



Facts Sheet

«Assessing the Needs of Persons with Disabilities during the Israeli War on the Gaza Strip»

Implement by

Nusierat Rehabilitation and Social Training Association (NRSTA)

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Executive Summary

This study aimed to assess the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) during the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip and to provide practical recommendations for decision-makers and donors to improve their conditions and alleviate their suffering. The study employed a descriptive-analytical method, which effectively helps achieve its objectives. Data collection utilized two tools: a questionnaire and interviews. The sample consisted of 100 PwDs who are permanent residents in tents within shelters for displaced people in the Middle Area.

The study resulted in several recommendations, including the provision of basic needs for PwDs, such as suitable shelters, financial assistance, food, water, tents, tarps, winter clothing, mattresses, blankets, and hygiene supplies. Achieving this requires coordination with government institutions and humanitarian organizations to ensure adequate support and improve their conditions amid displacement and conflict.

Furthermore, the study recommended implementing programs aimed at effectively integrating PwDs into society by enhancing infrastructure and providing appropriate education, employment opportunities, and healthcare. It also emphasized the importance of ensuring equal opportunities and social justice, which would contribute to a more positive societal perception of PwDs.

الملخص التنفيذي

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على احتياجات الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة في ظل فترة الحرب الإسرائيلية على قطاع غزة، وتقييمها ووضع توصيات عملية لصانعي القرار والجهات المانحة، بهدف تحسين أوضاعهم والتخفيف من معاناتهم. واستخدمت هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، حيث يُساعد هذا المنهج على تحقيق أهداف الدراسة، واعتمدت الدراسة في جمع البيانات على استخدام أدوات الاستبانة والمقابلة، حيث شملت عينة الدراسة (100) مفردة من الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة، المقيمين (المتواجدين بشكل دائم) في الخيام داخل مراكز الإيواء في المحافظة الوسطى. وأدلت هذه الدراسة إلى عدة توصيات منها: ضرورة العمل على توفير الاحتياجات الأساسية للأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة، مثل مكان ملائم للزوج، والمساعدات المالية، والغذاء، والماء، والخيام والشوادر، والملابس الشتوية والفرشات والأغطية، وأدوات النظافة، وذلك من خلال التنسيق مع المؤسسات الحكومية والمنظمات الإنسانية؛ لضمان توفير الدعم الكافي لتحسين ظروفهم في مواجهة النزوح وظروف الحرب، وأوصت أيضاً بضرورة اعتماد برامج دامجّة؛ تركز على دمج الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة بشكل فعال في المجتمع من خلال تحسين البنية التحتية، وتوفير التعليم، والعمل، والرعاية الصحية المناسبين، وتوفير فرص متكافئة. وتحقيق العدالة الاجتماعية، مما يؤدي إلى تعزيز نظرة المجتمع الإيجابية نحوهم.

- **Preface:**

PwDs in Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip, face exceptional and complex challenges exacerbated by ongoing wars and hostilities. They are considered one of the most vulnerable groups in society, as conflicts significantly limit their access to essential services such as healthcare, education, adequate shelter, food, and water. Moreover, PwDs are often marginalized during wartime, which increases their susceptibility to suffering and risk.

According to statistics from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) 2023, PwDs in Palestine constitute 2.1% of the total population. This includes 1.8% of the population in the West Bank and 2.6% in the Gaza Strip before the recent war.¹The Palestinian Ministry of Health and active community-based rehabilitation centres in the Gaza Strip report that the percentage of PwDs in Palestine has been rapidly increasing, particularly in the Gaza Strip. This rise is attributed to the ongoing hostilities that began on October 7, 2023, which have resulted in lasting disabilities among the residents of the Gaza Strip.

The preparation and publication of this study occurred thirteen months following the Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip. The significance of this timing is underscored by its alignment with the International Day of PwDs, which is recognized annually on December 3. This choice of timing was intentionally made to illuminate the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in the Gaza Strip and to link their experiences and suffering with international initiatives aimed at advocating for their rights and promoting their engagement in society.

The significance of this study is particularly pertinent given the current circumstances. Its primary objective is to elucidate the most critical aspects of deficiencies in the delivery and provision of essential services to PwDs. By identifying these deficiencies, the study aims to engage the attention of local authorities, encompassing both officials and the public, as well as donor organizations at both international and local levels. This engagement is intended to foster efforts to bridge existing gaps and rectify shortcomings in providing essential aid and services.

