

Gaza after the War: Why is a Political Solution Necessary and Why it should not be Only about Reconstructing the “Prison”ⁱ

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Introduction

The Gaza Strip should be reconstructed once again. During a large scale conference held in Cairo on the 12th of October 2014, \$5.4 billion USD were pledged for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip.ⁱⁱ In particular Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and the European Union promised huge amounts in order to repair the extensive destruction from the last Gaza War in the summer of 2014.ⁱⁱⁱ The most pressing issue, without any question, is swift reconstruction. Tens of thousands of people are waiting for their houses to be rebuilt because their current homes are unlivable. There has to be an end to their waiting for reconstruction material and assistance. Nevertheless, concentrating all efforts on reconstruction would be shortsighted. Simultaneously, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive political solution for Gaza which not only aims at ending the blockade of the coastal strip but also perceives the Gaza Strip as part of a free and independent Palestine. Mere focus on reconstruction, without taking into consideration the political context, harbors the big risk of continuing the blockade and the isolation of the Gaza Strip and hence of the root causes of the conflict. At the moment, there is reason to fear that there is no paradigm shift in the way Gaza is dealt with. On the contrary, the dominating narratives and known asymmetries of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will only continue to sharpen: the Israeli narrative of the conflict and of the war dominate public and published opinion and legitimizes the military operation, as well as the continuation of the blockade as a reaction to the firing of rockets by Hamas. Donor countries finance the reconstruction without holding Israel responsible for the destruction it has caused. Whereas the Palestinian side, including Hamas, has agreed to the United Nations Commission of Inquiry, Israel has prevented it from commencing its investigation of human rights violations on the ground.^{iv} No guarantees have been negotiated for a future protection of the civilian population and of the reconstructed infrastructure. The Gaza crisis is being handled outside the other arenas of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, whereas Gaza should be a coherent part of a comprehensive conflict resolution which envisages the end of the Israeli occupation, as well as Palestinian independence. The Palestinians are not sufficiently involved in the reconstruction. Ownership is incumbent upon the UN and of international organizations which increases dependency in an already heavily aid-dependent country where the entitlement to self-determination and participative development has not materialized.

Consequences of the Gaza War

Images of death and destruction in the Gaza Strip went around the world and caused shock; however, it did not have a longstanding impact. Just a few days after the Egyptian mediated ceasefire between Israel and Hamas on the 26th of August 2014, Gaza was largely out of the media and out of people's minds. The 50-day war, to which the Gaza population was consigned to without any protection – there are no bunkers or shelters and escaping is impossible due to the cordoning off of the territory – belongs to the worst of what people in Gaza have ever experienced: the massiveness and scope of the attacks, the long duration of the war, the lack of protection for the population and the high number of victims among civilians, and the large scope of destruction. Even before the war, the situation in the Gaza Strip was substantially tense. The seven year blockade by Israel, in addition to the sealing off of the coastal strip from the Egyptian side, have largely brought economic livelihood to a standstill. The blockade prevented the access to 35% of agricultural land and to 85% of fishing waters.^v An economy of scarcity, high unemployment, and poverty were the consequences and over more than half of the population was considered food insecure.^{vi} Additionally, access to construction material has been difficult for many years. Only a small part was imported through Israel (20%), with the remainder coming either through the border with Egypt (30%) or through the tunnels into the Gaza Strip (50%).^{vii} Massive restrictions exist in the provision of power. Furthermore, Gaza suffers from severe water and soil pollution. The United Nations has warned already in 2012 that the Gaza Strip will not be livable by 2020, with a population increase of one million people.^{viii} Freedom of movement for the 1.8 million people has been largely restricted for quite a long time. Travelling into or out of Gaza is allowed for Palestinians only in exceptional cases, despite the fact that a third of the population has relatives in the West Bank or in Israel. The extensive closing of the border crossing with Egypt, as well as the destruction of the majority of the tunnels in the summer of 2013, has made the situation worse and has increased pressure on the population. The Egyptian government justifies its approach officially under the guise of political security and aims to weaken Hamas with the closure of the border. Hence, it takes lightly the collective

punishment of the Palestinian population in the nearby coastal strip.

