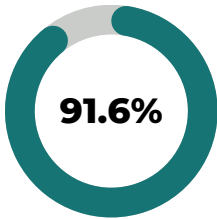
Shelter condition



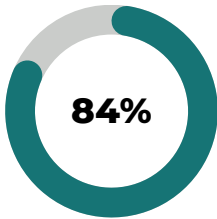
1- 98.3% of the respondents reported that their houses were damaged, either fully, severely, or partially. Of these, 51.2% reported full damage, while 47.1% reported partial damage



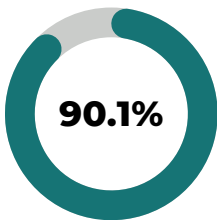
5- 58.4% of the respondents, while (62.9% of families with disabilities) indicated that there is no private space inside the tent or the displacement site/current residence for changing clothes.



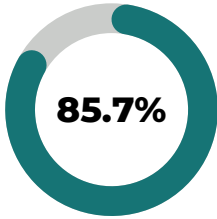
2- 91.6% of the respondents (93.3% of families with disabilities) indicated that the displacement shelter/current place of residence is unsuitable and does not meet the family's privacy needs.



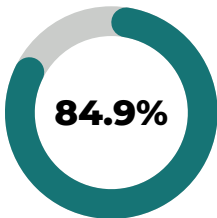
6- 84% of the respondents with and without disabilities stated that there is no electricity for lighting at night or for charging devices.



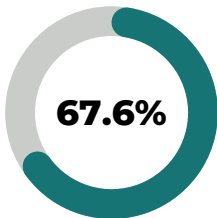
3- 90.1% of the survey participants with disabilities reported that the displacement sites/current places of residence have serious accessibility barriers



7- 85.7% of families with disabilities reported that the needs of persons with disabilities in displacement shelters are not considered, and they are not accessible nor inclusive.



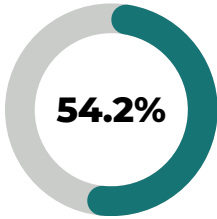
4- 84.9% of the survey respondents, while (86.6% of families with disabilities) stated that the displacement sites/current places of residence are unsafe and risky



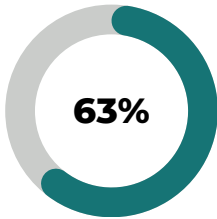
8- 67.6% of person with disabilities reported that the latrines do not ensure privacy and are inaccessible to persons with disabilities at displacement sites/current residences.

Analysis and Findings

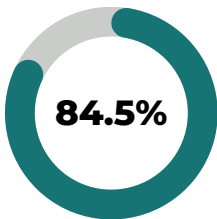
Clean Water and Sanitation:



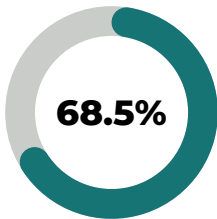
9- 54.2% of the respondents with and without stated that clean drinking water is not available at the displacement site/current residence.



13- 63% of the respondents with and without disabilities reported that there is no inclusive space for children to play at the displacement site/current residence.



10- 68.5% of the respondents with and without disabilities indicated that they are unable to use latrines freely at any time without waiting in queues.



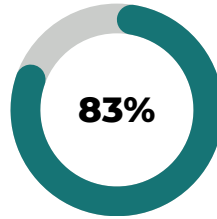
Accessibility and Inclusion

14- 68.5% of the respondents with disabilities reported that the current emergency responses severely lack the disability inclusion measures.

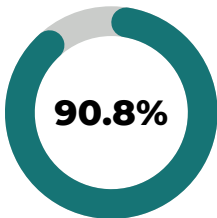
Safety and Accessibility



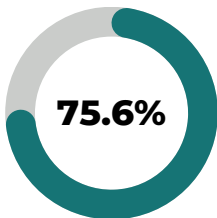
11- 84.5% of the survey participants, while (91.2% of families with disabilities) reported that the presence of rubble poses a danger to their families and children.



