

Sources of Human Insecurity in Post-War Situations

The Case of Gaza

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores classical and war-related factors associated with human insecurity reports in the Gaza Strip following the winter 2008-09 Israeli attack. A cross-sectional survey was conducted six months after the Israeli attack with adults from 3017 households. Results demonstrate that persons with greater human capital and socioeconomic resources were somewhat protected from human insecurity associated with the attack and siege. Results also underscore the significance of including both classical and war-related factors in assessing human insecurity in conflict, and the link between individual and communal/national security. While it is important to intervene by supporting Gazans with food and aid, interventions should also address the violence of war and ongoing siege as one of the causes of human insecurity.

Keywords: Gaza strip, human security, displacement, distress.

The Gaza Strip population has been exposed to various forms of long-term political violence under the Israeli military occupation. With its population composed largely of displaced Palestinian refugees of the 1948 Arab Israeli war as a result of the creation of the State of Israel, the strip fell under Israeli military occupation in 1967. Over time, the Gaza population was exposed to a number of Israeli military operations and ground incursions with overwhelming military dominance; as well, various Israeli measures and imposed restrictions lead to the de-development of the Strip's economy, and its dependence on Israel (Roy, 2006). When Israel withdrew its army and settlers from the Strip in 2005, it continued to control all its entry and exit points. After the success of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Legislative Council elections in 2006, Israel imposed a total blockade/siege on the territory and closed all entry and exit points, which worsened the economic situation, restric-

ted movement (Amnesty International, 2010), and intensified the political violence in the Strip due to Israeli military attacks and internal political conflict.

Under the Israeli blockade and resulting siege conditions, which until recently was supported by Egypt, the entry of food, fuel and other basic goods became severely restricted; access to medical care was blocked; the passage of people for trade and work became limited, and included the restriction on the movement of students to reach their academic institutions (Gisha, 2007). The importation of items used for industry and manufacturing was also prohibited; exports to the outside world were limited, resulting in a crisis in economic activity. Siege conditions on the economic and social wellbeing of the people have been destructive. Unemployment has risen to 37 percent in 2008, and food insecurity continued to rise reaching 56 percent in 2008. The percentage of Gazans who live in deep poverty has been steadily increasing, reaching 35 percent in 2006; Gaza was at risk of being totally aid-dependent as 80 percent of industry was forced to close (Gisha, 2007). Poverty rose from 52 percent in 2006 to 71 percent in 2007 (UNDP, 2010), all of which left Gazans living under humanitarian crisis conditions (Giacaman et al., 2009).

During December 2008 and January 2009, the Israeli army launched a three-week intensive military attack on the Gaza Strip. By the end of the attack about 1400 Gazans had been killed, including many civilians, more than 400 children and 100 women, and about 5380 had been injured, including 1800 children and 800 women (B'Tselem, 2009). A massive destruction resulted from the attack, which led to displacement and the loss of shelter, deterioration of water supplies and food insecurity. These events resulted in threats to the individual, family, communal, and national survival, economic development, and overall wellbeing in the Gaza Strip.

Apart from the body counts and traditional measures of morbidity, Palestinian 'survivors' continue to suffer from a compromised 'basic security' under Israeli occupation (Batniji et al., 2009). Continued siege, fragmentation of communities and land, acute and constant insecurities, routine violations of human rights, poor governance and mismanagement, and dependence on international aid for resources are all factors that compromise Palestinians' sense of security (Batniji et al., 2009; Giacaman et al., 2009). This collapse of economic development and the diminished level of personal wellbeing contribute to a state of ongoing individual and national insecurity.

THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN SECURITY

The concept of security has evolved over the past few years beyond a focus on the security of nations to include the security of individuals and communities (Takemi et al., 2008). Originally introduced by the UN's Human Development Report 1994, the concept is still being refined. In its broad sense, it focuses on the protection of fundamental freedoms that are 'the essence of life' and also protecting people from critical and pervasive threats (Jolly et al., 2006). Human security lacks a single accepted definition and no agreed framework for its measurement (Owen, 2003). The concept thus has many definitions and characterisations where the objective is 'to safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical and pervasive threats'. Thus according to the Commission on Human Security, protection from critical and pervasive threats is emphasised. Likewise, the idea that what is vital varies between different populations is also emphasised, making the definition a dynamic one to be adapted to the context in which it is used (Alkire, 2002). Indeed, different measures of human security have been developed in different countries and include asking respondents about specific

threats relevant to the context, ranging from a focus on economic, food, health, environmental, personal, political and community security (Owen, 2003).