The feeling of relief that came about in Gaza with the end of the military operation "Protective Edge" was mixed with the horrors of the consequences of the war: 20,000 houses and apartments were destroyed or heavily destroyed, a dozen factories, schools, hospitals, the electricity network, and many streets were destroyed. Towns and neighborhoods, such as Beit Hanoun and Shujaieh, which are close to the border with Israel, were particularly hit by destruction. According to United Nations figures, 2,100 Palestinians were killed and more than 11,000 injured. It is expected that around 80% of the latter will have to live with disabilities for the rest of their lives as a result. More than 485,000 people have fled from their homes and live in emergency shelters in transformed schools or with relative. Others stubbornly remain in their destroyed houses.^{ix} Atef Abu Saif, political scientist and author in Gaza, describes the situation of the population, for whom the war is far from over. According to him, the war is always still there because the houses are destroyed and because the people don't have electricity and possess only a small amount of water. He continues to say that for many in Gaza, it is as if people have arisen from the dead but cannot yet perceive their bodies. Although, he says, there are numerous local and international organizations that offer assistance, particularly in terms of food provision and despite the fact that the Palestinian government is working on plans to rebuild the houses, no one feels the pain of the people. He feels that no one understands how it feels to have owned a four-story building and suddenly they have to live in a caravan, in a room together with ten children and maybe also with the families of married sons. He concludes by saying that people worry not only about food but about numerous other things. Simply put, they want their homes to be rebuilt and to feel like normal people.^x

As a consequence of the war, the above mentioned problems have intensified issues in the Gaza Strip, in particular, unemployment and poverty have increased. In addition to the visible consequences, there are the invisible consequences also in this war which weigh heavily. There is a prevalence of post traumatic and psychosomatic disorders which have mostly affected the very young society, as almost 65% of the population is under the age of 25.^{xi} Panic attacks, hopelessness, depression, and withdrawal

are all part of it. Suicide rates have increased. Children suffer from flashbacks, nightmares, bedwetting, and the development of aggressions and are not able to concentrate.^{xii} All of this is unfortunately not new for Gaza; however, it seems as if a red line was exceeded with this war. Never was the scope of the suffering and despair wider and more encompassing. More and more people are trying to leave the Gaza Strip or contemplate to leave. Many cannot endure the situation any longer and do not see any perspective for hope or better days in the future. The most burdening aspect is the concern about children. Dozens of Palestinians paid with their lives during the summer of the war while fleeing over Egypt. Many drowned at sea, off the coast of Malta.^{xiii}

Reconstruction of the Gaza Strip

In October 2014, when representatives of 50 countries and 20 international organizations met in Egypt for the Donor Conference for the Reconstruction of Gaza, thousands of destroyed houses, as well as infrastructure from the previous Gaza wars, have not yet been reconstructed and for which pledged contributions were partially outstanding. In order to take into consideration experiences from previous reconstruction processes and in order to make the process transparent and participative, representatives of Palestinian Civil Society tried early on to participate in the conference, however without much success. With the exception of some politicians and business people, Gaza wasn't represented in the Donor Conference. According to the assessment of Atef Abu Saif, no political discussion took place with the aim of contextualizing the events of the war as well as linking the reconstruction plans with security concepts for Gaza. Abu Saif states that people, whose homes were destroyed during the war, were not represented. Hence, in the jargon of development work, one would say that the target group was missing. However, he continues to state that only the politicians who live in nice houses and villas were present at the Conference. He rightly argues that one could have sent a delegation of the affected population to Cairo to speak about their situation. Nevertheless, he concludes that there was no contextual discussion during the conference and that the only objective was to collect money. Abu

Saif emphasizes that what Palestine needs mostly for the future is security. He would like so much for Gaza and Palestine to live in security, which should closely be linked with the reconstruction process.^{xiv}

Although Palestinian Civil Society actors have submitted an 8-point paper prior to the Donor Conference, they were not invited to participate in it. However, in this paper, they clarified their expectations and demands in the design of the reconstruction, which goes far beyond the aid-focused approach and instead demands a comprehensive political handling of the Gaza conflict.

