

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a protest. Several individuals are visible, some wearing keffiyehs (black and white headscarves). They are holding up large Palestinian flags, which feature horizontal stripes of black, white, and green, with a red triangle at the top. The scene is set in an urban environment with tall buildings in the background. The overall color palette is dominated by warm, orange and red tones, suggesting a sunset or sunrise setting. The text is overlaid on this image.

INTERNATIONAL AID FOR PALESTINE

**Disproportionate Cuts,
Overwhelming Damage**

February 2024

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Authors:

Islam Al-Khatib and Claire Provost

Data and research assistance:

Mark Brough and Jerry Richardson

Project management support:

Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah

Copy-editing:

Rozanna Travis

Report design and graphics:

Tettey Mante



Summary

Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, Al Azhar University, and the Jabalia Refugee Camp. These are among numerous healthcare, education and other essential facilities that have been damaged or destroyed in recent Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip. Even when these places have been named in media coverage, however, there has been little recognition of how much work had gone into building and equipping these facilities to meet the needs of millions of Palestinians living under siege. Also absent from media reporting are the millions of dollars of international aid that directly connect taxpayers around the world to these essential facilities that have now been damaged, and must be reconstructed.

This briefing analyses a decade of data on international aid to Palestine to support fact-based reporting on the current situation and critical discussions about reconstruction as well as immediate emergency relief. This data analysis shows how many aid donors significantly reduced their support to Palestine ahead of Israel's current war on Gaza – some more than others. The US, Israel's most important military ally, which has consistently voted against UN resolutions calling for a ceasefire, reduced its annual bilateral aid flows to Gaza and the West Bank by more than 90% from 2013-2022. By the end of that decade, it was spending just \$1 on bilateral aid for Palestine for every \$59 it was giving Israel for military and missile defence support.

Some sectors have been particularly underfunded. Women's rights organisations, for example, received less than 0.4% of the total aid for Gaza and the West Bank between 2013 and 2022 (the latest year for which this data is available). Some donors including the US haven't given any money directly to these organisations in years. Millions of dollars of the aid that has been spent, meanwhile, went to dozens of projects at hospitals and other essential facilities that have now been damaged (in some cases again).



Background

“Gaza has simply become uninhabitable,” United Nations humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths warned at the start of 2024, after three months of Israel’s current war, which has already displaced most of the population and destroyed most of its houses and essential infrastructure, along with taking an unprecedented toll on human life.¹

It was a chilling pronouncement – though the UN has said such things before, reflecting the horrific cycle Gazans have been caught in. More than a decade ago, for instance, it said it would take accelerated and intensified “herculean efforts” for the Gaza Strip to be a “liveable place”.² By 2017, instead of improvements, it described a trajectory of “de-development” with daily lives “getting more and more wretched”.³

Before the current war, most of Gaza’s water was “undrinkable” and “slowly poisoning people”, according to rights groups.⁴ The densely-populated area had one of the world’s highest unemployment rates (over 45%), with a majority of people living in poverty.⁵ “Prior to the current crisis”, the UN said, Israel’s “decades-long blockade hollowed Gaza’s economy, leaving 80% of [its] population dependent on international aid.”⁶

Though, as this briefing details, annual levels of aid going to Palestine decreased over the decade ahead of the current war, and by almost 15%, from a peak of almost \$2.8 billion a year in 2016 to less than \$2.4 billion in 2022.⁷ In contrast, total global aid spending has increased, as has support to the Middle East – apart from Palestine. While it received about 1.4% of global aid at its peak in 2016, by 2022 that figure was just 0.8%.

These cuts in annual aid flows to Palestine have happened despite the UN’s warnings throughout the years about the deteriorating situation in Gaza, and alongside Israel’s ongoing blockade against the area (which began in 2007) and repeated military assaults.

After Israel’s 2014 two-month assault on Gaza – which damaged or destroyed dozens of healthcare centres and about 150 schools – aid donors made numerous pledges to fund reconstruction, though some were never fulfilled. The process was also criticised for excluding Gaza’s civil society from consultations about reconstruction plans, leaving them with “no choice but to accept a program developed without their consent.”⁸

¹ AP at the United Nations, “UN warns Gaza is now ‘uninhabitable’ as war continues”. The Guardian (2024)

² United Nations Country Team, “Gaza in 2020: A Livable Place?”. United Nations Relief and Works Agency (2012)

³ “Living conditions in Gaza ‘more and more wretched’ over past decade, UN finds”. United Nations (2017)

⁴ M. Humaid, “Gaza’s undrinkable water ‘slowly poisoning’ Palestinians”. Al Jazeera (2021)

⁵ UNRWA, “Gaza – 15 years of blockade”. (2022)

⁶ “Prior to current crisis, decades-long blockade hollowed Gaza’s economy, leaving 80% of population dependent on international aid”, UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2023)

⁷ USD, constant (2021) prices

⁸ S. Barakat & F. Masri, “Still in ruins: Reviving the stalled reconstruction of Gaza”. Brookings (2017)

By 2021, when Israel began another bombing campaign against Gaza, much of what had been previously destroyed still lay in ruins.⁹ On the 15th anniversary of Israel's blockade against Gaza, in 2022, rights organisations again described "intolerable conditions" from the lack of vital healthcare services to Israeli authorities' denial of exit permits for patients from Gaza who needed to travel to seek treatment elsewhere.¹⁰

Israeli authorities have also denied humanitarian movement requests in the current war, according to the UN, "critically inhibiting time-sensitive responses". They denied, for instance, a planned mission in January by the UN and World Health Organisation, to bring medical supplies including to the Al Awda Hospital in the Jabalia refugee camp.¹¹

Essential facilities like hospitals are not just buildings, they are also people and teams who work there; all of this has been damaged by Israeli airstrikes and attacks. By 1 January 2024, the Healthworkers Watch Initiative said 374 healthcare workers had been killed since the start of the current war (equivalent to five a day since it began).¹² These deaths exacerbate an already severe shortage of medical staff and expertise in Gaza.¹³

The staggering loss of medical professionals in Gaza, particularly those experienced in critical subspecialties, represents a significant blow to its health infrastructure. Attacks on expert medical teams, painstakingly built over years through significant investment of resources, time, and dedication, illustrate the ongoing struggle that Palestinians in Gaza face in recovery and rebuilding efforts. Despite their relentless efforts, the fruits of their labour are repeatedly reduced to rubble due to repeated Israeli attacks.

This grim reality lays bare how the people of Gaza are shouldering an unbearable burden – one that not only threatens their lives, but also seeks to erase the very essence of their infrastructure as they know it. Because of the blockade and Israeli control over movements, the availability of international aid isn't the only thing that matters.

It doesn't change the fact that there are only three border crossings in and out of the Gaza Strip, none of which are controlled by Palestinians.¹⁴ Meanwhile, as this briefing also details, now many of the health, educational and other facilities that have been supported with increasingly limited aid have been damaged (again, in some cases).