Furthermore, the study aspires to provide a comprehensive analysis of the prevailing situation and to delineate the necessary future steps aimed at enhancing the conditions of PwDs, especially in the context of emergency humanitarian situations.

- **Introduction:**

On the occasion of the International Day of PwDs, which falls on December 3 of each year, and after more than thirteen months have passed since the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, the need arises - more than ever - to develop scientific concepts of the basic and necessary needs that PwDs need, and hence the importance of this study.

This study systematically reviews the assessment and identification of the needs of PwDs residing in shelters within the Middle Governorate. It focuses on the critical and urgent needs that have emerged during this emergency period, primarily due to the insufficient availability

¹ the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) 2023

<https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/postar.aspx?lang=ar&ItemID=4647>

of resources, which has exacerbated their health, social, psychological, and economic conditions.

The primary objective of this study is to identify the challenges and difficulties encountered by PwDs in these shelters. The findings will culminate in a set of recommendations aimed at informing decision-makers and potential donors.

Recognizing the critical importance of this topic, the Nuseirat Rehabilitation and Social Training Association has taken the initiative to undertake this study. A team of specialists has been entrusted with its implementation, aimed specifically at addressing the needs of displaced PwDs residing in shelters within the Middle Governorate. The study was conducted through field visits to the shelters and conducting a comprehensive field study, which used both questionnaires and interviews. The objective is to assess and evaluate the needs of these people, particularly in the context of the emergency circumstances faced by the Palestinian people as a result of the ongoing Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip.

- **Study Methodology:**

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, which is deemed appropriate for the subject matter. This methodology facilitates the attainment of the study's objectives, specifically the assessment and identification of the needs of PwDs residing in displacement centers within the Middle Governorate. The outcome of this analysis will be presented in a sectoral policy paper aimed at addressing the needs of PwDs in this context.

Study Tools:

The study used questionnaire and interview tools to collect data.

- ❖ **Questionnaire:** The study relied primarily on applying the questionnaire tool to the study community. To facilitate the task and ensure that the information reaches the respondents with visual disabilities accurately, the questions were read to them clearly, and their answers were recorded by the statistical researcher. As for the people with hearing disabilities, the questions were translated and data was collected by a sign language specialist, and their answers were recorded by the statistical researcher. As for the people with mental disabilities, the questions were read in a simplified way that suits the people with mental disabilities, and sometimes with the help of their relatives.
- ❖ **Interview:** The interview tool was also used to compensate for any shortcomings that might arise through the questionnaire tool, based on asking some questions related to the study topic to the respondents, and then collecting and analyzing these answers. This tool was used to know the respondents' opinions on some specific topics, and to determine the most important needs of PwDs in displacement camps.

Study Sample:

A sample of 100 PwDs who reside in tents within shelters in the Middle Governorate was selected. The work team, supervised by the statistical researcher at the Nuseirat Rehabilitation and Social Training Association, conducted field visits to 12 shelters. During these visits, they interviewed PwDs and completed a needs assessment questionnaire. The

shelters were selected in collaboration with camp administrations to ensure the presence of people with disabilities in these locations.

Sample Characteristics:

In terms of Gender: The distribution of the study sample by gender reveals that 53% of the questionnaire participants are male, while 47% are female. This distribution indicates a relatively balanced representation of both genders within the study sample, allowing for the collection of comprehensive and balanced insights into the needs of PwDs during the emergency period from both genders.

In terms of Age: The results of the distribution of study sample individuals show a balanced distribution according to age, as the age group (less than 15 years) represents 26% of the total sample. The age group (15 to 30 years) constitutes 25%, and the older group (30 years and over) constitutes 49%. In the context of the Emergency Needs Identification Form for PwDs, this distribution emphasizes the importance of tailored support strategies to address the specific needs of different age groups. Children and youth (under 15 and aged 15-30) may encounter challenges related to education and psychosocial support. In contrast, older persons (30 years and above) may require ongoing healthcare and additional assistance with mobility or handling chronic diseases.

In terms of type of disability: The distribution of the study sample based on the types of disabilities shows that 40% of the individuals are persons with physical disabilities, representing the largest group in the sample. Additionally, 21% of the individuals are persons with intellectual disabilities, 12% are persons with hearing disabilities, 9% are persons with visual disabilities, and 4% are persons with psychological disabilities. Finally, 14% of the individuals are persons with multiple disabilities, which includes more than one type of disability.

