



## FACT SHEET

# Implications of new INGOs registration measures and their impact on local organization in Palestine

"EXPECTED IMPACTS AND POSSIBLE SCENARIOS"



2026



## Palestinian NGOs Network – PNGO

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### FACT SHEET

# Implications of new INGOs registration measures and their impact on local organization in Palestine. "Expected Impacts and Possible Scenarios"

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# Implications of Restrictions on the Registration of International Non-Governmental Organizations Operating in the Palestinian Territory

## "Expected Impacts and Possible Scenarios"

### Executive Summary

This paper examines the impact of restrictions imposed on the work of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) operating in the occupied Palestinian territory with a particular focus on their impact on Palestinian national NGOs (NNGOs) and local humanitarian response systems.

The paper explores how increased operational uncertainty, restrictions on humanitarian access, and disruptions to international partnerships may affect the sustainability, institutional capacity, and response capabilities of Palestinian NGOs. It further examines potential implications for service delivery, localization efforts, community resilience, and the broader humanitarian ecosystem.

Palestinian civil society organizations play a central role in delivering humanitarian and community-based services across Gaza and the West Bank. However, many national organizations operate through interconnected partnerships with INGOs involving funding, technical support, procurement systems, coordination mechanisms, advocacy, and program implementation. As a result, operational disruptions affecting INGOs may also have significant indirect consequences for Palestinian organizations and the communities they serve.

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach to understand the relationship between the humanitarian and political context and the performance of key actors. It concludes that strengthening partnerships between international and local actors, ensuring sustainable support, and empowering local institutions are essential to improving humanitarian response effectiveness.

### Introduction

Palestinian national NGOs (NNGOs) have long served as frontline responders to humanitarian and development needs across the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), particularly in Gaza. Over successive emergencies and within a protracted crisis context, local organizations have developed extensive operational networks, deep community trust, and substantial implementation capacity across key sectors, including health, food security, protection, shelter, education, psychosocial support, and emergency relief.

At the same time, the humanitarian response system in the OPT is highly interconnected and locally anchored. Palestinian organizations are central actors in implementation and community engagement, while also operating through structured partnerships with international NGOs (INGOs), UN agencies, and donor-supported coordination mechanisms that provide funding, procurement channels, technical assistance, advocacy platforms, and broader operational facilitation.

Recent administrative and registration-related measures affecting INGOs have therefore raised broader concerns regarding their indirect implications for Palestinian organizations. While these measures primarily affect international actors, their effects may extend to national NGOs through disruptions to funding flows, coordination systems, staffing arrangements, supply chains, program continuity, and humanitarian access.

This paper examines the potential implications of these developments on Palestinian civil society organizations and the communities they serve, with particular attention to operational sustainability, humanitarian response capacity, and longer-term resilience within the local humanitarian ecosystem.

This paper's central question is: **To what extent does the absence or restructuring of international presence in the Palestinian territory affect the effectiveness of humanitarian action and the capacity of the humanitarian system to respond to growing needs?** Several sub-questions follow from this: What is the impact of the decline or restructuring of international presence on the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian interventions in Gaza? How does this affect the humanitarian system's ability to meet the growing needs of the population? And what are the main challenges expected for the most vulnerable groups as a result of this shift?

This study employs a descriptive-analytical approach to understand the relationship between the humanitarian and political context and the performance of key actors. It also draws on a participatory methodology that allows for understanding of the interactions among various stakeholders in the humanitarian field. To deepen the analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a number of actors from international and local organizations, with the aim of collecting qualitative data that reflects the reality of humanitarian interventions and their challenges on the ground.

## Section I: Israel's Decision to Revoke the Licenses of International Organizations Operating in the Palestinian Territory

In March 2025, the Israeli authorities introduced a new process for registering non-governmental organizations operating in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), imposing strict requirements related to registration and periodic reporting. The new manual's provisions require all international NGOs operating in areas under Israeli control - including the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip - to register with the Israeli "Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism." The "Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism" oversees this process and established a joint ministerial committee comprising officials from several Israeli intelligence and security agencies. According to a recent statement issued by the Israeli "Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism," approximately 170 international organizations are currently registered in Israel.<sup>1</sup> On 30 December 2025, 37 international NGOs operating in the Palestinian territory received official notice that their existing registrations under the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs would expire on 31 December 2025. These international NGOs would subsequently be required to suspend their operations in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

Since the beginning of the war, Israel had closed the registration portal for international organizations with the relevant authorities, effectively preventing many international organizations operating in the humanitarian sector from submitting their data. This impeded the work of many such organizations and prevented them from delivering a range of services to the Palestinian public, contributing to a deepening of the humanitarian suffering caused by the war.

