

UN says Israeli war renders Gaza uninhabitable, restoration will take decades

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Palestinians stand amid the rubble of a mosque and buildings that collapsed during Israeli bombardment around the town city of Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, on January 24, 2024.

(Photo by AFP)

United Nations, February 1 (RHC)-- The United Nations says the ongoing Israeli war of aggression has left the Gaza Strip “uninhabitable” and that the destruction in the Palestinian territory will take tens of billions of dollars and “decades” to reverse.

In a report published on Wednesday, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) assessed the social and economic deterioration in besieged Gaza since the genocidal Israeli aggression began nearly four months ago. The report said that the war has displaced 85 percent of Gaza’s population, halted economic activities and further worsened poverty and unemployment in one of the world’s most densely populated areas.

As of December 2023, it added, unemployment had surged to 79.3 percent while 37,379 buildings – equivalent to 18 percent of Gaza’s total structures – had been damaged or destroyed by the Israeli onslaught. “The Gaza Strip, half of whose population are children, is now rendered almost uninhabitable, with people lacking adequate sources of income and access to water, sanitation, health or education,” it said.

“UNCTAD’s assessment underscores that restoring pre-conflict socioeconomic conditions in Gaza will take decades and requires substantial foreign aid.”

The report also found that Gaza’s gross domestic product (GDP) dropped by 24 percent after the Israeli assault and that it would take “until 2092 just to restore the GDP levels of 2022.” It further noted that Gaza’s dire economic situation originates from well beyond the current war.

“Gaza’s economic constraints, rooted in 56 years of occupation and a 17-year blockade, necessitate a thorough understanding and realistic strategies to unlock its growth potential through measures that include restoring the Gaza International Airport..., building a seaport and enabling the Palestinian government to develop the natural gas fields discovered in the 1990s in the Mediterranean Sea,” it said.

Meanwhile, UNCTAD economist Rami Alazzeq, who co-authored the report, said new data indicates that 50 percent of the Gaza structures are damaged or destroyed.

“The longer these (military) operations in Gaza go on... the more severe the impact will be,” Alazzeq warned. “Gaza currently is uninhabitable.”

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