⁹ Y. M. Asi, "Rebuilding Gaza, Yet Again". Arab Centre Washington DC (2021)

¹⁰ "15 years of blockade leaves Gaza facing a perpetual health crisis". Medical Aid For Palestinians (2022)

¹¹ "Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel I Flash Update #87". Relief Web (2024)

¹² 1.1.2024 HWW-Palestine Update, Healthcare Workers Watch - Palestine social media post (2024)

¹³ "Huge loss: Experienced Gaza doctors killed in Israeli attacks". Al Jazeera (2021)

¹⁴ "These include Erez, a crossing into northern Israel for individuals, Kerem Shalom, a commercial goods junction with southern Israel, and the southernmost exit point into Egypt, and the southernmost exit point into Egypt.

Part 1

Disproportionate Cuts

IJSC analysis of the latest data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Creditor Reporting System (CRS) shows overall declines in aid for Palestine, in the decade ahead of the current war on Gaza – in contrast to overall increases in international aid globally.¹⁵ Some sectors have been particularly under-funded – including women's rights organisations and reproductive health.

According to this data, which covers both bilateral and multilateral spending:¹⁶

US annual bilateral aid for Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza Strip combined) in 2022 was just 7.5% (\$82 million) what it was in 2013 (more than \$1.1 billion).

The UK's annual bilateral aid for these territories also fell, by about 74%, from more than \$112 million in 2013 to less than \$30 million in 2022.

Other wealthy countries that cut their annual bilateral aid to Palestine over 2012-2023 include several Scandinavian countries – Finland (-40%), Denmark (-31%) and Sweden (-10%) – along with Canada (-30%), at the same time as they had explicitly feminist foreign policies and reputations as 'progressive' donors.

Overall, annual aid flows for Palestine from official donors – bilateral (government) agencies and multilateral organisations such as UN agencies, combined – decreased by about 15% from a peak of almost \$2.8 billion a year in 2016 to under \$2.4 billion in 2022. Compared to the start of the decade, these 2022 flows were about 10% less than they'd been in 2013 (over \$2.6 billion).

They would have fallen even further if it wasn't for increased contributions from some countries, including Germany as well as Qatar, which began reporting its aid spending to the OECD in 2019. Qatar reported more than \$1.3 billion in aid for the West Bank and Gaza between 2019-2022 alone.

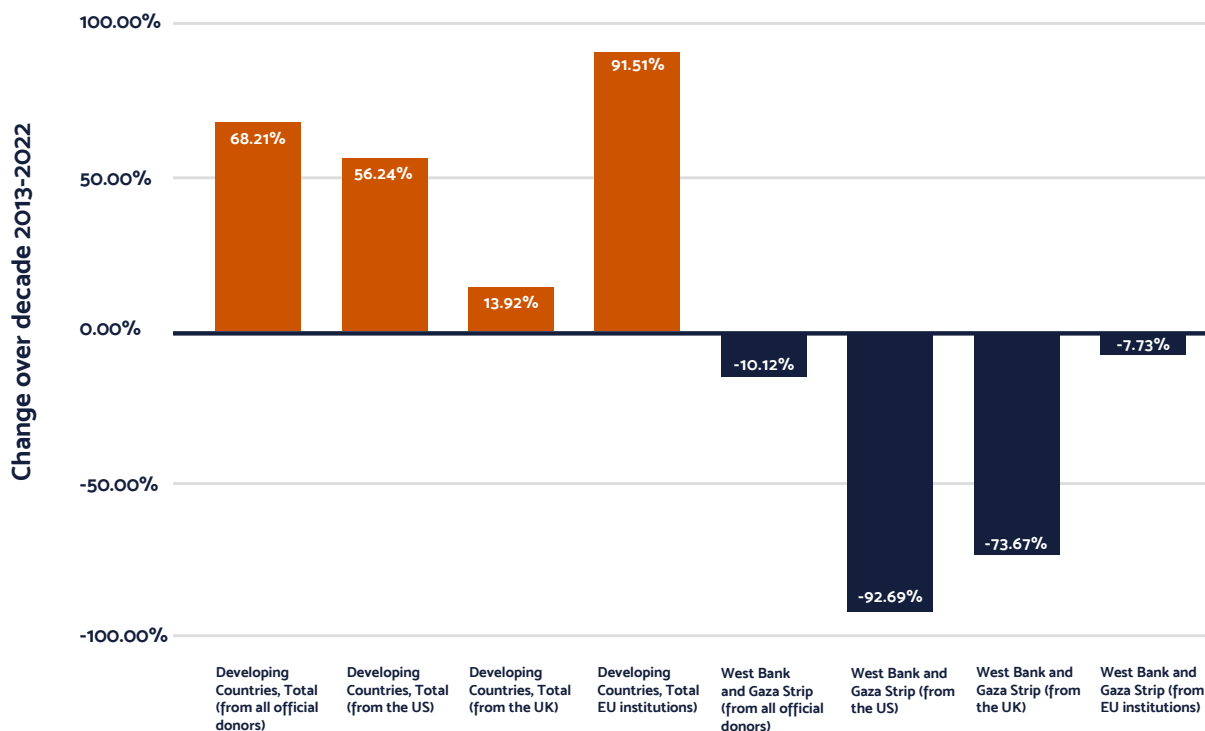
In contrast, and despite recent cuts to development budgets in a number of countries, aid from all official donors increased overall by almost 69% between 2013 and 2022, from about \$170 billion to more than \$287 billion.

¹⁵ This data is specifically on Official Development Assistance (ODA), which is defined by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee as "government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries." It includes humanitarian assistance. Bilateral aid is that spent directly by donor country governments. Multilateral aid is that spent via multilateral organisations such as UN entities and EU institutions. Multilateral organisations also get most of their money from donor governments. Double-counting is avoided in the OECD's CRS methodology.

¹⁶ See 'Table 1: OECD data on aid to West Bank and Gaza, by donor, 2013 vs 2022' in this report's Annexes. All of the figures in this section are in USD, constant (2021) prices.

Chart 1

Global aid flow vs those to Palestine (2013-2022)



UNRWA spending also falls after 2017

The UN has a specific agency called the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) which also reports its spending to the OECD and appears as a donor in its aid dataset. It reported spending almost \$882 million in total in 2022, of which \$499.7 million was spent on projects in the West Bank and Gaza (the rest in neighbouring countries). This is more than the agency spent in Palestine in 2013 but about 15% less than what it spent in 2017 (\$584.5 million).