Reports from the United Nations and NGO networks point to a qualitative shift in Israeli restrictions on the work of international organizations in the Palestinian territory - particularly in the Gaza Strip - from sporadic security measures to a comprehensive, restrictive registration system that requires:

- Submission of sensitive data regarding Palestinian staff.<sup>3</sup>
- Compliance with political/security conditions that are not clearly defined.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NGO Registration Manual: The Weapon of Colonial Bureaucracy to Eliminate the International Presence in Palestine, Palestinian Citizenship Rights Center, Badil, March 25, 2025. Available at: <https://badil.org/press-releases/15936.html>

<sup>2</sup> 53 International NGOs warn Israel's recent registration measures will impede critical humanitarian action, Islamic Relief, 2 January 2026, <https://goo.su/BkzCIK>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> UN agencies and NGOs warn that without immediate action most international NGO partners could be de-registered by Israel in coming weeks, OCHA, 06 Aug 2025, at <https://goo.su/H5H9C6P>

- Notification of no fewer than 37 international organizations that their registrations would expire, with a 60-day deadline to cease operations.<sup>5</sup>

The Israeli government had previously enacted the Israeli Counter-Terrorism Law (2016), an expansive piece of legislation granting authorities broad legal and security tools to define, prosecute, and punish those it designates as "terrorists" or terrorist organizations. The law provides wide legal cover for taking stringent measures against Palestinians, civil society associations, and social media publications - while expanding the scope of penalties to include the death penalty in certain cases. The extensive law contains hundreds of clauses and provisions spanning more than 100 pages, which provide Israeli authorities with new tools alongside entrenching some of the brutal emergency laws in force since the British Mandate era and related temporary ordinances. It is designed to suppress the political activism of Palestinians inside Israel and pursue their activities in support of Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.<sup>6</sup>

The Israeli decision aims to reengineer the humanitarian reality in the Gaza Strip, restrict the work of international organizations, and compel them to operate within the framework of the Israeli security perspective - so that the programs and working mechanisms of these organizations serve or align with Israeli security interests. The decision also seeks to intensify the challenges faced by both international and Palestinian local organizations and perpetuate the state of instability - which drives greater numbers of Palestinians toward voluntary emigration.<sup>7</sup> Israel has systematically undermined Gaza's health and educational systems while destroying its agricultural and commercial activity, forcing citizens to rely on international and local organizations for their basic needs.<sup>8</sup> This policy is designed to weaken Palestinian presence by targeting the mechanisms and factors underpinning Palestinian resilience -by reengineering the space for humanitarian and civil work in Gaza and subordinating it to the Israeli vision and policy.<sup>9</sup> The decision also aims to control the exit of international presence from Gaza, which serves as a witness to the genocide, thereby affecting the Palestinian narrative and reports on the humanitarian and security reality in Gaza.<sup>10</sup>

For Palestinian national NGOs, restrictions affecting international humanitarian actors may create significant operational uncertainty. Many local organizations rely on partnerships with INGOs for funding administration, procurement support, technical assistance, advocacy engagement, and coordination mechanisms. Disruptions affecting international organizations may therefore have cascading effects on Palestinian organizations, potentially reducing operational continuity and limiting the ability of local actors to sustain humanitarian programming at scale.<sup>11</sup>

## Section II: Context of International Organizations' Work in Gaza and the International Response to the Israeli Decision

The Gaza Strip is one of the most complex humanitarian environments in the world. Addressing the collapsed humanitarian situation there relies heavily on the work of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), United Nations agencies, and Palestinian civil society partners. Together, these entities form the core of the

<sup>5</sup> Humanitarian organisations petition Israeli High Court as closure deadline approaches, Humanity & Inclusion, 24th February 2026, at <https://goo.su/GKmFkN>

<sup>6</sup> Counter-Terrorism Law, Adalah Center, 2016, available at: <https://www.adalah.org/ar/law/view/605>

<sup>7</sup> Interview: Hussein Murtaji, Executive Director of Gaza Group for Culture and Development, Gaza, Palestine (9 April 2026).

<sup>8</sup> Interview: Bassem Abu Jaray, Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Gaza, Palestine (19 April 2026).

<sup>9</sup> Interview: Saad Ziadeh, Executive Director of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees Association, Gaza, Palestine (14 April 2026).

<sup>10</sup> Interview: Dr. Bassam Zaqout, Executive Director of Medical Relief Association in Gaza, Gaza, Palestine (15 April 2026).