15- 83% of the respondents with disabilities stated that one of their assistive devices was lost during displacement/movement, such as hearing aids, prosthetics, or glasses, wheelchairs, crutches, and they cannot find new devices.



12- 90.8% of the respondents with and without disabilities expressed that the rubble in the streets affects their movement and consistute a crucial accessibility barrier to services.

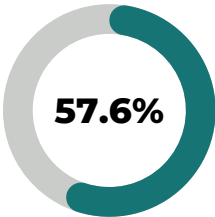


Disability and Elderly

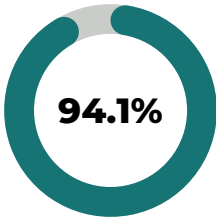
16- 75.6% of the respondents expressed that the elderly and persons with disabilities do not have enough awareness on their surroundings due to the lack of appropriate and inclusive communication and contact means.

Analysis and Findings

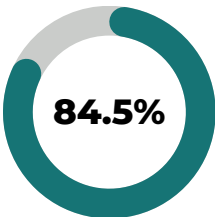
Medical Care



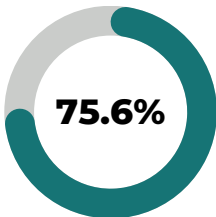
17- 57.6% of the respondents, while (58.2% of families with disabilities) stated that persons with disabilities suffer from poor communication with their families and their special needs related to their disabilities are not considered.



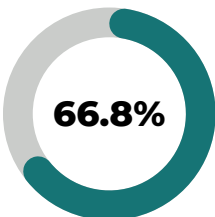
21- 94.1% of the survey respondents, while(95.4% of families with disabilities) stated that family members, especially children, women, and persons with disabilities, do not receive adequate medical care.



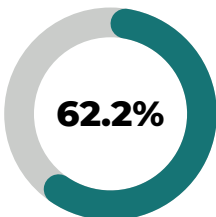
18- 84.5% of the survey participants, while (91.2% of families with disabilities) reported that the presence of rubble poses a danger to their families and children.



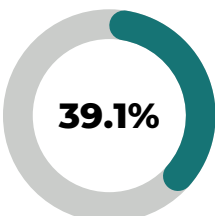
22- 75.6% expressed that during the current circumstances, women and girls have faced difficulties in providing their personal healthcare needs.



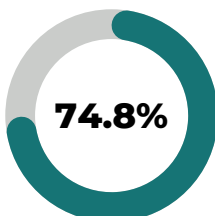
19- 66.8% of the respondents reported that persons without disabilities feel that persons with disabilities are a burden on those around them under the current circumstances.



23- 62.2% of the respondents with and without disabilities indicated that the elderly don't receive appropriate care for their health needs in the current situation.



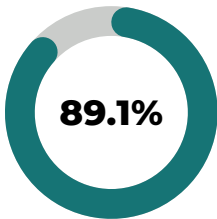
20- 39.1% of the respondents with disabilities stated that since the war started, their communication with their families has been limited, their relationships with them are fragile, and their special needs and disabilities are not considered.



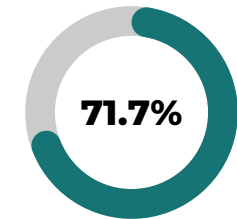
24- 74.8% of the respondents with and without disabilities the respondents indicated that they have noticed negative change in the health condition of their children.

Analysis and Findings

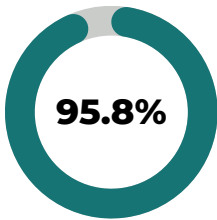
Protection condition



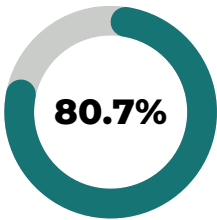
25- 89.1% of the respondents, while (92.1% of families with disabilities) stated that they have noticed an increase in crying and panic cases among children during sleep.