UNRWA's budget comes from governments led by the US. According to separate data from the UN agency, the US contributed almost \$344 million to its total budget in 2022, followed by Germany (\$202 million), the EU (\$114 million) and Sweden (\$61 million).¹⁷

Total figures on aid to Palestine in this report include spending by both multilateral organisations such as UNRWA and bilateral (government) agencies such as USAID. Double-counting is avoided in the OECD's CRS methodology.¹⁸

¹⁷ "Funding trends," UNRWA contribution data for 2022 as of 31 December 2022

¹⁸ "Frequently asked questions: official development assistance," OECD DAC website.

Table 1

Which countries cut annual bilateral aid to Palestine from 2013-2022

Donor	% change in annual aid to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 2013-2022	% change in total annual aid to all developing countries, 2013-2022
United States	-92.69%	56.24%
Greece	-75.29%	171.48%
United Kingdom	-73.67%	13.92%
New Zealand	-61.77%	22.41%
Iceland	-57.94%	91.22%
Belgium	-44.33%	-0.71%
Finland	-40.16%	33.70%
Slovak Republic	-33.13%	169.25%
Denmark	-30.64%	-6.10%
Canada	-29.54%	99.65%
Norway	-26.84%	6.54%
Czechia	-24.19%	1060.60%
Luxembourg	-21.99%	20.96%
Estonia	-10.42%	1097.44%
Sweden	-10.23%	9.50%
Korea	-3.27%	84.47%

This data also shows:¹⁹

Overall, aid donors have spent more than \$2.1 trillion globally since 2013. About \$24 billion (just over 1% of the total) was spent in the West Bank and Gaza (which are grouped together in the OECD's aid dataset, as a single 'recipient').

The percentage of total global aid spent on the West Bank and Gaza was always small, but it has gotten even smaller. While these territories received about 1.4% of global aid at their peak in 2016, by 2022 that figure was just 0.8%.

Palestine is the only aid recipient in the Middle East that has seen its annual aid flows fall over the decade examined. In contrast to its decrease (about -10%), total aid flows increased to Iran (+144%), Iraq (+26%), Jordan (+40%) and Lebanon (+96%) as well as to Syria (+285%) and Yemen (212%).²⁰

¹⁹ See also 'Table 2. OECD data on aid to Middle East recipients, by recipient (2013 vs 2022)' and 'Table 3. OECD data on aid to West Bank and Gaza, selected sectors, 2013 vs 2022', both in this report's Annexes, extracted from the OECD's CRS dataset on 11 January 2023

²⁰ Annual aid flows to the recipient 'Middle East, regional' also increased over this decade. This category captures spending on regional projects and those involving multiple countries. 2022 data under this category contains 1796 records. Gaza is mentioned in the project descriptions of just 29; West Bank (38)

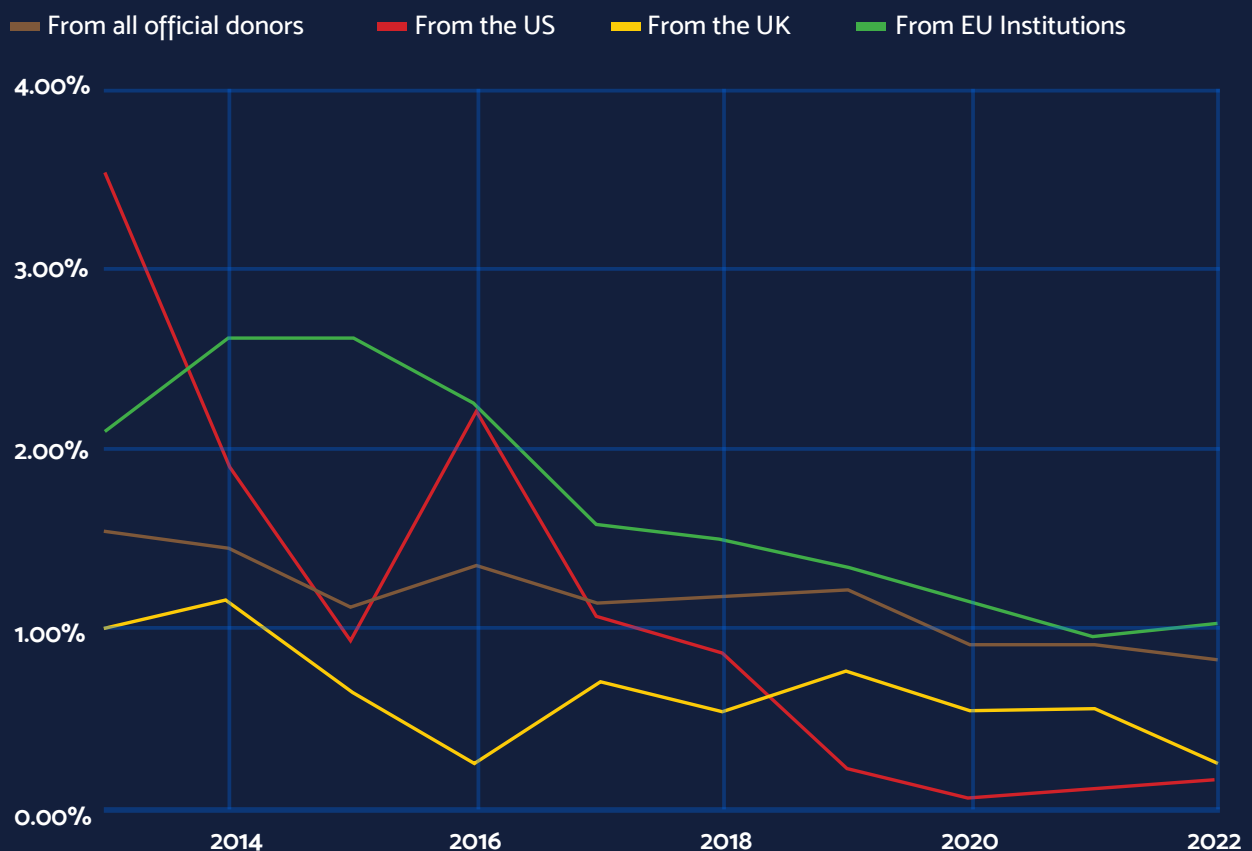
In 2022, the sectors that received the largest amounts of aid to Palestine were social infrastructure and services (almost \$1.3 billion) followed by humanitarian aid (\$809 million). Those that received small shares of the total meanwhile included 'Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution' (\$20 million) and 'Democratic participation and civil society' (\$16.5 million).

Even less went to Palestinian women's rights organisations (\$10 million overall in 2022, down from a peak of almost \$12 million in 2018), 'Ending violence against women and girls' (\$10 million) and 'Reproductive health care' (\$4 million).

