

Education Cluster Report on Damage in Educational Facilities Gaza Strip

July 2021



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Table of Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| BoQ | Bill of Quantity |
| DES | Designated Emergency Shelter |
| IDP | Internally Displaced People |
| INEE | Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies |
| GTC | Gaza Training Center |
| KG | Kindergarten |
| MoE | Ministry of Education |
| OHCHR | Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| PA | Palestinian Authority |
| RCVI | Rehabilitation Center for the Visually Impaired |
| UN OCHA | United Nations for Coordination of Human Affairs |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees |

1. Overview

The situation in occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) witnessed a significant deterioration during May 2021. Tensions increased in the West Bank and East Jerusalem due to clashes inside and around Al-Aqsa Mosque during the Holy month of Ramadan, in addition to the anticipated eviction of the Palestinian families from the neighborhoods of Silwan and Shiekh Jarrah. The tensions spilled over into Gaza on 10 May. The last escalation on Gaza Strip lasted 11 days between 10 and 21 May 2021. A ceasefire brokered by Egypt came into effect on 21 May at 2:00 am. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), up to 27 May, 256 Palestinians, including 66 children and 40 women were killed, of whom 128 were believed to be civilians. Around 245, including 63 children, were seemingly killed by Israeli Defense Forces.¹

In addition, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) noted that almost 2,000 Palestinians were injured during the hostilities, including over 600 children and 400 women, some of whom sustained severe injury and may suffer from a long-term disability requiring rehabilitation. During the escalation, the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) reached 113,000 IDPs sought shelter and protection at UNRWA schools and host communities. The number of IDPs decreased dramatically, primarily remaining for those whose houses were destroyed or so damaged as to be uninhabitable.²

Due to COVID-19 and public health measures taken to slow the transmission of the virus, schools in the Gaza Strip had been closed since 8 April and education was provided through distance learning approaches. During the escalation and after the ceasefire, all schools remained closed in Gaza, and MoE announced the end of the academic year on 3 June and latterly UNRWA on 10 June. Both MoE and UNRWA had to terminate the academic year shorter than expected due to the different challenges following the latest escalation of violence. These challenges included frequent electricity and internet cuts, damage to schools' infrastructure and difficulty in accessing schools due to damaged streets and infrastructure.

149 public and private schools sustained damage during the escalation. Moreover, 3 MoE directorates reported minor damages. As for UNRWA, 37 schools, Gaza Training Center (GTC) and a Rehabilitation Center for the Visually Impaired (RCVI) were also collaterally impacted. Another 63 UNRWA schools were used as Designated Emergency Shelters (DES) during the escalation to host IDPs and were partially damaged and in need of minor rehabilitation. In addition, 80 Kindergartens (KGs) were also assessed and reported damages due to the escalation.

2. Methodology

To strengthen the identification of school needs and level of damage post escalation, the Education Cluster activated its Assessment Team in Gaza to conduct school-based needs assessments and education-related incident verification for the Palestinian Authority (PA) schools.

2.1 Education Cluster Team Composition, Activation and Distribution

The assessment team is an operational group composed of 10 staff from 10 different Education Cluster partner organizations. Under the leadership of the Education Cluster Coordinator, the assessment team is usually activated and deployed in case of emergency or escalations that cause disruption to normal education including attacks on schools, students and educational staff, school damage, natural disasters including flooding and other education-related incidents. The activation decision in the last escalation was made by the Education Cluster team in consultation with cluster lead agencies.

¹ Source: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/response-escalation-opt-situation-report-no-1-21-27-may-2021>

² Ibid.

The assessment team was deployed post the ceasefire to ensure timely information sharing and enable a quick and effective humanitarian education response. The team visited the affected PA schools in the last week of May 2021³.

Five assessment teams were formed, each team composed of two cluster partner members covering the five Gaza Governorates⁴: North Gaza, Gaza, Middle Area, Khan Younis and Rafah. The participating assessment team organizations included: Emaar Association for Development and Rehabilitation, Palestine Save the Children Foundation (PSCF), Save Youth Future Society (SYFS), Teacher Creativity Center (TCC), Save the Children International (SCI oPt), Vento di Terra (VDT), The Society of Women Graduation (SWG), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Women's Affairs Center (WAC), Educational Forum Association and Maghazi Community Rehabilitation Society.