The percentages highlight the diverse types of disabilities among the sample members, indicating that the needs of PwDs during an emergency can vary greatly. Persons with physical disabilities may need mobility aids or assistive devices, while persons with hearing or visual disabilities may encounter additional challenges in communication and mobility. Additionally, persons with intellectual or psychological disabilities may require ongoing psychosocial support and specialized care to meet their needs in an emergency. These results indicate the need to provide a flexible and comprehensive response that considers all types of disabilities. This will ensure that each person's needs are met appropriately, including providing assistive devices, effective communication, and psychosocial support in times of crisis.

In terms of place of residence: The distribution of the study sample by residence indicates that the majority, 53%, of the participants live in Al-Zawaida area, while 47% reside in Al-Nuseirat area. This nearly even distribution between the two areas provides a comprehensive understanding of the needs of PwDs in both locations. In the context of the Emergency Needs Assessment Form for PwDs, the percentages suggest that local conditions in both areas may impact the specific needs of this group in different ways. The challenges faced by PwDs in Nusierat may differ from those encountered by persons in Al-Zawaida, particularly regarding access to essential services such as healthcare, social support, and the availability of safe spaces and adapted shelter facilities. Therefore, it is crucial to consider this geographical

distribution when planning to provide appropriate support and services to PwDs during emergencies.

In terms of marital status: The results of the distribution of the study sample individuals according to marital status indicate that 68% of the individuals in the sample are (singles), the most significant percentage in the sample. In comparison, 28% of the individuals are (married), 3% are (widowed), and 1% of the individuals are (divorced). The indicators reveal that the majority of PwDs in the sample are single. This status may influence their social and psychological needs during emergencies. Single persons are potentially more vulnerable to social isolation, highlighting the need for increased social and psychological support for them in such situations. Conversely, married persons may require additional assistance to address the challenges associated with family life, particularly during periods of displacement or emergencies.

These findings suggest that marital status should be a key consideration when designing support services for PwDs in emergencies. Comprehensive care tailored to meet the specific needs of each group, whether single, married, or in other marital or social situations, is essential.

- **Axes of the Emergency Needs Assessment Form for PwDs in light of war and interpretation of results:**

The assessment form for the needs of PwDs in light of war consisted of eight axes, as follows:

- 1. First Axis: Access To Basic Services During an Emergency:**

The first axis aimed to identify the difficulties faced by PwDs in obtaining services (health care, medicines/medical supplies, food/water, hygiene tools, safe shelter, financial assistance, assistive devices).

The results show that all PwDs included in the study face significant challenges that hinder their access to basic services during emergencies and displacement. These challenges are severe, with access difficulties reaching 100% across all levels. The essential services affected include basic healthcare, the provision of necessary medications and medical supplies, access to adequate food and water, as well as personal hygiene products, safe shelter, and financial assistance to fulfill their needs. Additionally, the availability of assistive devices, which play a crucial role in facilitating daily activities and enhancing independence, is also severely limited. This alarming finding underscores the barriers that PwDs encounter in accessing essential services during times of conflict.

During an interview with a person with a physical disability, he stated:

"I am from the north (north of Gaza Strip). When we were in the north, there were institutions we dealt with that always provided assistance to me. But now that I have moved to the south, I don't know anyone who can help me. The locations of the institutions have changed, and the people have changed. There aren't even any contact numbers to reach these places to get my right to access essential services,

assistive tools, food and drink, and financial aid. I am in dire need of all basic services."

2. The Second Axis: Health Condition:

2.1. Do you experience any injuries or a decline in your health condition due to the war?

The results reflect that the war has significantly affected the health conditions of PwDs, as the data showed that (55%) of this category experienced new injuries or a worsening of their health condition as a result of the conditions caused by the war. This indicates that more than half of PwDs face additional health challenges, whether due to direct injuries related to the war, such as wounds and fractures or due to the worsening of chronic diseases due to the lack of access to healthcare and medical supplies promptly. On the other hand, the remaining percentage (45%), despite not experiencing new injuries or a worsening of their health condition, may be at similar risk if the conditions of war and displacement continue. These results confirm the urgent need to provide specialized medical and therapeutic services for PwDs in conflict areas and shelters. They also reflect the importance of strengthening emergency healthcare systems and ensuring fair and easy access for this category, which alleviates their suffering and improves their quality of life.