Donors' total spending on Palestinian women's rights organisations over the ten years from 2013-2022 amounted to just over \$83 million – or less than 0.4% of all aid to Palestine over that period. Along with the US (which reported spending just about \$78,000 directly on these groups in 2013-2014, and nothing since), six European countries did not give any of their aid directly to these groups in 2022.²¹

Chart 2

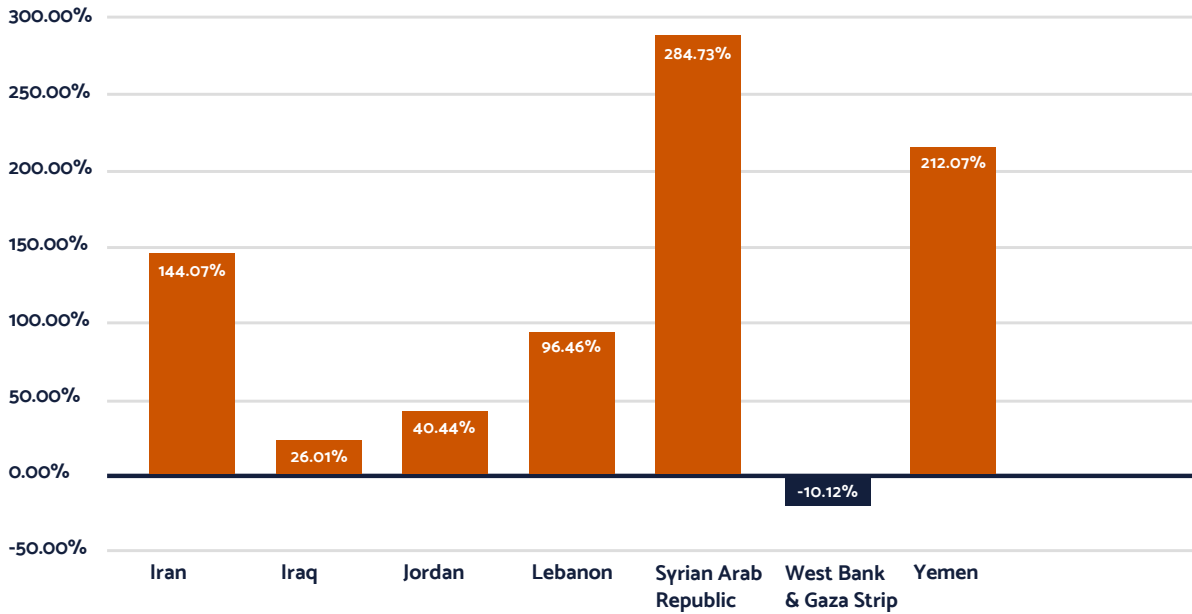
The small share of global aid to Palestine has gotten even smaller



²¹ Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Slovak Republic

Chart 3

Palestine is the only Middle East recipient to see its annual aid fall



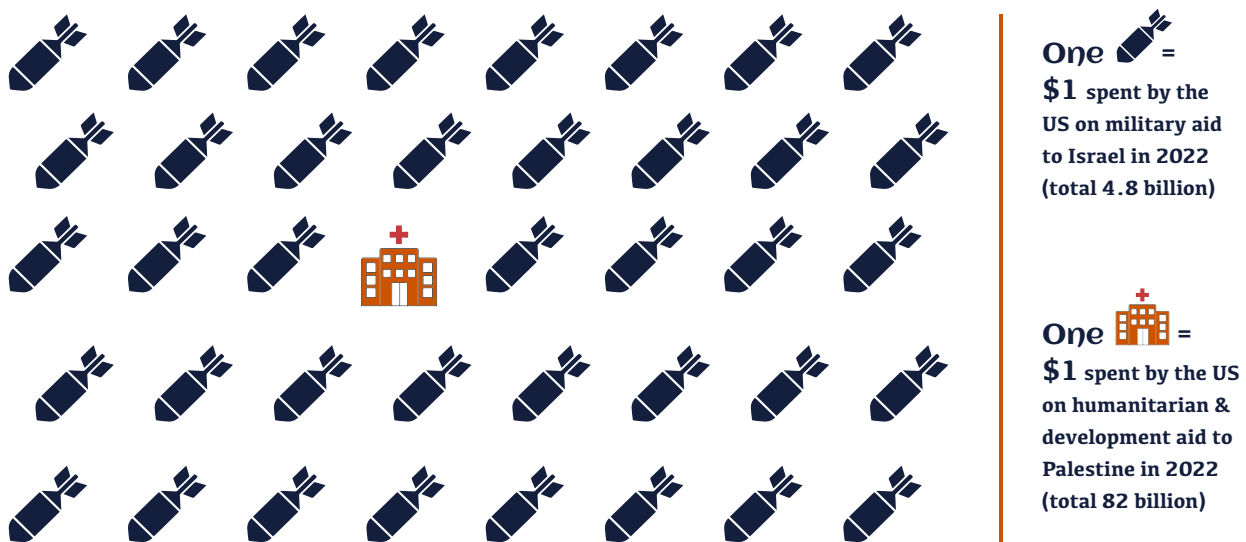
Part 2

Overwhelming damage

The IJSC also cross-referenced aid data with other information to understand how these flows connect taxpayers around the world to facilities that have been damaged in the current war, and how they compare to international assistance for Israel's military.

As mentioned above, the US reported spending just \$82 million in 2022 on bilateral humanitarian and development assistance for the West Bank and Gaza. That same year, the US provided Israel with \$4.8 billion in military and missile defence assistance, according to a 2023 report by the US Congressional Research Service.²²

This means that for every \$1 the US spent on bilateral aid for the West Bank and Gaza in 2022, it spent about \$55 on military support to Israel.²³




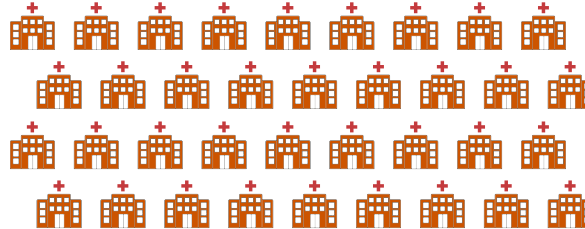
It also means that the US spent more (33% more, in fact) on military and missile defense assistance to Israel in just one year (2022) than it gave in bilateral aid for development and humanitarian activities in Palestine over the full decade from 2013 to 2022 (\$3.6 billion).


²² "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel". Congressional Research Service (2023), p.1

²³ The OECD aid data presented in this report is in USD; constant (2021) prices. The figures for US military assistance to Israel are in current (2022) prices, however. For 2022, the OECD's data shows the US spending about \$82 million in aid to Palestine (constant prices), and \$87.6 million (current prices). Using either aid figure, for every \$1 on aid to Palestine about \$55 was spent on military assistance to Israel.



\$4.8bn:
US military aid to
Israel in 2022 alone
(one  = \$100m)



\$3.6bn:
on humanitarian &
development aid to
Palestine over 10
years 2013-2022
(one  = \$100m)

Some aid donors also publish records of their spending to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)'s open data standard. In some cases, these IATI records can be more up-to-date than the OECD's data, as they are updated on an ongoing basis, and can contain more detail and text that can be searched for keywords.