The MoE in Gaza also deployed its engineering teams to calculate the cost of damage in the PA schools. After compiling and analyzing the data of the assessment team, the analysis was cross-checked for further data triangulation with the MoE rapid damaged schools' assessment report to validate the main findings and provide initial costing for the damaged PA schools. As a result of this process the cluster has produced the findings and analysis in this report. Further in-depth cost estimation is to be conducted by the Education Cluster partners responding to the rehabilitation of the damaged schools.

For the private schools, a team of UNDP engineers conducted an in-depth damage assessment for the schools and prepared a detailed Bill of Quantity (BoQ) for the incurred damages.

UNRWA also conducted an independent assessment for their facilities including schools and training centers. An initial report was shared by UNRWA covering schools that sustained collateral damage due to the escalation in addition to the damage incurred by the schools used as DES.

Regarding the damage in KGs, two assessment teams were formulated by SCI oPt and UNDP in close coordination with the Education Cluster in Gaza. Each team included: SCI engineer, UNDP engineer and a SCI social worker. A list of 122 KGs that reported damages was shared by the Education Cluster focal point with contact details and addresses. The SCI team managed all related logistical arrangements and the assessment teams conducted the assessment visits in the period between 6 to 17 June.

For the damage in the Higher Education facilities, UNESCO and UNDP in coordination with Ministry of Higher Education and the Education Cluster conducted an in-depth damage assessment. Initial reports indicate 19 Higher Education facilities⁵ sustained damage during the last escalation. The assessment team will circulate a report once completed.

Table 1: Summary of Damaged Educational Facilities:

| Type of Educational Facility | Lead Assessing Partner | Number of Damaged Facilities | Estimated Damage Cost in US\$ |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| PA Schools | Education Cluster and MoE | 136 | 2.24 M |
| Private Schools | UNDP | 14 | TBD |
| UNRWA Schools and Centers | UNRWA Assessment Team | 102 (both collateral and DES) | 1.17 M |
| KGs | SCI and UNDP | 80 | 140,000 |
| Total | | 331 | \$ 3.55 M |

³ [Terms of Reference for the Education Cluster Assessment Team.](#)

⁴ In the five Gaza Governorates, there are 7 MoE Education Directorates: North Gaza, East Gaza, West Gaza, Middle area, Khan Younis, East Khan Younis, and Rafah.

⁵ The 19 Higher Education Facilities belong to 12 Higher Education Institutions.

2.2 Tools

The Education Cluster Assessment Team members conducted the assessment for PA schools through a contextualized Education Cluster Emergency Assessment Tool. Using this tool, team members were able to assess the nature and scale of damage in the schools in addition to identification of any urgent humanitarian needs.

As for the damage assessment for the KGs, a tool was developed jointly by the SCI oPt and UNDP teams adapted from the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) toolkit. The tool used took into consideration the impact of escalation on KG children and staff, as well as the structural damage to KGs' buildings that affect the continuity of education in these KGs. The tool was then developed on Kobo toolbox and uploaded to the app for data collection on tablets.

UNRWA, UNESCO and UNDP developed their own assessment tools to be used when assessing the damaged educational facilities. All assessment tools were checked for comparability to feed into this overall analysis.

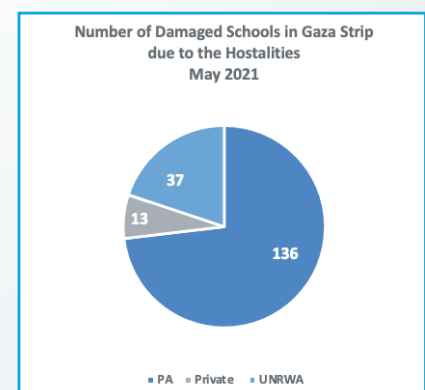
It is worth noting that the assessment of damage only took into consideration the damage which resulted from the recent attacks on Gaza. However, there are other maintenance and rehabilitation needs for the schools and KGs that were not covered by this assessment. For that, the cost of damage is not inclusive of all costs related to schools and KGs construction and rehabilitation interventions. For any planned interventions a technical assessment is still needed to assess relevant costs.

3. Limitations

- Not all educational facilities that initially reported damage to MoE were found to have sustained damage.
- Data collection for the assessment was conducted at a time when all educational facilities were closed and non-operational, which resulted in difficulties in contacting and accessing the facilities.
- There was a level of inaccuracy in the contact information, specifically in the case of KGs, which resulted in difficulties in communications and reach.
- The assessments relied on observation, engineering assessments, and interviews with the educational facilities administration, without being able to interview children or staff.
- The assessment only covered damage resulting from the recent escalation and did not account for other pre-existing needs.
- Several Education Cluster partners conducted the assessment for the various educational facilities which required efforts in coordination and streamlining in data collection tools and analysis.