<sup>11</sup> Aman discusses the Israeli occupation's restrictions on international institutions and their impact on reducing civil space in the Gaza Strip, Aman Coalition, 22 December 2025, available at <https://goo.su/gR7UN>

humanitarian response of the humanitarian response in the territory - providing relief services, health support, food assistance, and protection programs - amid limited capacity of local institutions and constraints on resources.<sup>12</sup>

Reports from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) indicate that the Gaza Strip is almost entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance, given the widespread destruction of infrastructure and the acute shortages of food, water, and healthcare. These reports affirm that international organizations constitute a major actor in providing emergency relief - including food, shelter, and medical services.<sup>13</sup> World Food Programme (WFP)<sup>14</sup> also notes that hundreds of thousands of Gaza residents face catastrophic levels of hunger, and that the continuation of relief operations depends primarily on the intervention of international organizations to ensure the flow of food aid and prevent famine.

Humanitarian response efforts in Gaza rely on a combination of Palestinian civil society organizations, community-based actors, UN agencies, and international NGOs operating through interconnected partnerships and coordination mechanisms. Palestinian organizations remain central to frontline implementation and community engagement, while international actors often provide complementary support through funding, procurement systems, technical assistance, advocacy, and international coordination structures

United Nations reports confirm that the Gaza Strip faces an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, with millions of resident's dependent on international assistance to survive under severe restrictions that impede access to relief (OCHA, 2026). UNICEF reports indicate that children are suffering serious psychological and health consequences as a result of the collapse of basic services (UNICEF, 2025). In this context, international organizations play a decisive role in providing food and healthcare and ensuring the minimum requirements for survival - particularly amid the continued deterioration of the health system and shortages of resources (WHO, 2025).

International humanitarian law guarantees the protection of international and civil organizations working in the humanitarian field during armed conflicts through a set of binding rules. The four Geneva Conventions stipulate that relief workers must be treated humanely and must not be targeted. The First Additional Protocol affirms that relief personnel "shall be respected and protected" and that their mandates must be facilitated. International law also upholds the principle of distinction, which prohibits the targeting of humanitarian workers as civilians, and obliges parties to allow the passage of assistance under the Fourth Geneva Convention. The UN Security Council has reinforced this protection through its resolutions, making the protection of humanitarian organizations a legal obligation for parties to a conflict - not a matter of choice.<sup>15</sup> OCHA has warned that Gaza remains unsafe for civilians, including relief workers and others providing life-saving services.<sup>16</sup>

International NGOs are an integral part of the humanitarian response, working in partnership with the United Nations and Palestinian civil society organizations to provide life-saving assistance on a large scale. The United Nations, the Humanitarian Country Team, and donor governments have repeatedly affirmed that international NGOs are indispensable to humanitarian and development operations, and have urged Israel to change course.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Interview: Iyad Al-Karnaz, Director of Hope Stars Association for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities, Gaza, Palestine (8 April 2026).

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2026). Humanitarian Situation Update #357 – Gaza Strip.

<sup>14</sup> WFP runs out of food stocks in Gaza, <https://goo.su/HLNfz>

<sup>15</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). (1949). Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. & United Nations Security Council. (2016). Resolution 2286 (2016).

<sup>16</sup> OCHA: UN warns civilians at risk as Gaza attacks, West Bank harassment continue, 20 April 2026. at <https://goo.su/vQEZu>

<sup>17</sup> 53 International NGOs warn Israel's recent registration measures will impede critical humanitarian action, Islamic Relief, 2 January 2026, <https://goo.su/BkzCIK>

Alongside UN agencies and Palestinian partners, international NGOs support more than half of food assistance in Gaza, 60% of field hospital operations, approximately three-quarters of shelter and non-food item activities, all inpatient treatment for children suffering from severe acute malnutrition, 30% of emergency education services, and fund more than half of explosive hazard removal operations.<sup>18</sup>

International NGOs also provide vital support to Palestinian civil society organizations, which depend on international partners for supplies, funding, and technical assistance. Without this collaboration, their operations would cease, leaving more communities cut off from food, medical care, shelter, and essential protection services.<sup>19</sup> They also play a significant role in meeting the urgent needs arising from the war's impact on Gaza, covering a vital portion of relief, shelter, medical, and psychosocial support services - both through their direct interventions, which expanded during the months of the war, and through funding partnerships and Palestinian local institutions.<sup>20</sup>

The Palestinian Authority's registration system provides the legal basis for international NGOs to operate in the Palestinian territory. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the occupying power is required to facilitate access to relief for civilians under its control. Tying the continuation of international humanitarian presence to broad administrative conditions - including requiring organizations to submit detailed lists of national staff - alongside the adoption of vague, politically motivated justifications for denying licenses, threatens the continuity of life-saving services and undermines the legal and ethical obligations to ensure the protection and well-being of the civilian population living under occupation.<sup>21</sup>

With the implementation of this Israeli decision, the number of international NGOs operating in the Gaza Strip declined significantly. The majority of these organizations have not obtained formal registration, while only a limited number have been registered. Others continue to operate under temporary authorizations or extensions. The number of organizations is also subject to ongoing change depending on registration procedures and operational conditions.