The IJSC used this IATI data (cross-referenced with the names of facilities from news reports) to identify dozens of specific aid projects at hospitals and other essential sites that have recently been damaged in Gaza. The following maps and tables display some of this information; they help reveal the full toll of the war, and what must be rebuilt.

The identified facilities include the Al-Naser Hospital in Khan Younis, which has been the focus of UN-led aid projects to, for instance, "ensure safe access to essential life-saving and life-restoring healthcare services through the Limb Reconstruction Unit." That hospital was subject to multiple airstrikes in November 2023, severing the power supply to its Intensive Care Unit and rendering the hospital inoperational.

Another example is the Rosary Sisters School in Gaza City, which was the focus of a German aid-funded project with objectives to buy "furniture for classrooms and science labs as well as creating a safe and happy learning environment for mentally strained and stressed children". That school was hit by bombing on 4 November 2023, including its playground and a school building that collapsed.²⁴

²⁴ See 'Table 2: Examples of aid for hospitals damaged in recent attacks' in this section of the report

Map

Aid-funded health and education facilities recently damaged



Sources: Satellite imagery from Copernicus Sentinel, 21st November 2023; damage sites from UNOSAT Gaza Strip Comprehensive Damage Assessment, 7th November 2023; names of aid-funded health and education facilities recently damaged identified from IJSC research. Plotted with QGIS.

Table 2

Examples of aid for hospitals damaged in recent attacks

Facility	Aid projects	Recent damage
Al-Ahli Arab Hospital	This hospital was the site of a German aid-funded project for ‘Capacity building and training on the job for young medical professionals’ ²⁵ . It was also the implementing partner on a 2020-2021 project entitled ‘Safe Surgical Management for Gaza’s Vulnerable People’ ²⁶ funded by the UN’s OPT Humanitarian Fund for Palestine (itself funded by nine European donors: Belgium, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland ²⁷).	On 14 October 2023, the Diagnostic Cancer Treatment Centre of Al-Ahli Arab Hospital was hit by an Israeli airstrike, injuring four hospital staff and causing severe damage to the top two floors. ²⁸ On 17 October, an explosion in the carpark of the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital killed 471 Palestinians and wounded 314 others, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. ²⁹
Al-Awda Hospital	This hospital is named in at least 7 IATI records for projects funded by the UN’s OPT Humanitarian Fund between 2017-2021 (with a total value of more than \$3 million). They include projects with titles: “Ensuring lifesaving health services for trauma cases” and “To alleviate the suffering of patients on the waiting list for surgical operations.” ³⁰	The hospital was subject to two Israeli airstrikes, which damaged two Palestinian Red Crescent ambulances on 9 November 2023. ³¹ Additionally, on 21 November, the fourth floor of the building was hit and three doctors were killed. ³²
Al-Naser Hospital	The UN’s OPT Humanitarian Fund also spent more than \$2.6 million on projects at this hospital to “ensure safe access to essential life-saving and life-restoring health care services through the Limb Reconstruction Unit” ³³ and for “Addressing the needs of Limb Reconstruction patients.” ³⁴	The hospital was subject to multiple airstrikes on 10 November, severing the power supply to its Intensive Care Unit and rendering the hospital inoperational. ³⁵

²⁵ IATI ID: DE-1-201629484-0, reported by Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) (Accessed 24 January 2024)

²⁶ IATI ID: XM-OCHA-CBPF-OPT-20/DDA-3482/SA1/HNC/INGO/15247, reported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Accessed 24 January 2024)

²⁷ OPT Humanitarian Fund”. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

²⁸ Anglican-run al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza damaged by Israeli rocket fire as war continues”. Anglican Communion News Service (2023)

²⁹ M.Ganguly, E.Morresi, A.Kirk, B.Moore & H. Symons, “Al-Ahli Arab hospital: piecing together what happened as Israel insists militant rocket to blame”. The Guardian (2023)

³⁰ IATI ID: XM-OCHA-CBPF-OPT-19/DDA-3482/SA1/HNC/NGO/12323, reported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Accessed 24 January 2024)

IATI ID: XM-OCHA-CBPF-OPT-18/DDA-3482/RA2/HNC/NGO/9489, reported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Accessed 24 January 2024)

³¹ M.Ganguly, E.Morresi, A.Kirk, B.Moore & H. Symons, “Hospital damage in Gaza during Israeli offensive – a visual investigation”. The Guardian (2023)

³² ActionAid partner Al-Awda hospital hit by bombing, killing three doctors”. ActionAid (2023)

³³ IATI ID: XM-OCHA-CBPF-OPT-19/DDA-3482/SA2/HNC/O/14069, reported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Accessed 24 January 2024)

³⁴ IATI ID: XM-OCHA-CBPF-OPT-19/DDA-3482/SA1/HNC/INGO/12378 reported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Accessed 24 January 2024)

³⁵ Al-Nasr Children’s Hospital in Gaza becomes inoperable following Israeli attack”. Middle East Monitor (2023)

Facility	Aid projects	Recent damage
Al-Quds Hospital	“Solar panels are installed to ensure continuous renewable energy supply in Al-Quds Hospital”. This was a planned ‘outcome’ of a Netherlands Red Cross project funded in part by the Dutch government. ³⁶	Airstrikes within the vicinity of the hospital resulted in structural damage to the hospital and to hospital equipment. ³⁷
Turkish Friendship Hospital	“The project will provide 80 KW solar energy system to the Turkish Friendship Hospital in Gaza to improve the delivery health services to patients in the Gaza Strip.” This is the description of a \$200,000 Japanese aid-funded project via the UN Development Programme (UNDP) that began in 2022 with a planned end date in June 2024. ³⁸	The hospital, which is the only dedicated cancer hospital in Gaza, was hit directly in an airstrike that also damaged its oxygen and water supply on the third floor. The hospital was rendered inoperational because of the strikes and a lack of fuel. ³⁹

Table 3

Examples of aid for other facilities damaged in recent attacks

Facility	Aid projects	Recent damage
Rosary Sisters School in Gaza City	At this school, German aid funded “procurement of furniture for classrooms and science labs as well as creating a safe and happy learning environment for mentally strained and stressed children”. ⁴⁰	The school was damaged by bombing on 4 November. A school building that totally collapsed and a playground as well as surrounding infrastructure were damaged. ⁴¹
Islamic University of Gaza	“Enhancing the employability of engineering students and graduates in Gaza through better linkages with the private sector” was the title of a project funded by the International Labour Organization that said it would be delivered “Through a partnership with the Islamic University of Gaza.” ⁴²	The building sustained major damage, affecting multiple colleges of the University. The windows and the facades of the building were almost entirely destroyed and the building is now inoperational. ⁴³

³⁶ IATI ID: NL-KVK-40409352-PRJ13-037-0004, reported by The Netherlands Red Cross (Accessed 24 January 2024)