4. Main Findings

186 schools (136 public, 13 private and 37 UNRWA) sustained damage in the last escalation on Gaza in May 2021. In addition, 63 UNRWA schools used as DES reported minor damage. Most of the damaged PA schools are located in West Gaza while UNRWA damaged schools were mainly in North Gaza. The total estimated damage cost for the PA schools and for UNRWA educational facilities including schools, training centers and schools used as DES is US\$ 3.41 Million.



Out of 122 reportedly damaged KGs, 80 KGs were verified. The damages incurred by the KGs are described mainly between moderate and minor with a total estimated cost of US\$ 140,000 .

Table 2: Estimated Damage Cost per School Type:

| Type of Educational Facility | Number of Educational Facilities | Estimated Damage Cost (USD) |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| PA Schools | 136 | 2,244,294 |
| Private Schools | 14 | TBD |
| UNRWA (including Schools, training centers, RCVI and DES) | 102 | 1,173,360 |
| KGs | 80 | 140,000 |
| Total | 331 | \$ 3,557,654 |

4.1 PA Schools⁶

The Education Cluster Assessment Team visited PA schools and 3 MoE directorates (North, West Gaza and Khan Younis) that reportedly sustained major to moderate damage during the escalation in May 2021. The purpose of the visits was to verify and report the level of damage incurred by the schools and MoE directorate buildings. 93% of the PA schools reported between moderate and minor damage and only 10 schools sustained major damages including one basic school building which was massively impacted. Out of the 136 PA schools, 18 were previously targeted multiple times either directly or indirectly⁷ in the escalations in 2018 and 2019.

The 136 schools are attended by a total number of 121,092 students (Female: 59,008 , Male: 62,084).

According to the assessment teams, around 79% of the schools assessed can allow students back to their premises after conducting the required maintenance and minor rehabilitation. The rest of the schools need reconstruction and moderate rehabilitation⁸ before allowing back students to ensure a safe learning environment.

4.1.1 PA Schools and Level of Damage

Damage sustained by the PA schools was divided into three main categories: minor, moderate, and major (See Annex 6.1). Most of the schools reported moderate or minor damages: broken windows, doors, cracked walls, damaged water tanks and water pipes in addition to solar panels.

According to the verification and observations of the assessment teams, 10 schools sustained major damage either by Israeli airstrikes or tank shelling. The major damage included: destroyed classrooms, labs, cracked walls, demolished school fences, damaged school playgrounds and infrastructure including water and electricity networks, damaged water tanks, solar panels, and WASH facilities.

Table 3: Schools that sustained damage in Gaza Strip disaggregated by directorate and level of damage:

| MoE Directorate | Number of Schools | Level of Damage | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Major | Moderate | Minor |
| East Gaza | 19 | 4 | 12 | 3 |
| West Gaza | 43 | 4 | 21 | 18 |
| North Gaza | 32 | 1 | 18 | 13 |
| Rafah | 10 | - | 4 | 6 |
| Khan Younis | 14 | - | 3 | 11 |
| Middle Area | 18 | 1 | 4 | 13 |
| Total | 136 | 10 | 62 | 64 |

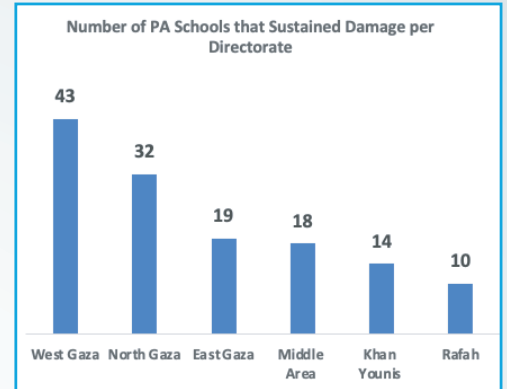
⁶ To see the full List of PA Damaged Schools, click here: [PA Damaged Schools List](#).

⁷ Indirectly targeted school are schools that sustained damage due to a nearby airstrike or tank shelling which did not directly hit the school premises.