2.2. Did you receive appropriate health care after the injury or worsening condition?

The findings reveal a troubling reality regarding the access to healthcare for PwDs following injuries or the deterioration of their health conditions. It was determined that (88%) of PwDs did not receive adequate healthcare services. This lack of access to essential primary healthcare has resulted in further deterioration of their health and heightened suffering, indicating a significant deficiency in the humanitarian response aimed at this population during the ongoing conflict.

Conversely, the small percentage of persons (12%) who received healthcare underscores the limited availability of services and the barriers to accessing them. These findings highlight the urgent necessity for comprehensive healthcare programs designed specifically for PwDs. Such initiatives should prioritize improving access to medical facilities, supplying essential health resources, and ensuring timely and appropriate treatment. Furthermore, enhancing coordination between humanitarian organizations and health authorities is critical to delivering healthcare more equitably and efficiently. This approach will help mitigate the impact of war on the health of this vulnerable population and improve their ability to adapt to challenging situations.

When one of the children with a physical disability was asked about healthcare, the child's father stated:

"When I moved to the south through the safe passage, I was forced to leave my son's assistive and stabilization devices at our home in the north. When I arrived in the south, I tried to find the devices to provide for my son, but I couldn't because they are not available. My son's health deteriorated, which has significantly affected him."

3. The Third Axis: Immediate/Urgent Needs:

3.1. What are your most immediate/urgent needs?

The findings of the study underscore the immediate and urgent needs faced by PwDs in emergency and displacement situations, with the identified needs reaching an alarming 100%. This statistic highlights the significant challenges that affect their daily lives and exacerbate their suffering, particularly in the absence of a supportive environment that meets their basic requirements.

Among these needs, urgent medical treatment is crucial to maintain health and mitigate the worsening of emergency health conditions. Additionally, securing a safe space for those displaced is a priority to protect them from the physical and psychological threats they face. The study also emphasizes the necessity of providing assistive tools that empower PwDs and enhance their mobility and independence. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for psychological support to help them cope with the trauma resulting from conflict and displacement.

Financial assistance remains vital for meeting daily necessities such as food and water, which are fundamental for sustaining life. Additionally, hygiene products are essential in disease prevention, while social support is critical for fostering a sense of security and belonging. Regarding material needs, items such as shelter tents or tarpaulins, winter clothing, blankets, and mattresses are indispensable for protecting PwDs from harsh weather conditions and ensuring the minimum requirements for a dignified living.

These findings collectively emphasize the urgent call for a comprehensive and integrated humanitarian response to effectively address these critical needs.

3.2. What is your top priority at the moment?

The findings presented illuminate the salient priorities of PwDs in the context of emergencies and displacement. Notably, the demand for "diapers" was identified as the foremost concern, with 45% of respondents indicating dependency on these essential supplies for maintaining personal hygiene and mitigating health complications associated with inadequate hygiene practices. This high demand can be attributed to the scarcity of such items in local markets, where they are often available at prohibitive prices, and their unavailability in community-based rehabilitation centres, thus imposing additional burdens on caregivers.

Regarding to assistive devices emerged as a priority for 21% of PwDs. These devices — encompassing wheelchairs, crutches, and other mobility aids— are critical for fostering independence and facilitating social inclusion. The need for accessible bathrooms for PwDs was cited at the same percentage (21%), underscoring the lack of adequately equipped health facilities and the resultant challenges to maintaining personal hygiene and privacy, particularly in shelters and other displacement contexts.

Furthermore, 13% of respondents identified speech therapy as a priority, highlighting the necessity for specialized rehabilitation services, particularly for children and adults facing speech and communication challenges. The absence of such services can severely impact their quality of life and restrict their community engagement.

Collectively, these results underscore the diverse and multifaceted needs of PwDs, ranging from basic daily necessities to specialized rehabilitation services. There is an urgent call for a holistic and integrated response that addresses these varied priorities. Such a response must prioritize the immediate provision of diapers and assistive devices, the rehabilitation of health facilities to accommodate the specific needs of PwDs, and the inclusion of speech therapy services within comprehensive care frameworks.