³⁷ M.Ganguly, E.Morresi, A.Kirk, B.Moore & H. Symons, “Hospital damage in Gaza during Israeli offensive – a visual investigation”. The Guardian (2023)

³⁸ IATI ID: XM-DAC-41114-OUTPUT-00130908, reported by the United Nations Development Programme

³⁹ N. Ebrahim & A. Salman, “Surgery without drugs, patients piling up: Gaza’s hospitals overwhelmed amid Israeli strikes and fuel shortages”. CNN (2023)

⁴⁰ IATI ID: XM-DAC-5-7-6612126, reported by Deutschland - Auswärtiges Amt (Accessed 24 January 2024)

⁴¹ A. Balog & M. Lozano, “HOLY LAND: Christian homes and Catholic school among buildings destroyed”. Aid to the Church in Need (2023)

⁴² IATI ID: XM-DAC-41302-105157-1475-2015-PSE101, reported by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (Accessed 24 January 2024)

⁴³ The Islamic University of Gaza, Facebook (2023)

Facility	Aid projects	Recent damage
Al Azhar University - Gaza	Two US aid-funded projects at the University, totalling more than \$27 million include, the “Leadership and Teacher Development Program” from 2012-2018, which said it aimed “to improve the quality of pre-service teacher preparation programs at Al Azhar University in Gaza.” ⁴⁴ The university is also named in a Swedish aid project titled “Support for the Palestinian Medical Relief Society”, from 2016 - 2022, which said it was “aimed at achieving universal health coverage.” ⁴⁵	The campus was destroyed by air strikes on 11 October. ⁴⁶
Central Desalination Plant Gaza	Three ongoing German-aid funded projects (scheduled to end in 2028, and with a combined budgeted value of more than \$58 million), focus on the Central Desalination Plant in Gaza with project titles describing “reconfiguration of water supply infrastructure” and “expansion of water supply infrastructure” for the area. ⁴⁷	The plant was rendered inoperational because of the lack of power caused by Israel’s restrictions. ⁴⁸

⁴⁴ IATI IS: US-GOV-1-AID-294-A-12-00006, reported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Accessed 12 January 2024) and “Leadership and Teacher Development Programme”. USAID (2016) (Accessed 25 January 2024)

⁴⁵ IATI ID: SE-0-SE-6-52110112, reported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Accessed 25 January 2024).

⁴⁶ W. Sawahel, “439 HE students and staff killed, universities hit in war”. University World News (2023)

⁴⁷ IATI ID: DE-1-201967744, reported by Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) (Accessed 24 January 2024)

IATI ID: DE-1-201969344, reported by Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) (Accessed 24 January 2024)

IATI ID: DE-1-202067312, reported by Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) (Accessed 24 January 2024)

⁴⁸ A.Bhandari, P.Kumar Dutta & C.Trainor, “Water is running out in Gaza”. Reuters (2023)

⁴⁹ IATI ID: XM-DAC-21-1-2020990736B1PAAOB2-EME1HQ012, reported by DFAT / Irish Aid (Accessed 24 January 2024).

Airstrikes and attacks have also damaged numerous facilities in refugee camps that have been funded by international aid. These include:

Jabalia refugee camp, which has been subject to numerous airstrikes, beginning on 9 October 2023 when the camp's central market was destroyed.⁵⁰ Following further bombing on 31 October, Gaza's interior ministry described the camp as "completely destroyed".⁵¹ Several UN-run schools sheltering displaced people in the camp have also been hit in attacks.⁵² In a statement, the UN said: "Given the high number of civilian casualties and the scale of destruction following Israeli airstrikes on Jabalia refugee camp, we have serious concerns that these are disproportionate attacks that could amount to war crimes."⁵³

Al-Maghazi camp, where a UN-run school was struck on 17 October 2023, causing severe structural damage to the building, which was sheltering 4,000 displaced people.⁵⁴ Other examples of attacks on this camp include one on 5 November 2023, which caused severe damage to residential buildings and killed dozens of people.⁵⁵

Shati camp, where four mosques were reportedly completely destroyed by airstrikes on 9 October 2023.⁵⁶ Further strikes caused extensive damage to other buildings as well as numerous civilian casualties.⁵⁷ Bureij camp, which was also hit by airstrikes in November 2023. Media outlets published drone footage showing the camp "reduced to rubble after the bombing."⁵⁸

⁵⁰ R. Abdulrahim & A. Harouda, "Israeli Airstrike Hits Marketplace in Gazan Refugee Camp, Killing Dozens". The New York Times (2023)

⁵¹ J. Stepansky & F. Najjar, "Israel-Hamas war updates: Dozens killed in Jabalia camp, Gaza official says". Al Jazeera (2023).

⁵² "Hamas says 30 killed in Israeli attack on UN school ahead of Gaza truce". Al Jazeera (2023)

"Many killed in Israeli attacks on two schools in northern Gaza". Al Jazeera (2023)

H. Regan, A. Salman, Z. Saifi, A. Tal and M. Tawfeeq, "Airstrikes blast UN shelters, official says, as Israel announces complete encirclement of Gaza city". CNN (2023)

A. S. Fayed, "Egypt says Israel must be held accountable for attack on UN-run Al-Fakhoura school". Anadolu Ajansı (2023)

⁵³ UN Human Rights, Twitter (2023)

⁵⁴ P. Lazzarini, "GAZA: UNRWA SCHOOL SHELTERING DISPLACED FAMILIES IS HIT". United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (2023)

⁵⁵ "Israel bombs al-Maghazi refugee camp, killing dozens, Gaza officials say". Al Jazeera (2023)

⁵⁶ Al-Jarraq News, Twitter (2023)

"Maps: Tracking the Attacks in Israel and Gaza". The New York Times (2023)

⁵⁷ "Al-Shati refugee camp in ruins from continuous airstrikes". NBC News (2023)

⁵⁸ "Drone footage shows Gaza's Bureij refugee camp reduced to rubble after bombing - video". The Guardian (2023)



What should we take from these facts?

In December 2023 the UN General Assembly, after several attempts, passed a (non-binding) resolution demanding a ceasefire in Israel's war. The US joined Israel in voting against it; the UK was among the minority of countries that abstained.⁵⁹ Both are aid donors that, as this briefing shows, cut their support for Palestine over the decade leading up to the current war, despite increasing their aid flows globally. Many of the countries that did vote for a ceasefire, however, had also cut their aid to Palestine.

Only a tiny fraction of their increasingly limited funding has supported human rights including women's rights work. What has been spent on humanitarian and development activities in Palestine pales in comparison to US military assistance to Israel. Meanwhile, millions of the aid that was spent went into health, education and other facilities in Gaza that have now been damaged and must be rebuilt (in some cases, again).