In this paper we utilise Jennifer Leaning's framework to conceptualize human security among Palestinians both as individuals and as a nation. Leaning and colleagues (2004) theorised that human insecurity consists of two major components. The first constitutes the basic material needs necessary for survival such as shelter, food, water and safety. The second is the psychological and social component, which includes three main categories: sense of home, a link to community and a positive and hopeful sense of the future. This is a suitable framework for the Palestinian context especially that Palestinians link their identity and wellbeing to their families, and they continue to have strong ties to their communities as a matter of survival (Giacaman et al., 2007). Hence, threats to national communal security including displacement and destruction of home, place, community, and land are a key element of threats and insecurities to individuals and the Palestinian community as a whole. In this paper, we employ a standard of living constructed scale, and reports of the need to rebuild destroyed homes as a result of the attack, as measures of basic material needs; and reports on fears and threats related to home, community and the future, as well as distress and suffering to measure human security and psychosocial status.

Understanding the effects of political and military violence beyond body counts and reports of injury is essential for informing measures of communal stabilisation and reconstruction. In this paper, we will examine the relationship between threats to national security and individual and communal insecurity. We use the human security framework to show associated factors and consequences of the political and military power of an occupying state over a population under siege. This paper reports the results of a survey conducted in July-August 2009 to document reports of human security as experienced among people living in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the winter 2008-09 Israeli army attack and in conditions of ongoing siege.

METHODS

Sample

A cross-sectional survey of a representative sample of Palestinian households in the Gaza Strip was conducted mid-July to mid-August 2009, six months after the December 2008/January 2009 Israeli attack on the Strip. The sample was derived in two stages, using the 2007 housing and establishment census as a sampling frame. Sampling weights were calculated and provided by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics based on the sampling frame, which was updated in 2007.

In the first stage, the Gaza Strip was divided into 11 strata, based on governorates and type of locale. Out of a total of 1630 enumeration areas (EAs), 63 were selected using random systematic sampling to represent all strata. The second stage of sampling was based on the estimated number of households within each EA, which ranged from 46 to 228 households. 80 households were chosen at random from larger EAs, and either 35 or 50 households from the smaller EAs. In total, 3030 households were targeted for interviewing, and fieldworkers visiting a given EA were instructed to select the required number of households by starting from a randomly chosen beginning of the EA and going clockwise in sampling the first houses encountered in the EA until the needed number is achieved (Abu-Rmeileh et al., 2009).

Household heads or another consenting adult member of the household provided basic demographic, socio-economic and health information on all members of the family. One adult aged 18 years or over from each household was selected using the Kish table method and responded to various questions related to distress and other measures of psycho-social mental health. Men were selected from households with even numbers and women from households with odd numbers. For this report, participants completed a questionnaire about their levels of insecurity.

Instrument

The study instrument included information on the demographic and socio-economic status of respondents, household amenities, property destruction, losses of family members, displacement and reports of distress and human insecurity within the past two weeks. The distress and human insecurity measures were developed locally over time. The questions included in these measures were based on focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and knowledge of the context. The research instrument was revised based on feedback from regional and international experts, and was validated in the local context in 2005 (Mataria et al., 2009). The study instrument was piloted on 32 Gaza Strip households, and modified accordingly.

Construction/Explanation of Variables

This paper relies on Jennifer Leaning's conceptualisation of human security. Here, we employ a standard of living constructed scale composed of 9 items (see Index A), and respondent reports of destruction to homes and neighbourhood as measures of basic material needs. We also utilise respondent reports on fears and threats related to home, community and the future, as well as distress and suffering to measure human security and psychosocial status.

Factor analysis was used for the Standard of Living (STL), Human Insecurity, and Distress constructed variables, and exploratory factor analyses were conducted using principal component extraction with varimax rotation. Items with loadings under 0.4 were excluded from the model. Each item was then multiplied by its loading; the scores were all added and divided by the sum of all the loadings to yield the weighted mean. The variables included for each factor analysis are detailed in Index A.

The STL scale contained items which were identified through factor analysis, and then a count variable was created counting how many of those items were available to the household on a range from 0-9 items. Sample scale items for STL include the following: 'currently available electrical fridge to the household' and 'currently available Solar Heater to the household.' Cronbach's Alpha for the scale was 0.76, which indicates good internal consistency/reliability of the scale.

War-related destruction in our study was measured by private property destruction and neighbourhood destruction. The two destruction variables were computed as follows. Private property destruction variable was computed by counting the number of positive answers for destruction to: residence (home), family property/commercial- project facility, crops/agricultural products, animal products, and private car. A neighbourhood destruction variable was computed by counting the number of positive/affirmative answers for the following questions: destruction to schools and universities, clinics, commercial shops, roads and infrastructure, and public gardens and recreational areas. These two variables resembled the war-related destruction in our study, and were further recoded into: either reporting at least one type of destruction (Yes destruction), or reporting no destruction (No destruction). Displacement

was assessed by asking respondents whether they were forced to leave their homes during or after the war (yes or no). The majority of households had returned to their original place of residence at the time of the survey.