The disclosure of the names of local staff in these organizations represents the greatest obstacle to obtaining Israeli licenses. The Israeli authorities require regular submission of lists of employees working in these organizations, as well as security screening for each new employment case -which constitutes a form of interference in the work of these organizations.<sup>22</sup>

Based on the lists of signatories and joint statements (53 organizations), a large number of threatened or affected organizations can be identified. Key international NGOs active in the humanitarian sector include: Médecins Sans Frontières, Medical Aid for Palestinians, Oxfam, Norwegian Refugee Council, Islamic Relief, CARE, ActionAid, Danish Refugee Council, Terre des hommes, Humanity & Inclusion, Médecins du Monde, among other international non-governmental organizations operating in the humanitarian sector in the occupied Palestinian territory.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Humanitarian organizations petition Israeli High Court as closure deadline approaches, Humanity & Inclusion, 24th February 2026, at <https://goo.su/GKmFkN>

<sup>19</sup> UN agencies and NGOs warn that without immediate action most international NGO partners could be de-registered by Israel in coming weeks, OCHA, 06 Aug 2025, at <https://goo.su/H5H9C6P>

<sup>20</sup> Interview: Dr. Bassam Zaqout, Executive Director of Medical Relief Association in Gaza, Gaza, Palestine (15 April 2026).

<sup>21</sup> Humanitarian organisations petition Israeli High Court as closure deadline approaches, Humanity & Inclusion, 24th February 2026, at <https://goo.su/GKmFkN>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> 53 International NGOs warn Israel's recent registration measures will impede critical humanitarian action, Islamic Relief, 2 January 2026, <https://goo.su/BkzCIK>

These organizations play pivotal roles in providing humanitarian response across multiple sectors, including health, relief, protection, psychosocial support, and the empowerment of vulnerable groups - thereby enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions in crisis-affected contexts.

**Table: Key Sectors Affected by the Decision and Its Consequences<sup>24</sup>**

#	Sector	Impact
1	<b>Public Health &amp; Primary Care</b>	International NGOs represent approximately 44% of the 80 active health partners in Gaza, making them a key component of the health response system. De-registration of these organizations would effectively result in the loss of nearly half of the operational capacity of the health sector. These organizations also manage approximately 60% of hospitals and 42% of primary healthcare centers, highlighting the extent of dependence on them and the gravity of any restrictions that may affect the continuity of their services.
2	<b>Relief &amp; Food Security</b>	In 2024, NGOs delivered US\$ 221 million of the \$420 million in food assistance provided in Gaza. Of 195 cooked-meal provision points, 132 (68%) depend directly on INGOs for staffing, supplies or operations: 66% in Deir al Balah 59% in Gaza city 71% in Khan Younis
3	<b>Water, Sanitation &amp; Hygiene (WASH)</b>	INGOs are central to WASH service delivery and outbreak prevention.  INGOs constitute 62% of WASH partners and deliver 42% of all WASH services in Gaza. INGO-supported activities include: Safe water provision and decentralized water production Emergency latrine installation Hygiene item distribution Primary solid waste collection Acute watery diarrhoea outbreak control
4	<b>Protection &amp; Human Rights</b>	Restricting the work of international organizations affects the quality of reports issued from Gaza regarding the human rights and humanitarian situation, thereby weakening monitoring and documentation processes, limiting the accuracy and reliability of available information, and undermining the effectiveness of advocacy and international response efforts.
5	<b>Education</b>	A 30% reduction in emergency education programs weakens recovery efforts in the education sector and limits the continuity of schooling, thereby deepening learning gaps and increasing the risks of illiteracy and reduced access to education.
6	<b>Shelter &amp; Emergency Response</b>	Shelter and NFI activities would face a high risk of collapse without INGOs. Since early 2025, INGOs have: Implemented 74% of all shelter and NFI activities Delivered 83% of NFI items The majority of shelter and NFI supplies currently in the pipeline are held by international organizations, including: 600,000 shelter items 3.2 million NFIs

<sup>24</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNITED NATIONS, 17/12/2025, at <https://goo.su/rIAeFEw> & 53 International NGOs warn Israel's recent registration measures will impede critical humanitarian action

#	Sector	Impact
7	<b>Mine Action &amp; Technical Humanitarian Work</b>	The loss of up to 100% of some explosive hazard management capacities may weaken the response to humanitarian threats and increase safety risks for the population, thereby undermining protection efforts and limiting recovery opportunities.