When asked about the most immediate needs, a woman with a physical disability stated:

"When I moved from the north to the south, I came walking on my legs; I could walk. But one time, there was shelling close to us, and I lost the ability to walk. I needed a wheelchair, and we tried to get one from the institutions, but we couldn't find any. In the end, we begged our neighbours in the shelter to borrow a wheelchair. The chair is in bad condition; its wheels don't have tyres, and the metal is rusted. I also can't go to the bathroom anymore, so I urgently need diapers because I can't go to the bathroom, especially at night. Moving in this chair is difficult because there's no flat ground to move on, and many times I end up falling from the chair."

4. The Fourth Axis: Safety And Security:

4.1. Do you feel safe in your current location?

The findings indicate that a significant majority of PwDs (87%) do not feel safe in the shelters within the displacement camps located in the Middle Governorate. This pervasive sense of insecurity highlights an environment fraught with challenges and risks that jeopardize their physical and psychological well-being, further exacerbating their vulnerabilities amid displacement and emergency conditions. Several factors contribute to this lack of security, including inadequate protection measures, poor camp infrastructure, and a lack of privacy. Additionally, they face the potential threat of violence, abuse, or discrimination. While only 13% of PwDs reported feeling safe, this limited percentage may be attributed to their presence in less hazardous surroundings or the availability of additional support that lessens their feelings of insecurity. Nonetheless, the high percentage of those feeling unsafe underscores the urgent need for intervention aimed at improving shelter conditions and enhancing the sense of security for this vulnerable population.

4.2. Are their special arrangements you need to ensure your safety in times of emergency?

The results indicate that 61% of PwDs lack special arrangements to ensure their safety and security during times of emergency and displacement. This finding highlights significant gaps in addressing the needs of this vital group during critical situations, such as instances of bombing. The reality suggests a deficiency in preventive arrangements and procedures necessary for safeguarding PwDs during crises, thereby posing a considerable threat to their physical and psychological well-being. Potential reasons for this situation may include the absence of emergency plans tailored to this group or inadequate awareness regarding how to address their specific needs during emergencies.

Conversely, the data reveal that 39% of PwDs do have special arrangements in place to ensure their safety during displacement or bombing. While this percentage indicates that a segment of this population benefits from designated safety procedures, it remains insufficient

relative to the urgent requirement to expand these provisions for all PwDs. Essential accommodations may involve the preparation of shelters to cater to their needs, including safe pathways to exits, designated protected areas, and the availability of medical care or prompt psychological support in emergencies.

The lack of specialized arrangements for the safety of PwDs during emergency situations underscores the pressing need to develop comprehensive response strategies and plans that factor in their unique requirements. It is crucial that these strategies prioritize emergency assistance specifically for PwDs, which includes establishing relief teams trained to address the needs of this group and providing necessary equipment, such as wheelchairs or assistive devices, to facilitate their transport to safe locations during crises. Additionally, it is imperative to ensure that safe facilities, including shelters and tents, are equipped to meet the needs of PwDs, featuring dedicated routes and equipment that enhance their mobility.

5. Fifth Axis: Support and Assistance:

5.1. Did you receive any support from local or international organizations during the war period?

The findings indicate that a striking 92% of PwDs did not receive any assistance from local or international institutions during the war period, highlighting a significant deficiency in responses to the needs of this vulnerable group in times of crisis. This high percentage underscores the limited support available for PwDs during emergencies, which exacerbates their suffering and heightens their vulnerability in conflict situations. Humanitarian organizations, whether local or international, either failed to reach this demographic or did not prioritize their needs during the war. Given that PwDs face challenges in mobilising, such as difficulty crowding or standing in lines for aid, there is an imperative to enhance the humanitarian response in alignment with their specific needs.

In contrast, only 8% of PwDs reported receiving support from these institutions. While this figure may suggest some efforts were made, it remains negligible relative to the substantial needs of this group during emergencies. These findings emphasise the urgent requirement for improved coordination among local and international humanitarian organisations and government agencies to ensure effective and sustainable support for PwDs during crises. The failure to provide adequate assistance exacerbates the challenges faced by this population, particularly in accessing health care, humanitarian aid, and essential services that uphold their dignity and well-being.

In this context, a person with a disability reported difficulties in receiving assistance from organizations during the war, stating:

"Most of us are unmarried, so our names are not listed in the organisations' records because their policy requires us to be married. Because of this, we often miss out on vouchers and financial assistance. Additionally, since we can't use the internet, we cannot fill out applications to receive help."

