



UPA Connect

Issue 3 • Summer 2014

2014: International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Letter from the Executive Director

The images and news from Gaza over the last four weeks have been absolutely devastating. Civilians killed and wounded, homes and infrastructure destroyed, lives disrupted and livelihoods ruined. Because of the sheer magnitude of the catastrophe, we have dedicated this edition of our newsletter entirely to Gaza.

Inside you will find a letter from our programs manager in Gaza, a story about a UPA **Children's Fund** partner that was attacked by Israel and how I imagine what life might be like for one family in Gaza.

UPA has acted immediately to help the displaced and injured. We are currently providing the following:

- Emergency medicines and disposables
- Pharmaceuticals worth \$10.3 million
- Food vouchers and baskets
- Hygiene kits

- Mattresses, pillows and blankets
- Emergency kitchen utensil kits for families
- Emergency psychosocial services and counseling

Please consider making a donation to our Emergency Appeal for Gaza by sending a check using the enclosed postage-paid envelope or by donating online at helpupa.org/gaza. Any amount you can donate will help. Every extra dollar we raise **now** can mean the difference between life and death for a Palestinian in Gaza.

In solidarity,

Saleem F. Zaru
Executive Director



Is there still hope for Amal?

Under a heavy blanket of darkness, on a small makeshift mattress resting on a spotless concrete floor, in a one-room hut in the Shujayia neighborhood in Gaza, a 3-year-old boy fell asleep.

While Salam slept, his young mother breastfed his newly born sister one more time before turning in. Two weeks earlier she had named her Amal (Arabic for “hope”) in celebration of a new life that was almost compromised at birth due to a lack of proper medical care. But this is Gaza and such things happen. Giving birth is taken for granted, but living is not.

Silence filled the air and the sweet smell of Ramadan Iftar reached the siege-limited horizon. Weary men gathered in alleyways separating rows of dilapidated shelters, smoking and discussing life under siege—its challenges and frustrations.

Too proud to mention poverty, unemployment was the topic of discussion. “It is the cause of all evil,” Salam’s father whispered. “It is shattering our lives. Our children are hungry. Our families’ needs are unmet. What kind of a man can’t provide for his family? Our world is miserable.”

While Salam peacefully slept, and Amal cuddled in her mother’s arms, the wicked giant of death returned once again. Out of the darkness and through the silence flashes of annihilation and arrows of destruction pierced the star-lit sky and landed in Shujayia.

“Mission accomplished,” the pilot’s voice claimed through the radio, “returning to base.”

The giant of death had struck again. Salam’s father was declared a martyr and was relieved of his worldly misery. Through it all, young Salam slept never to wake up again.

In the midst of the flames, the smoke and the suffocating dust, between the debris and scattered corrugated sheet metal that once was a humble home, the young mother wept. Tightly embracing her infant for a very long time she wondered whether the past two weeks with her baby were borrowed time or if there was still hope for Amal.

- Saleem F. Zaru, Executive Director

Before



Life and landscape in Shujayia before the Israeli attack

After



The devastation of Shujayia



A young adult's impression of Gaza under attack.

How many wars will Gaza children survive?

A seven-year-old girl rushed to the UN worker and said, "Can you take me to see my mom? You drive in cars that the soldiers don't fire at." The worker asked the girl where her mother was. She said, "My mom was killed by shrapnel that hit her in the head. I pulled her body out of the house and laid her to rest under a tree so the house won't collapse over her body. Please take me back to her. I never had a chance to say goodbye!"

- Excerpted from "How many more wars will Gaza children survive?" by Elias Zananiri, writing for UPA from East Jerusalem

This girl is one of 457,000 displaced Palestinians, a majority of whom have had to evacuate to UNRWA schools.



In Gaza City, a man pulls children's toys from the rubble of his home.

How your donations are used:



In 2013, 95% of UPA's operating expenses were used for programs that directly benefit Palestinian communities in need.

Donate online at: helpupa.org/donate

Updates from the Field

Israel attacks UPA Children's Fund partner

One of our Children's Fund partners in Gaza has been targeted by the Israeli military. The Beit Hanoun branch of the International Board on Books - Palestine (PBBY) was completely destroyed. The librarian, Abla Hassan, notified us of the devastation:

The center that hosts the library has been targeted and very badly damaged. **The children's courtyard has been destroyed as well as books, computers, windows and walls.** Of the children who use the library, three of their homes have been completely destroyed and thirty partially destroyed. The number of children or their family members killed is not known yet.

No known news about the library in Rafah. All families associated with the library have been displaced, including the librarian, **Mahmoud**, who left two days ago and described the situation as "horrific, tens of civilians killed and tens of houses destroyed. I do not know about the situation of the children using the library and the library building."

In a statement, IBBY's executive director said, "Our founder, Jella Lepman, believed that books could build bridges of understanding and peace between people...

These children have no such belief anymore."

As long as the Israeli assault continues, tragedies like this will become more common.



Dear Friend of UPA,

The weeks since the beginning of the Israeli attack on Gaza have been terrifying and horrendous. Many families have made the heart-wrenching decision to split to different locations – mother and son to one, father and daughter to another – hoping to maximize the chance one part of the family survives.

The already besieged Gaza Strip is now left with no water and electricity, as displaced families take shelter in UNRWA schools, without proper food, water and hygiene. During Ramadan, people broke their fast to the sound of bombs and smell of death.