⁸ For damage definitions, refer to Annex 6.1

4.1.2 PA Damaged Schools per Directorate

The highest number of affected PA schools was reported in West Gaza directorate with 43 schools. Out of the 43 schools in West Gaza, four reported major damage including demolished classrooms, damaged school infrastructure, school fences, cracked walls, broken windows and solar panels. As an example, in one school, Balqis Al Yamin Secondary Girls Schools, and due to the Israeli airstrikes, three classrooms were severely damaged in addition to severe damage to the school fence and playground. There was also damage reported in the windows, doors, and water tanks.



North Gaza directorate reported 32 schools that sustained damage. Out of the 32 schools, only one sustained major damage due to the shelling. The school reported broken windows, damage to several playground sunshades and to the fiberglass roof. In addition, 18 of the schools had moderate damage ranging from broken windows, cracked walls to partially demolished school fences. The other 13 schools had minor damage mainly to broken glass windows and doors.

East Gaza directorate had 19 schools that sustained damage of which 4 were majorly impacted. In one school, Jamal Abdalnaser Secondary School for Boys, the school wall in the southern area was destroyed due to shelling on land nearby to the school. In addition, around 50 windows in rooms on the southern side of the school, including labs and library, were broken. Damage was also reported to the solar panels and the playground roof which was impacted by shrapnel. Another school that sustained major damage due to direct targeting is Sabha Al Harazien Basic School for Boys, where the school reported cracked and damaged walls, broken windows, damaged classroom and resource room materials, damaged latrines, and solar panels.



The total estimated cost for the rehabilitation of the 136 damaged PA schools is US\$ 2,244,294 divided as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: Level of Damage in PA schools and the total cost in USD:

| Level of Damage | Number of PA Schools | Total Cost in USD |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Major | 10 | 713,629 |
| Moderate | 62 | 1,333,023 |
| Minor | 64 | 197,642 |
| Total | 136 | 2,244,294 |

4.2 Private Schools

UNDP conducted a detailed damage assessment for the private schools that sustained damage in Gaza during the escalation. According to the assessment, there were 14 damaged private schools of which some suffered from major damage.

One school, in the Middle Area, Ahmad Alkurd/ As Salah Basic Private School, reported complete destruction in several classrooms in addition to the science and computer labs of the basic school. Another private school, the Rosary Sisters School, located in West Gaza suffered from major damage including classrooms that were fully destroyed and in need of reconstruction. Damage was also reported in the windows, doors, school infrastructure, water pipes, school furniture and to 170 solar power cells.⁹

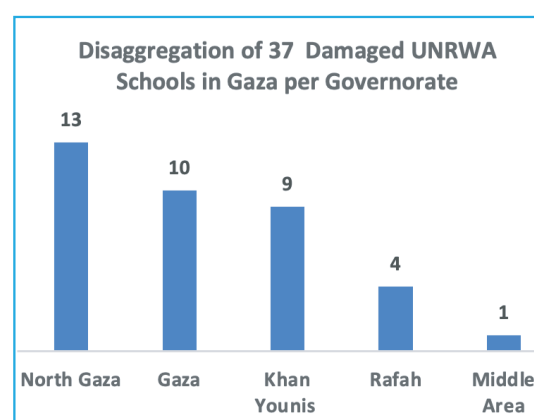
4.3 UNRWA Schools¹⁰

The UNRWA damage assessment team and engineering department conducted an independent in-depth damage assessment to all their educational facilities that sustained both collateral damage during the escalation and which were used as designated emergency shelters by the IDPs.

A total of 39 UNRWA educational facilities including 37 schools and one GTC and one RCVI sustained damage in the last escalation on Gaza. These schools have an estimated total number of 48,229 enrolled students (Female: 26,263 and Male: 21,966) . The total estimated cost of rehabilitation for the damage (for both schools and DES) is US\$ 1,173,360 .

62% of the UNRWA schools that sustained damage are located in North Gaza and Gaza governorates. Most of the schools sustained between minor to moderate damage with only 4 schools that were majorly impacted.

In addition to the schools that sustained damage during the escalation, 63 schools used as designated shelters (DES) suffered minor damage due to their use as shelters accommodating hundreds of displaced families. Most of the DES that were used, and sustained damage are in Gaza (31 DES) and North Gaza (18 DES) governorates. The total estimated cost for rehabilitating the 63 schools used as DES is around US\$ 500,400.



⁹ Source: Education Cluster Assessment Team.

