



MAS

PALESTINE ECONOMIC POLICY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE MAS

Restoring Household Access to Essential Infrastructure Services in Post-War Gaza: Housing, Shelter, Electricity, and Water

2026

ISBN 978-9950-417-23-6

Restoring Household Access to Essential Infrastructure Services in Post-War Gaza: Housing, Shelter, Electricity, and Water

Research Team:

Main Researcher: Dr. Rabeh Morrar
Assistant Researcher: Fadi Daraghmeh

Translation: Khalil Fawadleh

Layout: Lina Abdallah

This paper was funded by **The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development**



Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)

© 2026 All Right reserved (MAS)

Jerusalem and Ramallah

ISBN 978-9950-417-23-6

Foreword

This research-policy paper, the second in a series addressing access to essential services, was prepared amid the unprecedented conditions created by the Israeli war on Palestine since 7 October 2023, which has produced one of the most severe and multidimensional humanitarian, economic, and social crises in contemporary Palestinian history. The large-scale military aggression, now persisting for more than twenty-three months, has caused near-total devastation across the Gaza Strip, destroying critical infrastructure, housing, energy networks, water facilities, and sanitation services. It has also led to unprecedented, forced displacement, affecting nearly 90% of the Gaza Strip's population. At the same time, the war's repercussions have deeply affected the West Bank through economic decline, slowing growth, rising unemployment and poverty, and worsening fiscal and institutional distortions.

Amid the near-complete collapse of economic activity in the Gaza Strip and the erosion of the basic conditions required for a dignified life, the crisis has extended beyond the scope of an emergency humanitarian response to become a structural crisis affecting the very foundations of human survival and development prospects. Access to safe shelter, electricity, and potable water has become a daily challenge for the majority of Palestinian households, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, including women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Moreover, restrictions on the entry of fuel and essential equipment, together with the continued targeting of civilian facilities, have severely undermined local capacities for self-recovery and the restoration of essential services.

This policy research paper aims to provide a comprehensive analytical and research framework for examining Palestinian households' access to vital infrastructure services in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the October 2023 war, within the broader perspective of Palestine's socioeconomic recovery during the 2025-2026 period. The paper focuses on three critical sectors that constitute the structural foundation of daily life and community resilience: housing and shelter, electricity and energy, and water and sanitation. It also offers an in-depth analysis of the scale of destruction, patterns of deprivation, and the forced coping mechanisms adopted by households and local communities in response to the crisis.

Adopting an evidence-based policy approach, the paper links the diagnosis of structural gaps with the formulation of a package of practical interventions tailored to different stakeholder groups. Beyond assessment and analysis, the paper seeks to support policymakers and national and international institutions in designing more effective, targeted, and equitable interventions. These interventions can facilitate the transition from emergency relief to a gradual pathway of recovery and reconstruction. They can also strengthen the foundations of socioeconomic resilience within an exceptionally complex political and economic environment.

I would like to express the institute's sincere appreciation to the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) for its generous support of this series. Its continued commitment to supporting research and policy initiatives makes an important contribution to strengthening the resilience of the Palestinian economy and laying the foundations for development under extraordinary circumstances. I also extend my thanks to the research team, led by Dr. Rabah Morrar, Assistant Researcher Fadi Daraghme, and Data Analyst Ahmad Allawneh, for their scholarly and professional efforts.

Feras Milhem
Director General

Executive Summary

Since the outbreak of the war on October 7, 2023, the Gaza Strip has suffered extensive destruction on an unprecedented scale, affecting most aspects of life and vital infrastructure. Intense bombardment and ongoing military operations have destroyed large parts of cities and residential neighborhoods, giving rise to a profound humanitarian and economic crisis. Estimates indicate that over 64,000 Palestinians have been killed and over 172,000 others injured. Meanwhile, approximately 1.9 million people, accounting for around 90% of the population, have endured repeated internal displacement. These conditions have coincided with an almost complete collapse of the economic and social system, which has particularly affected the most vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

As for the housing sector, data indicate that hundreds of thousands of housing units in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed or damaged. During the first year of the war alone, approximately 292,000 housing units were destroyed, accounting for over 60% of the pre-war housing stock. Meanwhile, the total number of fully or partially damaged units exceeded 330,000 by 2025. Satellite imagery has documented the destruction of nearly 70% of buildings in the Strip. This extensive destruction has triggered a massive wave of forced displacement, as most families were compelled to leave their homes multiple times in search of temporary shelters. Studies indicate that some families have been displaced more than ten times in the course of the war. Given this reality, many residents have been forced to seek refuge in makeshift tents, damaged buildings, or school-turned-shelters, while others are staying with relatives or in non-residential structures. These conditions have created a severe housing crisis, with approximately 1.8 million people in need of emergency shelters, amid severe overcrowding, lack of privacy, and inadequate basic services.

In addition to the housing crisis, the energy sector in Gaza has experienced an almost complete collapse due to power supply cuts and the destruction of energy infrastructure. Before the war, the Gaza Strip relied primarily on electricity imported from Israel as well as on the electricity generated by its sole power plant. However, these sources ceased completely at the outset of the aggression. As a result, over 2.1 million people lost access to electricity, and residents and critical facilities were forced to rely on generators and limited solar power. Despite the heavy reliance on generators, restrictions on the entry of fuel into the Gaza Strip have made operating generators extremely difficult, which has adversely affected the operations of hospitals, water stations, bakeries, and shelters.

The water and sanitation sector has also suffered extensive destruction due to the damage of networks and infrastructure, and the lack of energy necessary to operate pumps and wastewater treatment plants. Water production in Gaza fell to less than 6% of pre-war levels during the first few months, at a time when two-thirds of the population received no more than 6 liters per person per day, far below the minimum water consumption per capita per day in emergencies. Damaged water networks have led to significant water leakage, while most wastewater treatment plants have stopped functioning. This has resulted in sewage overflowing into streets and solid waste accumulating, contributing to the spread of infectious diseases and further exacerbating health and environmental risks.

In light of these conditions, the paper proposes a set of policies and interventions to address the humanitarian crisis and enhance access to essential infrastructure services. This proposed set

of interventions includes emergency housing and reconstruction programs, and the expansion of the use of renewable energy, such as solar power, to generate electricity. It also includes the implementation of urgent repair programs for water and sanitation networks to improve water resource management. The paper also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between the Palestinian government, the international community, the private sector, and the local community to ensure an effective and sustainable humanitarian response, thereby contributing to rebuilding infrastructure and reinforcing the Gaza community's ability to remain steadfast and recover in the post-war period.