The Palestinian NGO network PNGO, which represents 145 local NGOs, concretely demands that:

1. Israel is held accountable for its acts of war in Gaza as well as for other attacks on Palestinians
2. Reconstruction efforts should not be considered in detachment from Palestinian aspirations for independence, freedom, and self-determination
3. International donors guarantee the protection of projects funded by them and demand compensation from Israel in case of destruction of infrastructure
4. The Israeli-Egyptian blockade of the Gaza Strip is ended and free movement of persons and goods including those materials that are necessary for the reconstruction, is made possible
5. The International community guarantees that Israel does not profit from the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip by procuring Israeli material. Instead, Palestinian resources should be used as far as possible in order to contribute to strengthening the Palestinian labor market and Palestinian economy
6. All sectors are equally taken into consideration in the reconstruction process: health, infrastructure, education, industry, trade, environment, and agriculture
7. Reconstruction should be aligned with the principles of transparency and accountability, and an alliance as broad as possible from international and national stakeholders should be part of the reconstruction and of shaping a

joint process within this reconstruction

8. Establish a committee of experts for planning and supervising the reconstruction^{xv}

However, if we look at the developments so far in handling the Gaza crisis, it becomes quickly clear that all of the above mentioned aspects and demands have remained unheeded. On the contrary, in the framework of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM), which was developed by the UN organization UNSCO

(United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process), and agreed upon mid-September 2014 with the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority (PA),^{xvi} mainly technical processes such as damage survey, import and control of construction materials are administered. Based on the GRM,^{xvii} the reconstruction is configured as complicated and very slow.

Conditions put forward by AIDA, the Association of International Development Agencies, which is a coordinating body of international aid organizations, political foundations, and NGOs that are active in the Palestinian Territory:

Starting with the understanding that the Gaza crisis does not pose a humanitarian catastrophe that can be ameliorated by humanitarian aid alone, but is more a result of decades of political failure and should hence be tackled politically. AIDA advocates for respecting five principles in order to achieve a comprehensive reconstruction of the Gaza Strip:

1. Guarantee the territorial integrity of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank
2. Ending the blockade as a precondition for the reconstruction and development
3. Protection of civilians and setting up of an independent commission of inquiry
4. Use and enhancement of local and national resources for the reconstruction
5. Accountability and introduction of the no-profit principle for actors involved in the conflict^{xviii}

The Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism

The GRM is understood as a mechanism that responds to both the needs of the Palestinians for reconstruction, as well as to Israeli security considerations. It is based on the premise that due to the possible dual use purpose of construction material for tunnel and rocket construction, the import of required construction material for the reconstruction process requires particular management and inspection. Whoever needs building materials in the Gaza Strip, whether individual persons or organizations, must go through a multi-layered process. This process is being criticized by humanitarian aid experts as very complicated and less transparent.^{xix} Firstly, the damage has to be registered by the applicant with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing

in Gaza in the form of a comprehensive file with construction plans, quantities, GPS-coordinates, and numerous pieces of personal information. After the examination of the documents, the latter will be transferred to the Ministry of Civil Affairs in Ramallah, where applications are subjected to a new examination. Finally, the documents are sent for final examination and approval by the Israeli authorities. All data is saved in a joint database. If Israel approves the application for receiving building materials, these can be procured by licensed merchants in the Gaza Strip. Israel can lodge a veto if they would want to prevent the delivery of materials to specific persons or organizations. Subsequently, the handing over of goods ensues in a warehouse which is equipped with surveillance cameras in order to document the sale and whereabouts of the material, the use of which is monitored by the UN organization UNOPS (United Nations Office

of Project Services). The monitoring and control capacities of the GRM are limited though. Part of the material is uncontrollably re-sold on the black market at higher prices. Hence, a possible abuse of the material cannot be prevented by the GRM.^{xx} Presently, the biggest part of construction material comes from Israel. This applies particularly for cement, which is supplied by Neshar Israeli Cement Enterprises Company. It is estimated that altogether, around 65% of all material required for the reconstruction is being supplied by Israeli companies.^{xxi}

The reconstruction of the Gaza Strip proceeds very slowly. In December 2014, not more than 2% (other sources speak of 4%) of the required materials have arrived in Gaza. Based on this, the reconstruction according to this rate will consequently take at least 20 years.^{xxii} The reasons for this delay are manifold. However, it is certain that the complicated reconstruction mechanism contributes to this because it poses a huge challenge for applicants, particularly for private persons. How are people, whose homes have been damaged or destroyed, going to cope with this complex process? How are they going to endure the costs of repairing or reconstructing the houses as long as not every individual has access to financial support, for example, through UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees? Even professional aid organizations struggle with the process. Due to this, many haven't even started implementation of construction projects in the Gaza Strip in the framework of the GRM. Politically, UN organizations are particularly criticized because of their role in the GRM. With the development and approval of this mechanisms, they make it possible for Israel not only to have more control over the society of the Gaza Strip, but they also legitimize the denial of humanitarian aid through the veto towards supposedly not agreeable target groups, which nullifies the basic principles of humanitarian aid.^{xxiii} Behind the facades, the reconstruction is also a controversial issue among the different UN organizations which are active in Palestine: whereas UNSCO is trying to downplay its role in the process, UNRWA refugee agency is criticizing very clearly the process so far and is pleading for a political solution in addition to reconstruction in the Gaza Strip.^{xxiv} Another reason being discussed for the slow pace of the reconstruction, is the delays in the transfer of financial aid. Reference is to financial constraints of aid organizations, as well as desperate calls to