What should we take from these facts? Rather than generously supporting Palestinians, the international community has backed away. Rather than supporting the emancipation of Palestinians, international funding flows may have done the opposite.

Problems with past international responses to reconstruction needs in Gaza have been recognised including by the UN. In November 2023, a month after the current war began, a UN report said: "It is crucial to handle the post-war phase differently from previous military escalations. Post-war reconstruction and recovery efforts for Gaza should learn from past mistakes, and should not be restricted to dealing with the immediate humanitarian, social and economic needs resulting from wars and military escalations."⁶⁰

To ensure that happens, pernicious cycles of destruction and rebuilding must end. Taxpayers around the world should know that their money paid for facilities that have now been damaged or destroyed, and must be rebuilt – and that not enough of their money ever went to supporting equal human rights for all Palestinians. Media outlets have responsibilities to ensure that the right connections are drawn, context is given, and that the voices and perspectives of Palestinians are at the forefront of coverage of the humanitarian crisis and the destruction caused by Israel's current and previous attacks.

⁵⁹ "UNGA demands ceasefire in Israel's war on Gaza: How your country voted". Al Jazeera (2023)

⁶⁰ Gaza war: expected socioeconomic impacts on the State of Palestine: Preliminary estimations until 5 November 2023". United Nations Development Project (2023).

Annexes

1. Tables of OECD aid data, 2013-2022

(covering all official donors; in millions USD constant 2021 prices)

A. Aid to West Bank and Gaza (2013 vs 2022), by donor category

Donor category	2013	2022	% change (2013-2022)
Official Donors, Total	\$2,647.86	\$2,379.90	10.12%
DAC Countries, Total ⁶¹	\$1,882.17	\$934.37	50.36%
Non-DAC Countries, Total ⁶²	\$63.75	\$537.48	43.10%
Multilaterals, Total ⁶³	\$701.94	\$908.0	29.36%

B. Aid to West Bank and Gaza (2013 vs 2022), by individual donor (countries)

Donor	2013	2022	% change (2013-2022)	Category
United States	\$1,120.20	\$81.91	-92.69%	DAC
Greece	\$0.69	\$0.17	-75.29%	DAC
United Kingdom	\$112.33	\$29.58	-73.67%	DAC
New Zealand	\$1.23	\$0.47	-61.77%	DAC
Iceland	\$2.29	\$0.96	-57.94%	DAC
Belgium	\$34.25	\$19.07	-44.33%	DAC
Finland	\$14.17	\$8.48	-40.16%	DAC
Slovak Republic	\$0.16	\$0.11	-33.13%	DAC
Denmark	\$39.90	\$27.68	-30.64%	DAC
Canada	\$48.55	\$34.21	-29.54%	DAC
Norway	\$88.10	\$64.45	-26.84%	DAC
Czechia	\$0.89	\$0.68	-24.19%	DAC
Luxembourg	\$5.69	\$4.44	-21.99%	DAC
Estonia	\$0.14	\$0.13	-10.42%	DAC
Sweden	\$55.52	\$49.84	-10.23%	DAC

⁶¹ DAC countries are members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. There are 32 members, more than half of which are European. The US, Canada, Japan and Korea are among others.

⁶² Note that in 2013 the United Arab Emirates was the only non-DAC country that reported aid spending on the West Bank and Gaza to the OECD. In 2022, 10 non-DAC countries reported their spending (UAE + Cyprus, Israel, Kuwait, Malta, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Turkey)

⁶³ Note that a large majority of this spending was reported by UNRWA and the EU, which spent \$499.7 million and \$330.8 million (respectively) on projects in the West Bank and Gaza in 2022. Together they accounted for more than 90% of multilateral spending on aid projects in these territories that year.

Donor	2013	2022	% change (2013-2022)	Category
Korea	\$4.74	\$4.59	-3.27%	DAC
Switzerland	\$28.35	\$30.95	9.15%	DAC
Australia	\$27.77	\$32.91	18.49%	DAC
Slovenia	\$0.21	\$0.25	19.14%	DAC
Austria	\$6.56	\$8.26	25.85%	DAC
Ireland	\$7.93	\$10.07	26.88%	DAC
France	\$64.66	\$83.43	29.03%	DAC
Netherlands	\$20.41	\$26.53	29.96%	DAC
Japan	\$46.69	\$76.41	63.66%	DAC
Spain	\$16.31	\$34.53	111.76%	DAC
Germany	\$121.99	\$260.86	113.84%	DAC
Italy	\$11.69	\$36.60		DAC
Poland	\$0.75	\$4.07		DAC
Hungary	..	\$2.66		DAC
Lithuania	..	\$0.12		DAC
Portugal	\$0.00	..		DAC
Cyprus	..	\$0.05		Non-DAC
Israel	..	\$46.69		Non-DAC
Kuwait	..	\$2.75		Non-DAC
Malta	..	\$0.09		Non-DAC
Qatar	..	\$399.62		Non-DAC
Romania	..	\$0.57		Non-DAC
Saudi Arabia	..	\$0.03		Non-DAC
Thailand	..	\$0.00		Non-DAC
Türkiye	..	\$17.66		Non-DAC
United Arab Emirates	\$63.75	\$70.00	9.81%	Non-DAC

C. Comparisons to overall aid flows for selected donors

Donor	Aid to Palestine			Total Aid to all Developing Countries		
	2013	2022	% change (2013-2022)	2013	2022	% change (2013-2022)
All Official Donors, Total	\$2,647.86	\$2,379.90	-10.12%	\$170,693.17	\$287,126.97	68.21%
United States	\$1,120.20	\$81.91	-92.69%	\$31,606.59	\$49,381.09	56.24%
United Kingdom	\$112.33	\$29.58	-73.67%	\$11,237.74	\$12,802.28	13.92%
EU Institutions	\$358.51	\$330.79	-7.73%	\$17,147.32	\$32,839.26	91.51%

D. Aid to the Middle East, by recipient (2013 vs 2022)

Recipient	2013	2022	% change (2013-2022)
Middle East, Total	\$11,063.01	\$21,722.58	96.35%
Iran	\$130.09	\$317.51	144.07%
Iraq	\$1,554.88	\$1,959.25	26.01%
Jordan	\$1,700.41	\$2,388.11	40.44%
Lebanon	\$786.97	\$1,546.07	96.46%
Syrian Arab Republic	\$2,141.17	\$8,237.70	284.73%
West Bank and Gaza Strip	\$2,647.86	\$2,379.90	-10.12%
Yemen	\$1,217.92	\$3,800.78	212.07%
Middle East, regional	\$883.71	\$1,093.24	23.71%