Children have lost their homes, seen their loved ones killed, their schools destroyed and their hopes eroded. Some have been physically or psychologically wounded and they are vulnerable to the worst types of exploitation.



You can help lift Palestinians out of misery, isolation and trauma. With your support, UPA can continue to ensure safe shelter, food and care for

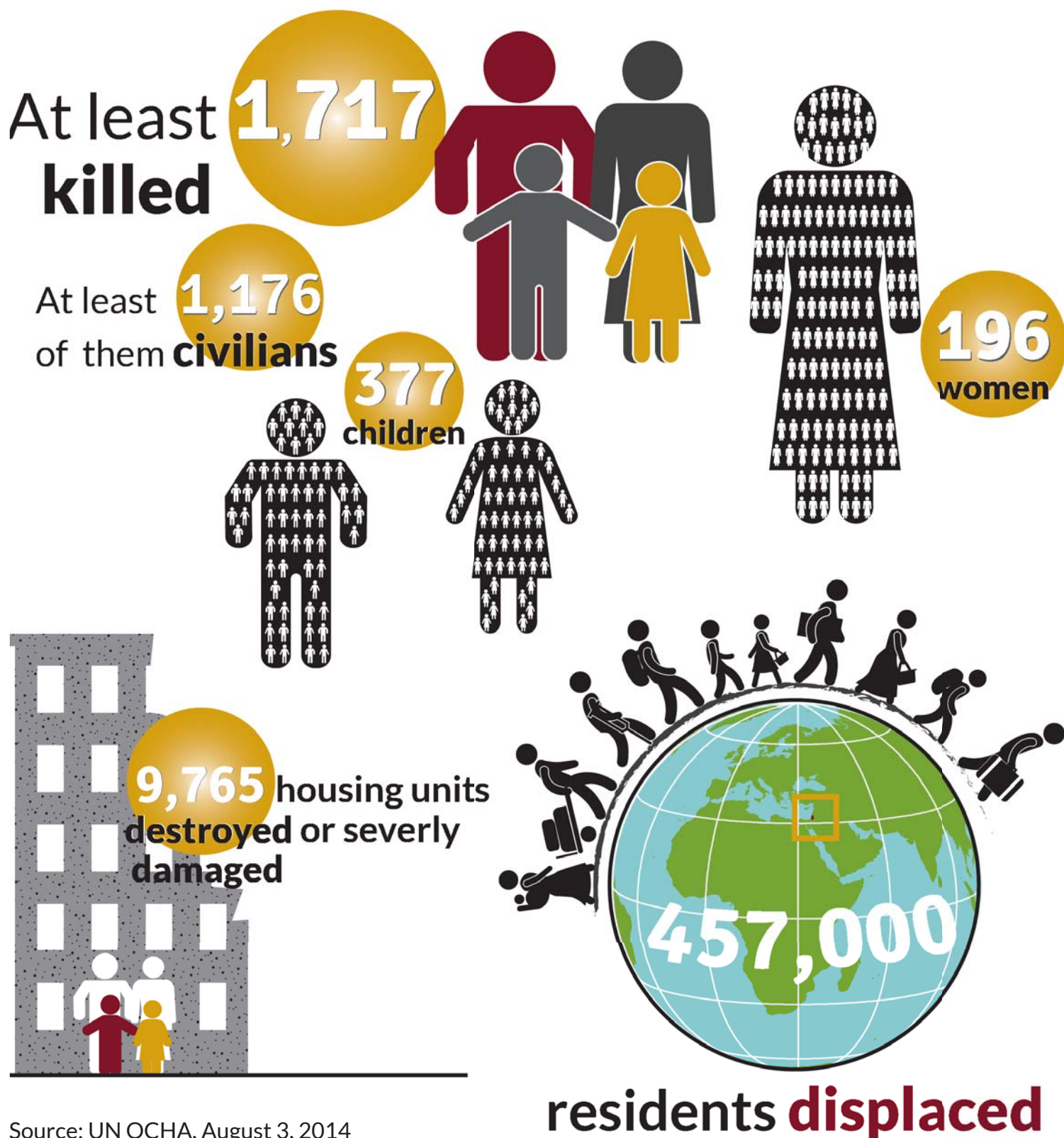
Gazans. I hope you will support Gaza in this time of need by making a donation to UPA. You can make a difference in people's lives right now.

Sincerely,

Halim Halabi
Gaza Strip Programs Manager

SITUATION REPORT

August 3, 2014



Source: UN OCHA, August 3, 2014

Connect thru Giving

Transformative humanitarian work in
Palestinian communities.

UPA is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are
tax-deductible according to applicable laws.



UPA Connect

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Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Washington, DC
Permit No. 5459

GAZA UNDER ATTACK - SPECIAL ISSUE

An elderly Palestinian couple seeks shelter in an UNRWA school in Gaza.



Palestinians in Lebanon, including UPA partners, rally in Beirut to show their solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

The **UPA Connect** newsletter is published quarterly by **United Palestinian Appeal, Inc. (UPA)**. UPA was founded in 1978 as a non-profit humanitarian organization to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians, particularly those in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and refugee camps throughout the Middle East, and to contribute to the long-term socioeconomic and cultural development of Palestinian society.