5.2. Do you have access to communication channels or information on how to get help/assistant?

The findings indicate that 75% of PwDs do not have access to communication channels or information regarding assistance, underscoring a significant challenge in facilitating communication and interaction with this demographic during times of war and emergencies. This substantial percentage suggests that the majority of PwDs struggle to obtain critical information necessary for accessing support and assistance during crises. Several factors may contribute to this communication gap, including the inadequacies of information infrastructure within displacement camps, a lack of appropriate means to access official or humanitarian assistance channels, and insufficient awareness or coordination among relevant organizations and PwDs.

Conversely, the data reveals that only 25% of PwDs do have access to communication channels or information on how to seek assistance. Although this figure represents a small proportion, it highlights some efforts to enhance information accessibility for this group. Nonetheless, this percentage remains low in relation to the urgent need for comprehensive access channels for all PwDs.

6. Sixth Axis: Challenges Faced by PwDs During Emergencies:

6.1. What are the biggest challenges you face as a person with a disability during a war?

The findings indicate that PwDs encounter significant and varied challenges during wartime. The foremost issue is the difficulty accessing assistive devices, reported at 35%. These tools, including wheelchairs, crutches, and other essential aids, are crucial for maintaining mobility and independence. As a result, many persons find themselves immobilised or unable to move effectively, severely hampering their ability to adapt to crises.

The second challenge, at 18%, is access to safe shelters. This highlights the struggles that PwDs face in reaching secure areas that offer safety and protection, likely due to inadequate infrastructure or a lack of accessible shelter facilities and accommodations to meet their needs. These facilities must be tailored to ensure safety and security during emergencies, featuring accessible pathways and reliable transportation options.

Discrimination or marginalisation in accessing food aid ranks as the third most significant challenge faced by PwDs, affecting approximately 13% of this population. This difficulty may arise from various factors, including exclusion from aid distribution, inadequate consideration of their needs, or barriers inherent within the camp or shelter environments.

Where the provision of personal hygiene supplies follows closely behind, accounting for 12% of the challenges reported. Maintaining personal hygiene is critical for upholding public health standards, particularly in emergency scenarios; a lack of access to these supplies disproportionately heightens the risk of disease among PwDs. The observed shortages in the local market and unreasonable price increases for available hygiene products exacerbate this issue and warrant urgent attention.

Regarding to mobility and movement challenges within shelters are identified as the fifth primary concern, impacting 11% of PwDs. These individuals often rely on mobility/assistive devices to access essential facilities, such as bathrooms or aid distribution points. The absence of accessible pathways and appropriate mobility tools and devices significantly impairs their ability to navigate their environment, intensifying their struggle for independence and participation.

Finally, inadequate access to appropriate healthcare services ranks sixth, affecting 10% of PwDs. Specialised healthcare is imperative in emergencies, where the risk of exacerbating pre-existing conditions is high. The unavailability of necessary healthcare provisions can lead to a deterioration of health status, as evidenced by cases where individuals have faced setbacks due to interruptions in critical services such as physical therapy during displacement.

These findings illustrate that PwDs encounter a multitude of complex challenges during periods of conflict. Consequently, a comprehensive and multifaceted response from humanitarian organisations and governmental agencies is essential. It is crucial to ensure equitable access to assistive devices, accessible shelter facilities, food aid, and healthcare supplies that are responsive to this group's unique needs. Additionally, measures must be implemented to eradicate discrimination and marginalisation in the delivery of these essential services.

6.2. Do you feel that the community or humanitarian organizations adequately meet your needs?

The results indicate that 97% of PwDs feel that society and humanitarian organizations have not adequately addressed their needs. This high percentage reflects a significant gap in the response to this group's needs, highlighting a clear failure to provide sufficient support during crises and emergencies. Despite the presence of numerous humanitarian organizations operating in displacement centres, PwDs experience substantial marginalization in meeting their unique needs, which necessitates specialized care and planning.

This reality suggests that the assistance provided by humanitarian organizations and society does not adequately reflect the actual requirements of PwDs in times of crisis. This gap may arise from a lack of awareness regarding the challenges faced by PwDs or from the absence of emergency response strategies designed to accommodate their specific needs. Furthermore, this assessment reveals that PwDs encounter difficulties in obtaining the necessary assistance to sustain their daily lives. The failure to adequately meet their needs exacerbates their suffering and exposes them to additional health and psychological risks, which can have severe consequences for their well-being.