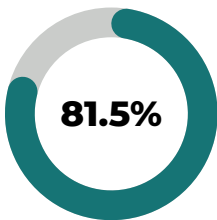
29- 71.7% of the survey respondents, while (79.3% of families with disabilities) reported that women and girls with disabilities have been subjected to exploitation by family members during the current situation.



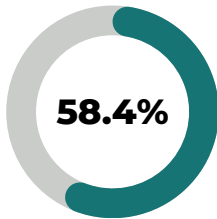
26- 95.8% reported that children are suffering from an inability to express their emotions due to the extreme fear during the war.



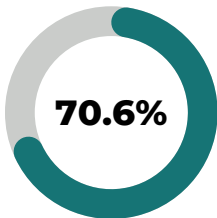
30- 80.7% of the respondents indicated that the displacement sites/current residences do not offer a safe environment to girls with and without disabilities and expose them to psychological harm.



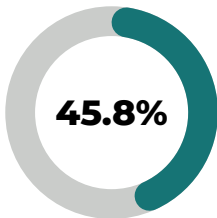
27- 81.5% of the respondents, while (89.7% of families with disabilities) stated that violent behavior and hyperactivity have increased among children due to the current situation.



31- 58.4% reported that persons with disabilities have been subjected to psychological or physical abuse at displacement sites/current residences.



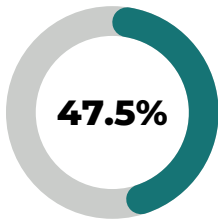
28- 70.6% of the respondents with and without disabilities stated that children are suffering from involuntary urination and bedwetting



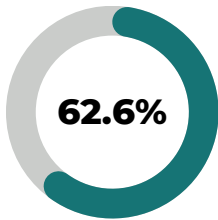
32- 45.9% of the respondents with disabilities stated reported that they have noticed persons with disabilities being subjected to exploitation or harassment at displacement sites/current residences.

Analysis and Findings

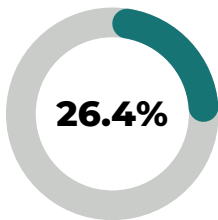
Protection condition



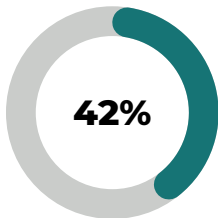
33- 47.5% of the respondents, while (52.1% of persons with disabilities) stated that they have noticed persons with disabilities being subjected to psychological and verbal abuse when receiving relief assistance.



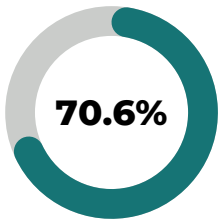
34- 62.6% expressed their observations of persons with disabilities being subjected to psychological harm due to offensive and hurtful language.



35- 26.4% of the respondents, while (29.4% of families with disabilities) indicated that they have noticed harassment of girls and women with and without disabilities at aid distribution points.

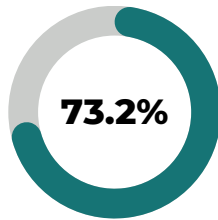


36- 42% stated that the elderly are subjected to neglect and verbal abuse at displacement sites.



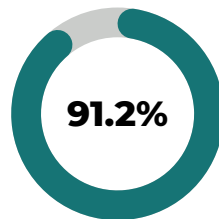
37- 70.6% of the respondents expressed that there has been an increase in family conflicts and disputes due to the current circumstances.

Access to Education

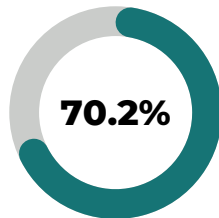


38- 73.2% of the respondents with disabilities indicated that there are no inclusive safe spaces or services (education, health, psychological support) near their location.

Financial and Livelihood Needs



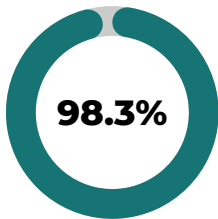
39- 91.2% of the respondents with and without disabilities expressed despite the availability of food and basic needs in the market, they cannot afford buying them due to their poor livelihood conditions.