### Section III: Potential Impacts on Palestinian Local Organizations

Field data and international reports confirm that Israeli restrictions on the entry of goods, the movement of humanitarian personnel, and the management of crossings in the Gaza Strip are being used as a political instrument - not merely as a consequence of the war or technical considerations. These restrictions encompass materials classified as dual-use, impediments to the entry of medical equipment, infrastructure materials, communications equipment, and energy supplies, as well as the rejection of dozens of requests to import life-saving aid - even in the midst of an unprecedented humanitarian emergency.<sup>25</sup>

Restrictions affecting the operational environment of international humanitarian organizations may have significant secondary impacts on Palestinian national NGOs and local humanitarian response systems. Given the high degree of interdependence within the humanitarian ecosystem in the OPT, disruptions affecting international actors may also undermine the sustainability, institutional capacity, and operational effectiveness of Palestinian organizations.

These impacts are particularly significant in Gaza, where Palestinian NGOs continue to operate under extremely constrained conditions while carrying substantial frontline response responsibilities. The weakening of international operational partnerships may therefore affect not only funding availability, but also procurement systems, access coordination, technical support, staffing arrangements, and broader humanitarian coordination mechanisms.

The most prominent of these implications are outlined below:

#### 1. Funding Implications

- **Weakening Funding Opportunities and Sustainability:** threatening the ability of Palestinian local organizations - as first responders to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza - to sustain interventions and meet growing needs.<sup>26</sup>
- **Marginalization of Palestinian Civil Society Organizations:** The growing dependence on international bodies or alternative implementation channels reduces the role of Palestinian civil society organizations and weakens their meaningful participation in designing and implementing programs - thereby limiting the effectiveness of locally-grounded responses.<sup>27</sup>
- **Loss of Accumulated Local Expertise:** The declining engagement of local staff contributes to the erosion of institutional knowledge and expertise built up by national institutions through years of field work - with negative consequences for the quality and sustainability of interventions.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Aman discusses the Israeli occupation's restrictions on international institutions and their impact on reducing civil space in the Gaza Strip, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Interview: Iyad Al-Karnaz, Director of Hope Stars Association for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities, Gaza, Palestine (8 April 2026).

<sup>27</sup> Interview: Bassem Abu Jaray, Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Gaza, Palestine (19 April 2026).

<sup>28</sup> Interview: Reem Farineh, Executive Director of Aisha Association for Women and Children, Gaza, Palestine (14 April 2026).

- **Reduced Capacity of National Institutions to Reach the Most Vulnerable:** Weak empowerment of local partners diminishes their capacity for direct and effective outreach to vulnerable groups - particularly in marginalized or hard-to-reach areas - thereby limiting the inclusivity of humanitarian and development interventions.<sup>29</sup>
- **Decline in Technical Support and Capacity Building:** These restrictions may lead to a reduction in programs aimed at strengthening institutional and technical capacities - including training, administrative systems development, and planning and monitoring mechanisms - undermining institutional performance in the medium and long term.<sup>30</sup>
- **Implications for Governance and Institutional Sustainability:** Weakening the local partner undermines sound governance systems within national institutions and reduces their financial and administrative sustainability - creating a continuity gap and increasing external dependence.<sup>31</sup>

## 2. Disruption of Humanitarian Response

- **Halt or Reduction of Essential Service Delivery (Relief, Health, Food):** Insufficient funding or operational restrictions leads to the disruption or reduction of humanitarian services - including emergency relief programs, primary healthcare services, and food assistance - resulting in clear gaps in meeting the basic needs of affected populations, particularly in protracted emergency situations.<sup>32</sup>
- **Weakening the Community's Capacity to Address Emergencies:** The declining effectiveness of the humanitarian response reduces the capacity of local communities to withstand and adapt to recurring crises - intensifying negative impacts and weakening coping mechanisms, at both the individual and local institutional levels.<sup>33</sup>
- **Increased Dependence on International Organizations:** In the context of weakened local capacities, dependence on international organizations and donor bodies for the provision of essential services increases - potentially creating dependency and limiting the sustainability of local solutions and the development of national capacities over the long term.

