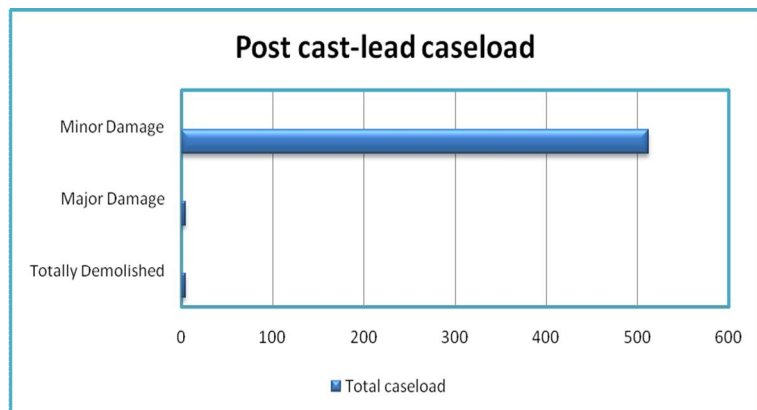
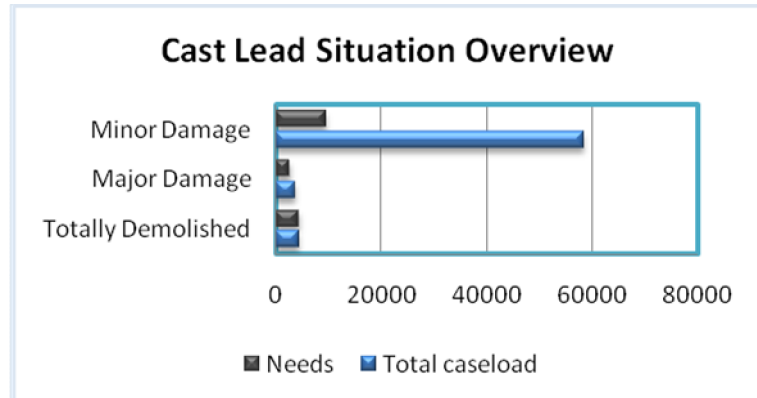


Situation Overview

SHELTER ADVOCACY FACT SHEET 3

Two years after the end of Operation Cast Lead people living in the Gaza Strip continue to suffer unnecessarily. Plans to reconstruct housing damaged or demolished as a result of the conflict remain largely stagnant. Housing needs continue to increase day by day putting pressure on already overburdened coping mechanisms and structures. In addition to the significant housing needs prior to the last war, and the caseload resulting from Cast Lead, over **500** additional shelters have also been damaged or destroyed by Israeli military action in the Gaza Strip in the last two years; total shelter needs, including for natural population growth, are now estimated to be almost **100,000** units. The shelter sector estimates that **20%** or **20,000** families of this total are in an extra vulnerable position, including some **120,000** women, men, boys and girls with particularly acute protection concerns. Another **20,000** individuals are estimated to still be displaced within the Gaza Strip.

Lack of access to raw building materials, as a result of the Israeli and Egyptian blockade, remains the major reason for the chronic lack of progress in reconstruction in Gaza. Two years after the end of Cast Lead only **875** of the **2,796** major damaged homes have been repaired and just **6** houses of the **3,487** totally demolished homes have been rebuilt.



Data source: Shelter Sector Gaza – Unified Shelter Sector Database (USSD)  
<http://www.sheltergaza.org>

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**Vulnerable Groups**

**Vulnerable groups and the strain of natural population growth**

Over **10,000** (17%) of Cast Lead shelter affected families are female headed households, while approximately 160 families whose shelters were demolished are known to have one or more family members living with a disability. They are all still waiting for reconstruction assistance. Overcrowding is now a major issue in a context where long term and chronic overcrowding can lead to increased protection concerns caused by lack of privacy and insufficient resources. Domestic violence, gender based violence and the general breakdown of social and cultural norms are all symptomatic of overcrowding. It is estimated that **13,000** housing units are required to be constructed in Gaza each year, just to cater for current population growth needs. The shelter sector estimates that 20% of the overall total in need of shelter are in an extra vulnerable position.

**MoPWH**

**Ministry of Public Works and Housing leads the way in Reconstruction Activities in Gaza**

Due to the blockade on Gaza, and restrictions on raw materials, UN agencies and most major international agencies continue to struggle to have any significant impact on reconstruction efforts for houses damaged and destroyed during Operation Cast Lead. Donors' reluctance to green light usage of tunnel materials has meant that the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH), and various agencies utilising materials available on the local market, are now leading the way with the reconstruction of totally demolished shelters in Gaza. During December 2010 the completion of a 36 unit multi-storey housing complex, made unfit for use during Cast Lead, marked a huge step forward and demonstrated what kind of reconstruction could be achieved despite the blockade. During January 2011 the MoPWH announced a plan to construct a further **1,000** units during the course of 2011.

