

Gaza reconstruction could take 80 years; damage unseen since World War II

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Amman, May 4 (RHC)-- A United Nations official says the destruction caused by Israel's war on the Gaza Strip is unseen since the Second World War, estimating that the reconstruction of the Palestinian territory could take 80 years and cost up to \$40 billion.

Speaking at a press conference in the Jordanian capital Amman, Abdallah al-Dardari, UN assistant secretary-general and director of the UN Development Program's (UNDP) regional office for the Arab states, added that the Israeli aggression has completely or partially destroyed 72 percent of all residential buildings in Gaza.

"The United Nations Development Programme's initial estimates for the reconstruction of... the Gaza Strip surpass \$30 billion and could reach up to \$40 billion," he said. "The scale of the destruction is huge and unprecedented... This is a mission that the global community has not dealt with since World War II."

He also estimated the Israeli attacks have left 37 million tons of rubble across Gaza, warning that the "colossal figure" is increasing every day and approaching 40 million tons. Dardari further said that the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip through a normal process could take decades.

Earlier, the UN Development Programme released an assessment, noting that Gaza would need "approximately 80 years to restore all the fully destroyed housing units" under a scenario assuming the pace of reconstruction follows the trend of several previous Gaza conflicts.

"It is therefore important that we act quickly to re-house people in decent housing and restore their lives to normal – economically, socially, in terms of health and education," he noted. "This is our top priority, and it must be achieved within the first three years following the cessation of hostilities."

The UN official also stressed that the Gaza genocide has wiped out 40 years worth of investments in the territory's human development, saying, "We are almost back in the '80s."

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