## 3. Economic and Social Impacts

- **Job Losses in the Civil Sector:** The decline in the activity of civil and humanitarian institutions leads to the loss of a large number of direct and indirect jobs - including administrative, field, and logistical positions - with negative consequences for income levels and rising unemployment rates, particularly among youth and recent graduates.<sup>34</sup>
- **Decline in Local Development Projects:** Insufficient funding or reduced development interventions leads to a fall in the number and scale of local projects - including economic empowerment initiatives and community infrastructure projects - limiting opportunities for local growth and affecting the sustainability of development in targeted areas.<sup>35</sup>
- **Delayed Transition to Recovery:** The curtailment of INGOs' role in Gaza can affect the prospects for a smooth and rapid transition to the recovery phase, which requires the concerted effort of all parties through multiple international and local partnerships to rebuild infrastructure and key sectors such as health, education, sanitation, and relief.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Interview: Saad Ziadeh, Executive Director of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees Association, Gaza, Palestine (14 April 2026).

<sup>30</sup> Interview: Iyad Al-Karnaz, Director of Hope Stars Association for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities, Gaza, Palestine (8 April 2026).

<sup>31</sup> Interview: Raed Halas, Consultant and Economic Expert, Gaza, Palestine (16 April 2026).

<sup>32</sup> Interview: Dr. Bassam Zaqout, Executive Director of Medical Relief Association in Gaza, Gaza, Palestine (15 April 2026).

<sup>33</sup> Interview: Saad Ziadeh, Executive Director of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees Association, Gaza, Palestine (14 April 2026).

<sup>34</sup> Interview: Raed Halas, Consultant and Economic Expert, Gaza, Palestine (16 April 2026).

<sup>35</sup> Interview: Bassem Abu Jaray, Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Gaza, Palestine (19 April 2026).

<sup>36</sup> Interview: Raed Halas, Consultant and Economic Expert, Gaza, Palestine (16 April 2026).

- **Rising Poverty and Social Vulnerability:** The decline in employment opportunities and development projects leads to higher poverty rates, with an expanding segment of vulnerable populations dependent on humanitarian assistance - deepening social divisions and increasing economic and social instability.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4. Imbalance in the Humanitarian Ecosystem

- **Concentration of Work in the Hands of International Organizations Alone:** The growing reliance on international organizations for implementing humanitarian interventions weakens the role of local actors -creating an imbalance in the humanitarian ecosystem, undermining the principle of equitable partnership, and reducing the effectiveness of responses grounded in local knowledge.<sup>38</sup>
- **Weak Sustainability of Implemented Programs:** International interventions are often tied to short- and medium-term funding, undermining the continuity of development and humanitarian programs and limiting the development of long-term solutions capable of responding to evolving needs.
- **Increasing Humanitarian Challenges:** International presence plays a role in highlighting the worsening humanitarian conditions in the Palestinian territory - particularly in Gaza - and lends humanitarian action an international dimension that strengthens protection mechanisms, raises the level of monitoring and oversight of interventions, and increases international attention to the humanitarian issue.<sup>39</sup> Conversely, this absence increases operational challenges for humanitarian work - including difficulties in reaching target populations, restricting field coordination operations, and heightening implementation-related risks -with negative consequences for the effectiveness and sustainability of the humanitarian response.<sup>40</sup>
- **Creation of New International Organizations:** This trajectory may contribute to the emergence of international NGOs operating within frameworks or approaches aligned with the Israeli vision - which could be leveraged to reshape the security and humanitarian reality in Gaza and reengineer humanitarian intervention mechanisms in ways that serve specific political and security considerations.<sup>41</sup>

#### 5. Erosion of Community Trust

- **Weakening the Relationship Between Citizens and Local Institutions:** The declining role of local institutions in implementing programs and services weakens the bonds between citizens and these institutions -reducing the level of mutual trust and affecting the legitimacy of institutional action.<sup>42</sup>
- **Reduced Opportunities for Community Participation:** Insufficient engagement of local communities in planning and implementation processes curtails opportunities for meaningful participation - limiting the sense of community ownership over development and humanitarian interventions.
- **Erosion of Social Capital:** The decline in trust and reduced participation leads to a gradual erosion of social capital - including networks of cooperation and social solidarity - with negative consequences for the community's capacity for resilience and adaptation to crises.<sup>43</sup>

### Section IV: Impacts on Palestinian Local Communities

The decline or restriction of the role of international humanitarian and development institutions may have direct and profound repercussions for Palestinian communities -particularly in the context of fragile economic and social

<sup>37</sup> Interview: Nora Zaout, Consultant on Psychosocial Support and Child Issues, 10 April 2026.