Although only 3% of PwDs reported feeling that their needs have been met adequately, this percentage is alarmingly low. It underscores the urgent need to improve the effectiveness of responses from the community and humanitarian organizations.

It is essential to allocate relevant programs and support specifically aimed at addressing the needs of PwDs. Their unique circumstances must be taken into consideration in the planning and implementation of humanitarian responses. This requires the development of precise

mechanisms that encompass the provision of accessible infrastructure, appropriate health services, social and psychological support, assistive devices, and other necessities.

7. Seventh Axis: Awareness And Human Rights Advocacy Services:

7.1. Have you participated in awareness sessions or training on the rights of PwDs?

The results indicate that 42% of PwDs participated in awareness sessions and training concerning their rights, while 58% did not engage in such sessions. This statistic underscores a significant gap in PwDs' access to information and training related to their rights, potentially resulting in a lack of awareness of their human and legal rights during crises. Although the 42% participation rate may reflect some efforts to promote awareness within this demographic, it remains relatively low in comparison to the necessary levels, particularly during emergencies when it becomes imperative to inform PwDs about their rights to receive assistance and protection.

Factors contributing to the low participation rates in awareness sessions may include a lack of organization for such sessions, insufficient access to information regarding the timing and locations of these events, challenges in providing the necessary accommodations for PwDs to attend, or a combination of these issues. The deficit in awareness regarding the rights of PwDs in crises heightens their vulnerability to discrimination and marginalization, adversely affecting their capacity to assert their needs and access essential services during critical periods.

Therefore, it is crucial to enhance efforts to provide training and awareness-raising opportunities for all individuals with disabilities to ensure they comprehend their rights and the resources available for support and assistance. Additionally, fostering their effective participation in society is vital for promoting equity and inclusion.

8. Eighth Axis: Community challenges:

8.1. Do you face any difficulties related to discrimination or marginalisation due to disability?

The findings indicate that 38% of PwDs experience discrimination and marginalization attributed due to their disability, while 62% report not encountering such challenges. This statistic suggests that over one-third of PwDs endure significant discrimination and marginalization, which can adversely affect their access to fundamental services, including healthcare and nutrition, as well as their overall social interactions. Discrimination manifests in various forms, such as exclusion from humanitarian assistance and a lack of recognition of their unique needs during crises.

In emergency contexts, the discrimination and marginalization faced by PwDs pose substantial obstacles to their meaningful engagement in society and impede their access to essential rights and services. This group may encounter difficulties in securing suitable shelter or accessing aid due to inadequate consideration of their specific requirements, such as the provision of assistive devices or accessible facilities.

While 62% of PwDs who do not perceive discrimination may suggest certain advancements in specific communities regarding the support available, it is imperative to acknowledge that this does not signify the attainment of an optimal situation for all. This figure may reflect localized improvements in resources or programs aimed at fostering inclusion; however, significant challenges remain prevalent in many areas, where equitable protection and fair opportunities for PwDs are still not assured.

8.2.How do you see society's perception towards people with disabilities?

The findings indicate that societal perceptions of PwDs are highly variable. According to the data, 40% of PwDs perceive society's view as mixed, while 36% report a negative perception, and only 24% believe that society views them positively. These statistics highlight the complex realities faced by PwDs in various societies, where significant challenges persist regarding the acceptance and recognition of their rights. The mixed perceptions suggest that societal attitudes towards PwDs can differ markedly; some individuals may exhibit positive and supportive behaviours, whereas others may demonstrate negative or dismissive attitudes. This disparity in views may stem from a lack of awareness about the rights of PwDs or from prevalent misconceptions that portray them as perpetually incapable or dependent on others.

When asked about society's perception, some PwDs reported that the outlook was positive at times and negative at others.

"I feel that some people look at me from a perspective of pity and compassion, thinking that I am a disabled person who cannot rely on myself. Honestly, I see it as a good and nice perspective, but it comes from a lack of awareness about people with disabilities. For instance, sometimes when I move from one place to another, people want to help me because I have a visual impairment, but I refuse their help. I am capable of moving from one place to another on my own. Before the war, I used to go to university by myself and attend classes, and I was the top student in my college."