donors to honor their pledges indicates a huge problem.^{xxv} The PA is also being criticized and is accused of delaying the process by not being quick enough in its inspection of the applications. What is also criticized is that approved projects are not paid for by the PA and hence cannot be realized due to internal conflicts within the PA. It is to be assumed that all these reasons contribute in their part to slowing down the reconstruction. Once again, those who will suffer most from the failure of local and international responsible sides are the people in Gaza, who are trying to survive the winter. The "Mechanism of the Bureaucratic Non-Solution" is turning them once again into victims.^{xxvi}

Internal Palestinian Situation

The Gaza crisis and the present reconstruction efforts are taking place in a highly complex political environment, which is only briefly demonstrated here.^{xxvii} In May 2014, a National Unity Government was formed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This was a pragmatic step by both of the substantially weakened protagonists Fatah and Hamas. Their aim was to overcome the deep Palestinian political rift in the aftermath of the failed negotiation initiative of the US Secretary of State John Kerry in the spring of 2014. A technocrat government of national unity^{xxviii} was formed in a bid to find an alternative course of action to end occupation and build an independent state. Hence, it found large support among the population. The United States and Europe welcomed this development, while Israel tried everything possible in order to bury the legitimacy of the new government. Although the Unity Government has held so far, it is under enormous pressure from the Israeli side, the International community side, and internally. On the one side and as demonstrated by its involvement in the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, the Unity Government stands for the agreements and for security cooperation with Israel, the latter being highly questioned internally among Palestinians. On the other side, it has to find ways for political successes to end the occupation, violence, expulsion, and dispossession so as not to lose any more legitimacy within Palestinian society. War and reconstruction pose huge challenges for this government: Ramallah did consign itself to Hamas' military resistance against Israel; however, once the war came to an end, old

conflicts resurfaced. Since the end of the war, the Palestinian government has made itself scarce in Gaza. Only twice so far has a bigger delegation visited the coastal strip. The population in Gaza feels that it has been let down by Ramallah. Outstanding “peace dividends,” as well as slow reconstruction heightens people’s frustration. The still unsolved issue of the salary crisis for thousands of employees of the former Hamas administration, who have been waiting for their money since months, makes the situation tenuous and weakens the government.

Hamas, in turn, emerged from the war as a leading force of military resistance. Months after the war, Hamas remains the strongest force in Gaza, and also in the West Bank its backing among the population is high.^{xxxix} The organization practices a fundamental opposition and uses the existential and operational weaknesses of the Palestinian government for its own interests.^{xxx} Power struggles and friction between the PA and Hamas in handling the GRM, as well as in handling the border crossing into Israel, contribute to delays in importing construction material. However, Hamas is not interested in any new war, despite its statements to the contrary, also because support among the anguished and absolutely conflict-weary population would be highly unlikely.^{xxxi} The de-facto power vacuum in Gaza is dangerous and can lead to an explosion in the situation at any time. Moreover, there is ample space beyond Hamas for the emergence and consolidation of radical Islamic forces. Besides Salafists and groups that are close to Al-Qaida, there is talk in the meantime of IS groups (or some who use the name) that have been established in Gaza. These endanger the progressive actors of Palestinian Civil Society, who campaign for a pluralistic, democratic, and secular society. Whereas, they were able to come to terms with Hamas in the past, in the meanwhile women, human rights activists, and publicists are now openly being threatened with death in Gaza.^{xxxii}