E. Aid to West Bank and Gaza, selected sectors in 2022

Recipient	2013	2022
Total All Sectors	\$2,379.90	100.00%
Social Infrastructure & Services, Total	\$1,275.86	53.61%
Humanitarian Aid, Total	\$809.10	34.00%
Government & Civil Society, Total	\$205.78	8.65%
Administrative Costs of Donors, Total	\$80.11	3.37%
General Budget Support, Total	\$34.84	1.46%
Human rights	\$34.82	1.46%
Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution	\$20.35	0.86%
Democratic participation and civil society	\$16.52	0.69%
Women's rights organisations and movements, and government institutions	\$10.05	0.42%
Ending violence against women and girls	\$9.69	0.41%
Reproductive health care	\$4.29	0.18%
Family planning	\$0.48	0.02%
Labour rights	\$0.27	0.01%

F. Aid to West Bank and Gaza, women's rights organisations, 2013-2022

Recipient	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Official Donors, Total	\$5.64	\$7.60	\$8.14	\$6.67	\$9.14	\$11.71	\$6.27	\$8.56	\$9.52	\$10.05
DAC Countries, Total	\$5.20	\$6.46	\$7.46	\$6.29	\$7.99	\$11.32	\$6.08	\$7.00	\$7.61	\$8.14
Non-DAC Countries, Total	..	..	..	..	..	\$0.02	..	\$0.28	\$0.14	\$0.05
Multilaterals, Total	\$0.44	\$1.14	\$0.68	\$0.38	\$1.16	\$0.37	\$0.19	\$1.28	\$1.77	\$1.86
Austria	..	..	\$0.03	\$0.02	\$0.07	\$0.05	\$0.02	\$0.01	..	..
Belgium	\$0.07	..	..	..	..	\$0.55	..	\$0.13	..	..
Canada	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	\$0.08	\$0.10	\$0.19
Czechia	..	..	\$0.02	\$0.03	..	..	..	..	..	..
Estonia	..	\$0.02	\$0.00	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Finland	\$0.03	\$0.07	\$0.11	\$0.14	\$0.03	\$0.06	\$0.06	\$0.06	\$0.05	\$0.01
France	..	..	..	..	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.01	..	..	\$0.11
Germany	\$0.36	\$0.31	\$0.46	\$0.26	\$0.33	\$0.27	\$0.22	\$0.12	\$0.17	\$0.13
Iceland	\$0.42	\$0.36	\$0.34	\$0.17	\$0.15	\$0.29	\$0.29	\$0.28	\$0.27	\$0.52
Ireland	..	..	..	\$0.09	\$0.09	\$0.09	\$0.15	\$0.00	..	\$0.13
Italy	\$0.13	\$0.26	\$0.33	\$0.82	\$0.65	\$3.97	\$1.34	\$0.57	\$0.51	\$0.88
Japan	..	..	\$0.94	\$0.13	..	\$0.51	\$0.26	\$0.61	..	\$0.36
Lithuania	..	..	..	..	..	\$0.02	\$0.02	..	..	\$0.01
Netherlands	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	\$1.16	\$2.30
Norway	\$2.43	\$3.29	\$2.14	\$2.42	\$1.79	\$1.01	\$1.60	\$1.68	\$1.48	\$0.69
Poland	..	\$0.10	..	..	\$0.01	..	..	..	..	..
Slovak Republic	..	..	..	..	\$0.02	..	..	..	..	..
Spain	\$0.36	\$0.61	\$1.89	\$0.54	\$0.67	\$1.88	\$1.98	\$1.51	\$2.29	\$1.23
Sweden	\$1.21	\$1.25	\$1.20	\$1.65	\$3.98	\$2.46	..	\$1.94	\$1.44	\$0.75
Switzerland	..	..	..	..	\$0.19	\$0.17	\$0.14	..	\$0.09	\$0.18
United Kingdom	\$0.16	\$0.15	\$0.01	\$0.03	..	..	..	..	..	\$0.58
United States	\$0.04	\$0.04	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
EU Institutions	\$0.44	\$1.14	\$0.68	\$0.37	\$1.16	\$0.37	\$0.19	\$1.22	\$1.72	\$0.71
ILO	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	\$0.05	\$0.04	\$0.05
UN Women	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	\$1.11
UNFPA	..	..	..	\$0.01	\$0.00	\$0.00	..	\$0.01	\$0.01	..
Cyprus	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	\$0.05
Türkiye	..	..	..	..	..	\$0.02	..	\$0.28	\$0.14	..

2. Notes on data sources and methodology

Data sources

The IJSC analysed two key sources of international aid data for this report: 1) the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) dataset that is maintained by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris, and which was last updated on 22 December 2023, and 2) open aid data published according to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard, which is updated on an ongoing basis. Records tagged to ‘West Bank and Gaza’, and ‘the state of, Palestine’, respectively, were extracted from each of these sources.

Both of these data sources focus on Official Development Assistance (ODA), which is defined by the OECD’s DAC as “government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries”.

In addition, we extracted figures on US military and missile defence assistance to Israel in recent years from a March 2023 report from the US Congressional Research Service;⁶⁴ we collated names of damaged health, education and other civilian facilities from news reports.

Methodology

For the report section ‘Disproportionate cuts’, we extracted the latest OECD aid data after it was last updated on 22 December 2023; this was extracted for all official donors, for all years 2012-2022 (the latest available), with ‘West Bank and Gaza’ as the recipient.

We calculated the percentage change in annual aid flows over this decade, for all donors overall and individually. We also extracted the data for aid to all countries over this time period, to compare how much went to the West Bank and Gaza versus other recipients (developing countries overall, and other recipients in the Middle East).

For the report section ‘Overwhelming damage,’ we combined aid data with other sources. First, we compared US aid to Palestine from the OECD data to figures on US military support to Israel, from the US Congressional Research Service report mentioned above.

In the ‘Overwhelming damage’ section we also used IATI aid data, cross-referenced with news reports of damaged health, education and other essential facilities. We compiled names of these facilities in a spreadsheet, creating a new row for each possible spelling. We then searched for these keywords in the d-portal.org platform for viewing IATI data. When a match was found, we recorded key information from the IATI data in our spreadsheet to capture details of the aid-funded projects involving that facility.

Satellite imagery was downloaded from the Copernicus Browser, using map imagery captured on 21st November 2023; this date was selected due to the good visibility and limited cloud coverage. Data on the damage sites was downloaded from the UNOSAT Gaza Strip Comprehensive Damage Assessment of 7th November 2023. The damage sites data was loaded into QGIS and plotted on the map as a heatmap. The specific locations of damaged facilities were then added onto the map as points.

⁶⁴ “U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel”. Congressional Research Service (2023), p.1



The Institute for Journalism and Social Change

✉ **Email:** admin@theijsc.org

✕ **Twitter:** [@the_ijsc](https://twitter.com/the_ijsc)

📷 **Instagram:** [@the_ijsc](https://www.instagram.com/the_ijsc)

🌐 **LinkedIn:** [/company/the-institute-for-journalism-and-social-change](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-institute-for-journalism-and-social-change)

🌐 **Website:** www.theijsc.org