The negative perception believed by 36% of PwDs, unfortunately, reflects the reality that many communities still harbour negative stereotypes about individuals with disabilities. This may include discrimination, underestimating their abilities, or even excluding them from social and economic opportunities. Such a perception can lead to their marginalization in many aspects of daily life, including access to education, employment, healthcare, and community participation.

When a person with Down syndrome was asked about society's perception, they said:

"The community's view is very negative; people mock and bully me a lot because my facial features are different from those of normal people. Additionally, people think I don't understand or know anything. Still, I am a person who feels and senses what is happening around me, and I also feel that I have value in society. Because of the community's perception, I feel I have no significance or importance."

On the other hand, 24% of PwDs believe that some individuals or communities treat this group with appreciation and respect, recognize their abilities, and work to integrate them effectively into various social and economic activities. This positive perception reflects an

improvement in awareness levels and the presence of efforts by some institutions and community organizations to promote the rights of PwDs.

One response from a person with visual disabilities regarding society's perception was:

"Honestly, I feel that the community's view is very positive because they help me when I want to move from one place to another. I also receive respect and appreciation from the people around me, who treat me as one of them without making me feel any deficiency. When we are sitting in a place, they introduce me to everyone present and do not ignore my presence."

• **Recommendations:**

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the aforementioned statistics and findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:

- 1- **Implement Awareness Initiatives:** Launch a series of initiatives aimed at raising community awareness and ensuring the effective inclusion of PwDs. This should include legal rights education for both persons with and without disabilities, psychological and social support sessions, training on how to interact with PwDs and guidance for PwDs and their families on handling evacuation orders and displacement. Additionally, provide education on personal hygiene and awareness about minimizing risks from war remnants and unexploded ordnance.
- 2- **Urgent Intervention for Rights Development:** It is crucial to urgently develop more inclusive and equitable strategies to guarantee the rights of PwDs, focusing on improving access to essential services. This requires enhanced coordination among government agencies, international humanitarian organizations, and local community-based organizations.
- 3- **Raise Awareness During Emergencies:** Promote awareness of the rights of PwDs in emergency situations, ensuring their inclusion as a priority in humanitarian response plans. This approach should aim to provide protection, dignity, and easy access to essential services in these challenging circumstances.
- 4- **Specialized Medical Services:** Provide specialized medical and therapeutic services for PwDs in displacement camps, which will help alleviate their suffering and improve their quality of life. Coordination with humanitarian organizations and health agencies is essential to deliver appropriate healthcare and mitigate the war's impact on the health of PwDs.
- 5- **Meet Basic Needs:** Ensure the provision of essential needs for PwDs, including safe shelter, financial assistance, food, water, tents, winter clothing, mattresses, blankets, and hygiene supplies. This should be achieved through coordinated efforts among civil society organizations and active humanitarian agencies in the field of disability and shelter management to prevent service duplication.
- 6- **Accessible Facilities:** The study highlights the importance of providing accessible facilities, such as adapted bathrooms for PwDs, adult diapers, speech therapy, assistive devices, and social and psychological support. Coordination between governmental bodies and humanitarian organizations is crucial for effective implementation.

- 7- **Ensure Safety and Dignity:** Intensify efforts to create a safe environment that ensures the safety and dignity of PwDs. This requires integrated actions from official entities, humanitarian organizations, and the local community to guarantee necessary protections in displacement camps.
- 8- **Engage Local Non-Governmental Organizations:** Involve community-based rehabilitation centres and other local NGOs that work in the field of disability in delivering and distributing assistance to PwDs. Their extensive experience and understanding of disability issues, along with detailed databases and logistical capabilities, make them well-suited to serve this population effectively.
- 9- **Community Education Programs:** Enhance community education programs to inform individuals about the rights of PwDs. While achieving this goal may seem daunting in the context of war and emergencies, it is essential to emphasize the importance of this approach alongside meeting the basic needs of PwDs.
- 10- **Educational Initiatives for Children with Disabilities:** Strengthen educational initiatives specifically for children with disabilities, especially as the Ministry of Education and UNRWA schools gradually resume educational services. It is unacceptable for children with disabilities to remain without education. Given the prolonged war and emergency conditions, there is an urgent need to provide educational services, psychosocial support, and speech therapy for children with disabilities.

These recommendations aim to provide a framework for enhancing the support and resources available to PwDs in conflict zones, ensuring their rights are respected and their needs are met holistically.

The End,,