A Paradigm Shift is Urgently Needed

The reconstruction course so far and particularly the GRM clearly demonstrate no re-thinking, no paradigm shift is to be expected in how to handle the Gaza Strip, also in the aftermath of the recent war. No word is being said as to the lifting of the

blockade and nothing about the re-establishment of territorial integrity between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank for the movement of persons and goods. Nothing is being said about the obligation to protect the population and infrastructure. While it is certainly crucial to consider the security interest of Israel, it is about time to also seriously consider the rights of Palestinians to security and development. Processes and mechanisms that single-sidedly take into account the Israeli narrative of the conflict and that describe the military action as legitimate and necessary in order to prevent tunnel construction and rocket launching into Israel by Hamas and other Palestinian groupings are more part of the problem than the solution. It is equally not possible to move ahead in this direction when the reconstruction is subordinated to this narrative or when control of distribution of humanitarian aid is de-facto left in the hands of the dominant side of the conflict. In addition, the factor that Israel stands to profit most from reconstruction is neither politically nor morally acceptable and should be reflected upon critically by international donors who finance the reconstruction. Companies that take part in the construction of, under international law, illegal settlements should not readily be part of the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. The profitable circle of destruction and reconstruction can only be stopped through - among others - the Association of International Development Agencies’ (AIDA)^{xxxiii} demand for commitment to accountability, as well as the introduction of the no-profit principle for actors taking part in the conflict. It would be the task of donor organizations and the United Nations to campaign for these (and many other) measures instead of continuously handling Gaza as a type of natural disaster and continue ignoring the root causes of the crises. Only through critical examination of the acts of war, possibly soon within the framework of the International Court of Justice,^{xxxiv} the lifting of the longstanding Israeli Egyptian blockade of the Gaza Strip and the substantial involvement and responsibility of Palestinians in shaping the reconstruction, is it possible to set the basis for sustainable development of the Gaza Strip on the basis of freedom and dignity. Supporting democratization of Palestinian politics and processes should be the guiding principle. Without such a paradigm shift and without a speedy political solution that takes into consideration Palestinian efforts for self-determination and independence, there is a high possibility that a new escalation of the conflict will render reconstruction efforts as absurd. Military

skirmishes have at the border area between Israel and Gaza have already begun in the winter of 2014.^{xxxv} Humanitarian and development actors must stop supposedly retiring to non-political mandates and only “implement projects.” In particular, in a conflict environment, this not only contradicts sound human logic, but also that of numerous development guidelines that teach us to pursue an all-encompassing and conflict-sensitive approach in our work. Otherwise,

international development cooperation loses credibility and rationality if it takes place more or less detached from political realities and responsibilities and if it does not anymore demand to contribute to greater structural justice. In such a case, donors threaten to become accomplices to the occupation and closure. Such criticism is increasingly becoming louder in Palestine.^{xxxvi}

Time is running against Gaza and anyone who has anything to do with the Gaza Strip knows this.