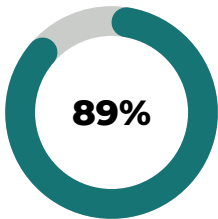
41- 70.2% of the survey participants with and without disabilities indicated that suitable bedding and blankets are not available for children and family members, including those with disabilities.

Analysis and Findings

Financial and Livelihood Needs



41- 80.3% of the respondents with and without disabilities reported an increase in seasonal illnesses among children due to the lack of winter clothing.



42- 89% of the respondents reported that the head of the household does not have the financial means to provide all of the family's basic needs.

Recommendation and Area for Improvement

1. Improve Shelter Conditions:

- Address the lack of privacy and safety concerns in displacement shelters by providing better-designed housing options that consider the needs of families, especially women and children, and those with disabilities.
- Ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, including ramps, wider paths, and adapted latrines to eliminate barriers.
- Incorporate privacy measures, including private spaces for changing clothes and better overall living conditions.
- Improve the structural safety of shelters to reduce the risk of injury, particularly from rubble.

2. Enhance Medical Care:

- Improve access to healthcare, especially for children, women, and persons with disabilities, by establishing more mobile clinics and providing adequate medical supplies.
- Develop targeted healthcare programs for vulnerable groups, ensuring proper medical care and psychological support.

3. Address Financial and Livelihood Needs:

- Offer livelihood programs and employment opportunities to heads of households to increase their ability to provide for their families.
- Provide financial assistance or vouchers to help families access essential items in the market, such as food, clothing, and healthcare.

4- Combat Exploitation and Abuse:

- Establish strict measures to prevent exploitation and abuse, particularly against women and persons with disabilities, in both the shelter environment and during aid distribution.
- Create inclusive safe spaces and reporting mechanisms where individuals can seek support if subjected to abuse.

5. Support for Children:

- Create inclusive spaces for children to play, learn, and release emotional energy. Provide toys, playground equipment, and safe, private spaces for children to rest and engage in activities.
- Focus on the emotional well-being of children, including trauma-informed care, and addressing psychological issues like anxiety, fear, and depression.
- Ensure adequate clothing and bedding to protect children from seasonal illnesses and the cold.

Recommendation and Area for Improvement

6. Provide Accessibility and Inclusion:

- Ensure that all facilities, such as latrines, play areas, and medical clinics, are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Include assistive devices for persons with disabilities and provide a means for replacing lost or damaged devices.
- Address communication barriers, ensuring that persons with disabilities can contact family members and access essential services.

7. Address Psychological Needs:

- Offer psychological support services to all displaced persons, particularly for children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, who may experience heightened levels of trauma.
- Provide mental health counseling and trauma recovery programs in shelters to mitigate the psychological toll of displacement and the war.

8. Safe and Inclusive Spaces:

- Establish safe spaces for vulnerable groups, especially women, children, and persons with disabilities, with facilities for education, health care, and psychological support.
- Make efforts to prevent harassment and verbal abuse at aid distribution points and other public spaces by training staff and volunteers in respectful and inclusive practices of displacement and the war.

9. Clean Water and Sanitation:

- Ensure access to clean drinking water at displacement sites to prevent waterborne diseases.
- Improve sanitation facilities, ensuring that latrines are accessible, clean, and private for all individuals, including those with disabilities.

10. Community Awareness and Support:

- Raise awareness about the specific needs of persons with disabilities, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups among displaced persons and aid workers to foster empathy and reduce stigma.
- Implement community-building programs to reduce tensions and conflicts among families and other displaced persons by offering support and conflict resolution mechanisms.

11. Access to Education and Protection:

- Ensure that children, especially those with disabilities, have access to education and recreational activities.
- Provide protection services to prevent gender-based violence, harassment, and exploitation, particularly in crisis situations.

Contact info.



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