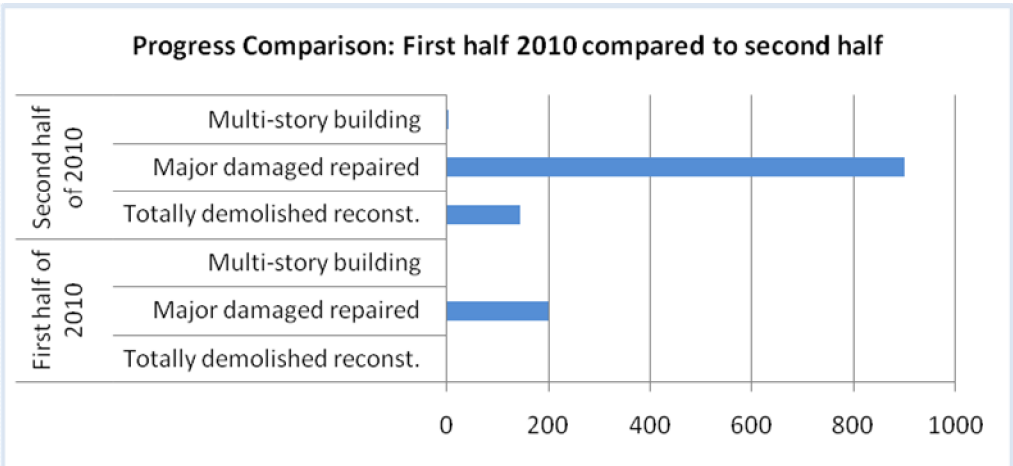
The shortage of building materials often forces families to build back lower quality homes. This raises serious concerns about exacerbating any future crisis situation conflict or naturally occurring.



*4 apartment building reconstructed in Jabalia*

**Positive progress by the end of late 2010**

Previously the Shelter Sector has reported little progress for major damaged and totally demolished shelters due to the blockade. However, for the second six months of 2010 the sector recorded a positive change compared to the previous 6 months. 675 shelters in need of major repairs were completed, compared to just 200 in the previous six months. The vast majority of this progress was due to the use of raw materials that entered Gaza illegally from Egypt and finishing materials that have been entering Gaza 'legally' since June 2010. Additionally, by the end of 2010 47,984 families out of a total of 53,409 recorded cases for minor repairs as a result of military action had received assistance worth up to USD 5,000 per shelter.



**The So Called ‘Easing’**

More than six months after Israel announced the easing of the Gaza blockade, shelter reconstruction remains at a near standstill. By the end of 2010 out of over 6,000 completely destroyed or major damaged shelters from Cast Lead, agencies have only been able to rebuild 875 that were major damaged, and just six that were totally destroyed.

While the ‘ease’ has seen an increase in items such as glass, materials to make doors and windows, and construction ‘finishing’ items such as plumbing and electrical fittings, coming through official Israeli crossings, vital raw building materials like steel, aggregate and cement remain on the Israeli “Dual Use List,” and are therefore restricted for import into the Gaza Strip.

“Now I can buy doors and windows, but what use are they without four walls?”  
*Farid Batsh, Jabalia*

**Positive steps for UNRWA:** Following massive efforts and recourses during 2010, UNRWA has succeeded in obtaining Israeli approval to import construction materials for 34 projects, which included 407 housing units, of which 151 are already completed. It is hoped that Israel will approve more housing projects during early 2011.

### Total Estimated Needs

- 4,938 destroyed or damaged shelters beyond repair during Operation Cast Lead remain to be rebuilt;
- 522 shelters damaged or destroyed by Israeli military activity post-Cast Lead;
- 2,900 families suffering Israeli related housing destruction from before Cast Lead;
- 2,735 housing units partially constructed by UNRWA and UNDP, but progress frozen since June 2007 due to the blockade;
- 5,500 refugee families from camps still living in derelict and unsanitary shelters;
- Approximately 75,000 additional housing units currently needed to address unmet natural population growth.

**Total 91,500\***

\*Unified Shelter Sector Database (USSD)  
[www.sheltergaza.org](http://www.sheltergaza.org) –the USSD does not currently hold the total figures for all pre-cast lead cases/needs

### Recommendations

1. The shelter sector recommends an immediate end to Israeli and Egyptian restrictions on raw reconstruction materials entering Gaza, specifically steel, cement and aggregate.
2. The international community should engage with Israel and Egypt to ensure the immediate availability of these materials on the open market in Gaza, thus reducing the need to use tunnel materials. As an interim measure agencies and donors should be as flexible as possible to facilitate reconstruction in Gaza using all available materials.