- ⁱ This text is an English translation of the original version of the German article by the author which was shortened and published, entitled: *Gaza nach dem Krieg: Warum eine politische Lösung gefragt ist, und es nicht nur darum gehen darf, das „Gefängnis“ wieder aufzubauen*. Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Standpunkte 05 / 2015 <http://www.rosalux.de/publication/41132/gaza-nach-dem-krieg.html>
- ⁱⁱ What is often not mentioned is that half of the amount flows into the PA state budget and not necessarily channeled for reconstruction. Gordon, Michael *Conference Pledges \$5.4 Billion to Rebuild Gaza Strip* New York Times, 12 October 2014 http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/13/world/middleeast/us-pledges-212-million-in-new-aid-for-gaza.html?_r=0
- ⁱⁱⁱ Gordon, Michael *Conference Pledges \$5.4 Billion to Rebuild Gaza Strip* New York Times, 12. October 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/13/world/middleeast/us-pledges-212-million-in-new-aid-for-gaza.html?_r=0
- ^{iv} The independent UN Commission of Inquiry is so far not allowed by Israel to travel into the Gaza Strip, West Bank, or Israel. In order to circumvent this travel ban and launch the inquiry, the commission is gathering evidence through different communication channels. Statement of the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict, 23 December 2014 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15456&LangID=E>
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- ^x Interview of the author with Atef Abu Saif: *Die Welt sollte fair zu Gaza sein* Neues Deutschland, 21 November 2014
- ^{xi} <http://www.indexmundi.com/factbook/compare/gaza-strip.israel/demographics>
- ^{xii} On the impact of the war on children see Yaghi, Mai *Gaza Children Haunted by Memories of War* Middle East Eye, 30 December 2014. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/in-depth/features/children-gaza-haunted-memories-war-386296060>
- ^{xiii} Marx, Bettina *The Destruction of the Middle Class* Qantara.de, 1 October 2014 <http://de.qantara.de/inhalt/wiederaufbau-in-gaza-die-zerstoerung-der-mittelschicht>
- ^{xiv} Interview of the author with Atef Abu Saif: *Die Welt sollte fair zu Gaza sein* Neues Deutschland, 21 November 2014
- ^{xv} Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) *PNGO Network Position regarding the Gaza Strip Reconstruction Conference* 20 September 2014
- ^{xvi} UN News Website *Middle East: UN Envoy Announces Deal on Reconstruction in Gaza* 16 September 2014 <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48730#.VMlhrkcRjo>
- ^{xvii} For the official UN Fact Sheet on the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) see <http://www.unsco.org/Gaza%20Reconstruction%20Mechanism%20Fact%20Sheet%209%20October%202014.pdf>
- ^{xviii} AIDA *Reconstructing Gaza: Five Principles for Transformative Change* AIDA Policy Paper 3 October 2014 <http://www.diakonia.se/globalassets/blocks-ihl-site/ihl---rights-side-boxes/reconstructing-gaza-five-principles-for-transformative-change.pdf>
- ^{xix} Othman, Riad *Gaza: Die Unmöglichkeit des Wiederaufbaus* Medico International (mi) Hausblog <http://medico.de/blogs/medico-hausblog/2014/12/23/490/>
- ^{xx} Interview of the author with Palestinian economist Omar Shaban, December 2014
- ^{xxi} Interview of the author with Omar Shaban, December 2014. Other sources speak of 45% or 71% <http://www.bdsmovement.net/dont-reward-israel>
- ^{xxii} Interview of the author with Omar Shaban December 2014 and Gisha – Legal Center for Freedom of Movement <http://gisha.org/updates/3901>
- ^{xxiii} On criticism of the UN role see <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/under-cover-reconstruction-un-and-pa-become-enforcers-israels-gaza-siege>
- ^{xxiv} On statements by UNWRA-spokesperson Chris Gunness see inter alia <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/under-cover-reconstruction-un-and-pa-become-enforcers-israels-gaza-siege>
- ^{xxv} Inter alia the Gaza Situation Report Nr. 76 (January 2015) of UNWRA: <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/gaza-situation-report-76>
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- ^{xxvii} For an analysis of the political context see e.g. Baumgarten, Helga: *Das „System Oslo“ und der Krieg gegen Gaza* Informationsprojekt Naher und Mittlerer Osten (inamo), Nr. 79, Autumn 2014, P. 34 – 38
- ^{xxviii} The Palestinian Government of National Unity was set up of technocrats without official participation of either Hamas or Fatah
- ^{xxix} Polls indicate very high support for Hamas at the end of the war: 79% of respondents stated that Hamas won the war and 94% are satisfied with the military confrontation of the organization with Israel. If presidential elections would have taken place at that point with only two candidates, I. Haniyeh (Hamas) would have won with 53% while M. Abbas (Fatah) would have won 43% of the votes in the Gaza Strip. Within all of the Palestinian Territory, I. Haniyeh would have received 61% and M. Abbas 32% of the votes. Before the war, 53% of the votes would have gone to M. Abbas and 41% to I. Haniyeh. Compare the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPRS): *Special Gaza War Poll, 26 -30 August 2014*. Although support for Haniyeh in the Palestinian Territory decreased slightly (53%), he would still consolidate 54% of the votes in the Gaza Strip even four months after the war. M. Abbas would receive 44% of the votes. Compare PCPRS: *Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No 54*. For further polls on Gaza as well as for regular polls on the political balance of Power in the Palestinian Territory see <http://www.pcprs.org/en>
- ^{xxx} Middle East Eye *Hamas: Palestinian Government Failing Gaza* 30 December 2014, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/hamas-palestinian-government-failing-gaza-207798688>

- ^{xxxii} Hass, Amira *Hamas Knows that the People of Gaza do not want Another War* Haaretz 25 December 2014 <http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/.premium-1.633640#!>
- ^{xxxiii} Conversations of the author with representatives of Palestinian Civil Society in the Gaza Strip, December 2014
- ^{xxxiiii} On the demands of AIDA, see box in the text
- ^{xxxv} In the aftermath of the Palestinian application to join the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the Court has begun preliminary investigations of the Gaza war despite Israel's strong criticism
- ^{xxxvi} Hass, Amira *Hamas Knows that the People of Gaza do not want Another War* Haaretz 25 December 2014 <http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/.premium-1.633640#!>
- ^{xxxvii} Lester Murad, Nora *Donor Complicity in Israel's Violations of Palestinian Rights* Al-Shabaka Policy Brief, 24 October 2014 <http://al-shabaka.org/node/876>

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