<sup>38</sup> Interview: Reem Farineh, Executive Director of Aisha Association for Women and Children, Gaza, Palestine (14 April 2026).

<sup>39</sup> Interview: Bassem Abu Jaray, Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Gaza, Palestine (19 April 2026).

<sup>40</sup> Interview: Hussein Murtaji, Executive Director of Gaza Group for Culture and Development, Gaza, Palestine (9 April 2026).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Interview: Iyad Al-Karnaz, Director of Hope Stars Association for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities, Gaza, Palestine (8 April 2026).

<sup>43</sup> Interview: Raed Halas, Consultant and Economic Expert, Gaza, Palestine (16 April 2026).

conditions. This may exacerbate existing challenges and weaken the community's capacity for resilience, as a result of the deterioration of essential services and the shrinkage of humanitarian and development interventions - thereby limiting the effectiveness of responses to growing needs. The most prominent of these implications include:

- A decline in the level of essential services provided in the areas of relief, health, education, and social protection - by up to 80% -leading to acute gaps in meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable groups, directly affecting quality of life and the continuity of vital services.<sup>44</sup>
- The halt or reduction of development programs and community projects by up to 70%, with negative consequences for local development efforts, limited opportunities for economic and social empowerment, and impact on the sustainability of long-term interventions.<sup>45</sup>
- Weakened response to emergency needs - particularly in crisis areas - due to limited operational and logistical resources, reducing the speed and effectiveness of humanitarian interventions during emergencies and increasing the severity of humanitarian impact.<sup>46</sup>
- Increased dependence on limited and unsustainable assistance — reinforcing dependency and weakening the capacity of local communities for self-reliance and gradual recovery from crises.<sup>47</sup>

## Section V: Risk Analysis and Scenarios

### 1. Key Risks

- **Legal Risks:** These comprise legislative changes or regulatory restrictions that may affect the operation of institutions - including difficulties complying with legal requirements or the complexity of licensing and accountability procedures.<sup>48</sup>
- **Funding Risks:** These manifest in the decline, interruption, or instability of donor funding - affecting the continuity of programs and projects, and leading to reduced or halted interventions.<sup>49</sup>
- **Institutional Risks:** These include weak administrative and organizational capacities in some institutions, overlapping roles, and the absence of effective coordination among stakeholders - affecting the efficiency of the response and the quality of services.

### 2. Possible Scenarios and Their Impacts

- **Scenario 1 – Deterioration:** The deterioration scenario represents the negative trajectory that may occur given the continued decline in funding and humanitarian services. This leads to escalating economic and social pressures, rising poverty and unemployment rates, and deteriorating essential services. This scenario is associated with a range of expected risks - including widening economic gaps, reduced social cohesion, worsening humanitarian conditions for the most vulnerable groups, and weakening of the capacity of local organizations to sustain their operations - potentially resulting in increased instability and a deepening of the humanitarian crisis in general.
- **Scenario 2 – Relative Stability:** The relative stability scenario represents a continuation of the current situation without notable improvement or deterioration, where humanitarian interventions remain limited and insufficient to meet growing needs. This scenario is associated with several risks, most notably: the persistence of

<sup>44</sup> Interview: Iyad Al-Karnaz, Director of Hope Stars Association for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities, Gaza, Palestine (8 April 2026).

<sup>45</sup> Interview: Raed Halas, Consultant and Economic Expert, Gaza, Palestine, 16 April 2026.

<sup>46</sup> Interview: Saad Ziadeh, Executive Director of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees Association, Gaza, Palestine (14 April 2026).

<sup>47</sup> Interview: Bassem Abu Jaray, Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Gaza, Palestine (19 April 2026).

<sup>48</sup> Interview: Mohammed Al-Talbani, Legal Researcher and Human Rights Activist, Gaza, Palestine (14 April 2026).

<sup>49</sup> Interview: Raed Halas, Consultant and Economic Expert, Gaza, Palestine (16 April 2026).

gaps in the provision of basic services, the gradual erosion of local institutions' capacity to respond, and the entrenching of a dependency on assistance without a genuine improvement in living conditions, thereby limiting recovery prospects and maintaining high levels of vulnerability.

- **Scenario 3 – Gradual Improvement:** The gradual improvement scenario represents a positive trajectory, based on a relative improvement in the funding environment and enhanced institutional coordination among stakeholders - leading to greater stability in the delivery of essential services and improvements in their quality. This scenario gradually reduces humanitarian gaps and strengthens the response capacity of local organizations, supporting the resilience of affected populations. Nevertheless, this trajectory remains subject to potential challenges - such as funding sustainability and ensuring the effectiveness of coordination - requiring sustained efforts to maintain and develop this improvement.