¹⁰ To see the full list of UNRWA Damaged Schools, click here: [UNRWA Damaged Schools \(Collateral and DES\)](#).

Table 5: Number of UNRWA Schools used as DES per Governorate:

| Governorate | Number of UNRWA Schools used as DES |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Gaza | 31 |
| North Gaza | 18 |
| Rafah | 9 |
| Middle Area | 5 |
| Total | 63 |

4.4 Kindergartens (KGs)¹¹

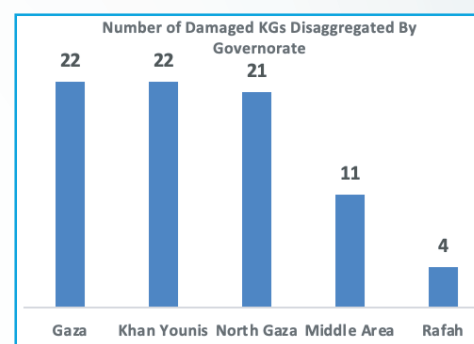
SCI oPt, in partnership with UNDP and in coordination with the Education Cluster, agreed to conduct an assessment for the 122 affected KGs. The assessment aimed to identify the level of damage, its impact on children and KG staff, and functionality of KGs. The data gathered feeds into response planning and resource mobilization for humanitarian actors. Out of the 122 affected KGs in the list shared by MoE, a total of 80 KGs were visited and assessed across the five governorates, of which 67 are private KGs and 13 are affiliated to organizations.

4.4.1 Damaged KGs per Governorate

The majority of KGs are located in the North Gaza, Gaza and Khan Younis governorates while Rafah had the least number of affected KGs.

4.4.2 Age ranges and enrollment rates

The KGs assessed serve children with ages ranging between three to five years old. A few KGs serve children that are up to six years old or starting from one year old.



A total of 10,539 children are reported to be enrolled in the 80 KGs, of which 53% are boys, 47% girls. Of those children there are 91 (0.8%) children with disabilities enrolled in 25 KGs.

67 out of the 80 KGs run one shift in the morning and 13 run two shifts (morning and afternoon). Regarding the number of KG staff, in total there are 513 teachers, 221 educational staff and 73 volunteers working at the assessed KGs.

A total of 238 classrooms were found to have some level of damage across 70 KGs.

The total estimated cost of damage in KGs is US\$ 140,000

Table 6 Number of KGs and Level of Damage Disaggregated by Governorate

| Governorate | Total Number of Assessed KGs | Classrooms | KG Playground | KG Latrines | KG equipment /or materials | Other KG Facilities |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|---------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| North Gaza | 21 | 14 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 3 |
| Gaza | 22 | 22 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Middle Area | 11 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Khan Younis | 22 | 20 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Rafah | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Total Cost of Damages | \$140,000 | | | | | |

¹¹ For the full report on damaged KGs in Gaza, click here [KGs Assessment Report](#)

5. Education Cluster Response

The education cluster organized several meetings with UNRWA, MoE Gaza and Ramallah in addition to the cluster strategic advisory group members and used the results of the finding of the cluster rapid assessment to identify the main response priorities for Gaza and developed the below key priorities:

- In coordination with the protection cluster, provision of remote Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services to vulnerable children.
- Provision of emergency education kits to children. This includes stationary, books and education materials to ensure children especially the displaced children.
- Rehabilitation of damaged schools and KGs.
- In collaboration with the protection cluster and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility, organize children summer activities to provide vulnerable children in Gaza with MHPSS support and catch up programs to compensate for the lost education time due to the conflict.

Table 7: Education Cluster Intervention for Gaza Response:

| Objectives, activities | Targeted people (disaggregated by gender and age) | Location | Partners | Requirements in USD |
|---|--|----------|---|---------------------|
| Objective 1: Vulnerable children can access safe and inclusive learning opportunities through emergency repairs of education facilities and provision of non-formal education services. | | | | |
| Assess and rehabilitate damaged schools and KGs. The number of affected education facilities due to the conflict is at least 58 in addition to 55 schools that have been used as DES. | 60000 children (32000 girls) and 2000 school staff (70%women) | Gaza | HI, UNDP, Islamic Relief Palestine, The Gulf Educational Organization, UNICEF, UNRWA | 4,000,000 |
| Organize children summer programs to provide vulnerable children in Gaza with non-formal education opportunities to compensate for the lost education time due to the conflict. | 70,000 children (51% girls) | Gaza | NRC, UNICEF, UNRWA, Save the Children, UNESCO | 1,900,000 |
| Providing emergency education kits to children. This includes stationary, books and education materials to ensure children especially the displaced children can access distance learning once re-activated by UNRWA and MoE and summer activities. | 150,000 children (51% girls) | Gaza | NRC, Tamer Institute, Save the Children, HI, Right to Play, Terre des hommes-Lausanne, Fares Alarab For Development & Charity Works, UNICEF, UNRWA | 600,000 |
| Objective 2: Support the mental health and psychosocial well-being of both students, parents and educators in Gaza | | | | |
| In coordination with the CP AoR, provision of remote and face to face MHPSS services to vulnerable children and their families and school staff. | 330,000 children (50% girls) and 10000 adults (60% women) | Gaza | UNRWA, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, AFKAR, Al Amal Rehabilitation Society, NRC, Save the Children, HI, Right to Play, Terre des hommes-Lausanne, TCC, Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, Maghazi Community for Rehabilitation Society, Palestine Save the Children Foundation, Islamic Relief, the Gulf Educational Organization, Fares Al Arab | 1,600,000 |
| In collaboration with CP AoR, organize children summer activities to provide vulnerable children in Gaza with MHPSS support and recreational activities | 50000 children (50%girls) | Gaza | Tamer Institute, Save the Children, Right to Play, TCC, Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, UNICEF, UNRWA | 2,100,000 |
| Total | | | | 10,200,000 |

6. Education Cluster Advocacy Messages

Education is a fundamental right that is crucial for children's development and protection, as well as enabling understanding and the fulfilment of other rights. Protecting safe access to schools must be a priority of all duty bearers in the oPt, and every effort made to address any impediment to safe access.

6.1 Government of Israel

- End attacks on schools. Attacks on schools – whether targeted or collateral damage due to indiscriminate fighting – constitute a Grave Violation against children and can amount to war crimes. Every school damaged immediately threatens children's right to life and diminishes their prospect of building a better future.
- Endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and implement its Guidelines. With 108 endorsing States, the Safe Schools Declaration and its Guidelines represent best global practice for operationalizing International Humanitarian Law as applied to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure in and around sites of learning.

6.2 De facto authorities in Gaza

- Limit the presence of armed actors near schools. Such practices increase the risk of schools being targeted for attacks and other Grave Violations such as child recruitment, sexual and gender-based violence, and killing and maiming.
- Implement the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict. The Guidelines represent best global practice for operationalizing International Humanitarian Law as applied to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure in and around sites of learning.

6.3 International community

- Invest in education. School rehabilitation, catchup classes and MHPSS activities are life-saving interventions that ensure children learn & develop in a protective space. An investment in education over the next three months will yield high returns for a generation of children in Gaza.
- Hold perpetrators to account. Attacks on schools and hospitals, the killing and maiming of children, and denial of humanitarian access are Grave Violations against children. The international community should ensure that immediate and independent investigations take place and that perpetrators are brought to justice.
- Call on the Government of Israel to sign the Safe Schools Declaration. By signing the Declaration, Israel will commit to protecting children, teachers, and education infrastructure. This can reduce the need to rehabilitate schools in the future and more importantly save children's lives and protect their futures.
- Urge parties to the conflict to implement the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict. The Guidelines outline six principles to assist parties to a conflict to operationalize International Humanitarian Law, and therein guaranteeing and respecting the right to education for all Palestinian children, in its full expression.

7. Annexes

6.1 Definitions of the Level of Damage:

| Level of damage | Explanation | Range of Cost Estimation |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Major | Where severe damage occurred to the building's body and infrastructure, the building still exists but is not usable | Above 50,000 USD |
| Moderate | Where damage occurred to the building's body and infrastructure, but the building is usable | Between 10,000 – 50,000 USD |
| Minor | Where damage occurred to windows, doors and similar facilities, the building is easily usable | Below 1,000 USD |

8. Links to Relevant Documents

8.1 List of Damaged PA Schools

[PA Damaged Schools List.](#)

8.2 SCI and UNDP Full Report on Damaged KGs

[KGs Assessment Report](#)

8.3 List of Damaged UNRWA Schools (Collateral and DES)

[UNRWA Damaged Schools \(Collateral and DES\)](#)

8.4 Education Cluster Assessment Teams Terms of Reference

[Terms of Reference for the Education Cluster Assessment Team.](#)