

Occupation practices and continued conflict drive humanitarian needs in the occupied Palestinian territory, a UN OCHA Annual Overview concludes

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Humanitarian needs in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) are driven by practices related to Israel's prolonged occupation and recurrent escalations of armed conflict, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says in its 2014 Annual Humanitarian Overview released today.

According to the report, "Fragmented Lives", Palestinian civilians continue to be subject to threats to their life, physical safety and liberty. 2014 witnessed the highest civilian death toll since 1967.

"2014 was a devastating year for Palestinians in the oPt," said James Rawley, Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt. In Gaza, 1.8 million people experienced an escalation of hostilities, which resulted in over 1,500 Palestinian civilian fatalities, including more than 550 children, and left some 100,000 residents without a home. On the Israeli side, five civilians, including a child, as well as a security guard were killed. Serious concerns were raised over the conduct of hostilities of both Israeli forces and armed Palestinian actors. Reconstruction in Gaza has been slow, hampered by the continued blockade and the lack of funding, although the temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism has enabled the import of construction material.

"In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem," he added, "conflict-related casualties increased, a record number of 1,215 Palestinians were displaced due to home demolitions by Israeli authorities, while settlement and settler activity continued, in contravention of international law, and contributed to humanitarian vulnerability of affected Palestinian communities."

According to the report, movement and access restrictions continued to fragment the occupied territory, undermining Palestinians' livelihoods and impeding their access to basic services.

"Continued occupation undermines the ability of Palestinians to live normal lives. Were these factors removed and related policies changed, international humanitarian assistance would not be necessary here." Mr. Rawley concluded.

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