## Section VI: Recommendations and Action Plan

### I. Recommendations

#### For Donors:

- Preserve the neutrality of humanitarian action, ensuring a clear separation between humanitarian aid and the political considerations linked to the siege.
- Strengthen partnerships with Palestinian local institutions as strategic partners in planning and implementation.
- Ensure long-term funding sustainability to guarantee the continuity of humanitarian and development interventions.
- Direct support toward the most vulnerable sectors, in accordance with actual needs priorities on the ground.
- Adopt flexible funding mechanisms that allow for rapid response to field changes and emergencies.
- Enhance the efficiency of resource distribution to achieve equity and maximize the impact of humanitarian interventions.
- Support sustainable development programs alongside emergency interventions, contributing to community resilience.

#### For International NGOs (INGOs):

- Strengthen international accountability and activate UN mechanisms to ensure the protection of humanitarian principles and prevent the politicization of aid.
- Intensify international advocacy and diplomatic pressure to counter restrictions on humanitarian action and ensure respect for international law.
- Strengthen partnerships with UN agencies and local organizations, achieving complementarity of roles and increased response efficiency.
- Transition toward a model of partnership and local empowerment, through supporting capacity building and reducing reliance on direct implementation.
- Design interventions based on accurate field assessments to ensure effective response to needs.
- Strengthen monitoring and documentation to support accountability and protect the continuity of humanitarian action.

#### For Palestinian Civil Society Organizations:

- Strengthen governance and build institutional capacities - including improving internal management, developing monitoring and evaluation systems, and enhancing transparency and accountability.
- Establish a unified beneficiary database, with clear standards to protect privacy and support targeting efficiency.

- Localize services and expand local partnerships, while diversifying funding sources to ensure sustainability.
- Enhance community participation by reactivating volunteer work and reducing dependence on international funding.

## II. Short and Long-Term Actions to Strengthen Resilience and Sustainability

### Short-Term Actions:

#### At the Governance Level:

- Strengthen flexible governance by adopting organizational structures capable of rapidly adapting to crises and making immediate decisions.
- Develop institutional coordination mechanisms between local and international organizations to ensure complementarity of roles and reduce duplication.
- Enhance transparency and accountability through clear systems for resource management and information exchange.
- Manage risks and crises by developing contingency plans and alternative response scenarios to ensure operational continuity.
- Empower local leadership by engaging local actors in decision-making and strengthening their role in directing the response.

#### At the Funding Level:

- Diversify funding sources to reduce dependence on a single entity and ensure sustainability.
- Establish flexible emergency funds that allow for rapid response to urgent needs.
- Enhance direct funding to local organizations to support the continuity of their interventions and increase their efficiency.
- Adopt flexible funding mechanisms that allow for the reallocation of resources according to changing priorities.
- Strengthen funding partnerships with donor bodies and international institutions to support short and long-term responses.

### Long-Term Actions:

- Strengthen and build the institutional capacities of local entities, enabling them to lead humanitarian action with efficiency and sustainability.
- Develop strategic partnerships among various stakeholders to ensure complementarity of interventions and unification of efforts.
- Improve joint coordination and planning mechanisms, enhancing the efficiency of resource utilization and minimizing duplication.
- Localize humanitarian action in the Palestinian context by empowering local institutions to assume leading and implementation roles.
- Develop sustainable funding solutions that ensure program continuity and reduce dependence on emergency funding.
- Transition toward a sustainable development approach focused on strengthening community resilience and reducing dependence on humanitarian assistance.

## Conclusion

The findings of this paper indicate that increasing operational and administrative restrictions affecting humanitarian organizations may further strain an already fragile humanitarian system in the occupied Palestinian territory. Reduced operational predictability, disruptions to humanitarian access, and uncertainty surrounding registration and authorization processes risk undermining the continuity and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance across multiple sectors. On this basis, this paper emphasizes the necessity of rebuilding a more balanced model of cooperation between international and local actors - one grounded in genuine partnership and institutional empowerment, rather than replacement or marginalization. It also highlights the importance of ensuring funding sustainability, strengthening the capacities of local organizations, and expanding the adoption of implementation models through local partners - alongside intensifying international advocacy efforts to protect humanitarian action and guarantee access to assistance. Collectively, these measures can contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the humanitarian response, improving service quality, and supporting community resilience in the face of escalating challenges.