The Human Insecurity measure was constructed utilising ten questions about individuals' levels of fear; threats to personal safety, safety of their families, and their ability to support their families; loss of income, homes and land; and fear about their future and the future of their families (refer to Index A). Sample survey questions for the human insecurity scale include the following: 'To what extent do you fear for yourself in your daily life?', 'To what extent do you fear for your family in your daily life?' and 'To what extent do you worry/fear losing your home'. Responses ranged from 1 (least insecure) to 5 (most insecure). Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.83, which indicates a very good internal consistency/reliability of the scale. The distress measure was constructed using 12 questions about individuals' fears of anxiety, incapacitation and displacement, in addition to their fears of losing control over important things in their lives (Index A). The distress measure had been validated and adapted to the local context (Mataria et al, 2009; Giacaman et al, 2007). Sample survey questions for individual distress scale include the following: 'To what extent did you feel worried?', 'To what extent did you feel frustrated?', 'To what extent did you feel incapacitated?' and 'To what extent did you feel humiliated?' Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.85 which indicates a very good internal consistency/reliability of the scale. Finally, suffering was measured by asking respondents to report whether suffering is part of their lives (yes or no).

For the purpose of description, the scores obtained for distress and human insecurity were divided based on the sample distribution: least distress or insecurity (1-2), low (2-3), moderate (3-4), and high distress or insecurity (≥ 5). Due to the negatively skewed distribution of human insecurity scores, the scores were further regrouped into two categories: least to moderate insecurity and high insecurity. The human insecurity distribution, 55.3 percent of respondents reported least to moderate, and 44.7 percent high insecurity (Table 2).

Data Analysis

The dependent variables in our analyses included human insecurity reports, and independent variables included standard sociodemographic factors (age, sex, marital status, educational status, governorate and type of locality of residence, employment status and household standard of living), war-related factors (reports of private property and neighbourhood destruction), and psychosocial impact of war (reported distress and suffering). Frequencies were used to provide a description of the study population and the factors associated with war-related destruction. Bivariate (t-tests and chi-square) were conducted to examine the association between human insecurity and independent variables. Variables that were significantly associated with human insecurity in bivariate analyses were entered in the logistic regression model. The analyses were conducted using individual sampling weights to account for clustering. Linear regression was also conducted and this provided similar results. Presentation of the results is made using the logistic regression model because those appear to be easier to understand by public health professionals.

RESULTS

The overall response rate was 97 percent, yielding a final sample of 3017 households consisting of a total of 18,631 persons. About 41 percent of household members were children

under the age of 15 years. Of the adult respondents, there were almost equal numbers of men and women.

Table 1 presents the weighted sample characteristics of 3017 adults from households who completed the human insecurity section of the study instrument. Respondent ages ranged between 18 and 90 years, with a mean age of 35.7 years ($SD = 14.0$). Only 2.8 percent of respondents resided in rural areas, with the rest residing either in urban areas (82 percent) or in refugee camps (16 percent). Half of the respondents reported having less than secondary education and 20 percent reported having post secondary education. These results are comparable to those from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics census for 2007 (PCBS, 2007). As for household employment, 58 percent of respondents reported that at least one member of their households held a full time job at the time of survey.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics, Gaza Strip 2009

		N (3017)	%
Age	18-30 years	1336	44.3
	31-64 years	1520	50.4
	65 years and older	161	5.3
Sex	Male	1524	50.5
	Female	1493	49.5
Locality	Urban	2463	81.6
	Rural	86	2.8
	Refugee Camp	468	15.5
Governorate	North Gaza	553	18.3
	Deir al-Balah	1020	14.1
	Gaza City	439	36.0
	Khan Younis	642	20.2
	Rafah	362	11.4
Education	Below secondary	1506	49.9
	Secondary completed	903	29.9
	Post-secondary	608	20.2
Household Employment	No one working/ partially employed	1263	41.9
	Full-time employment	1754	58.1
Standard of living*	On a scale from (0-9)	Mean= 3.67	SD= 2.04

*The STL items were identified through factor analysis, and then a count variable was created counting how many of those items were available to the household on a range from 0-9 items

The mean human insecurity score was 3.8 ($SD = 0.7$) on a scale from 1 (least insecure) - 5 (most insecure). Table 2 shows the human insecurity distribution among respondents (86.7 percent) reporting least to moderate (55.3 percent) and high (44.7 percent) levels of human insecurity.

Table 2: Distribution of Human Insecurity (fears and threats variable), Gaza Strip, 2009

	Mean (SD)	(N)	%
Fears and Threats*	3.78(.69)	-	-
Least insecurity	-	61	2
Low insecurity	-	336	11.3
Moderate insecurity	-	1248	41.9
High insecurity	-	1331	44.7

*Scale ranged from 1 (least insecurity) to 5 (high insecurity).

Table 3 presents the distribution of direct and indirect war-related variables. Forty-two percent of all participant households reported complete or partial destruction to private property as a result of the military attack on the Gaza Strip, and 32 percent reported complete or partial destruction of their neighbourhood (including roads, schools, shops and other public facilities). Thirty percent of respondents reported being displaced during the war and when respondents were asked if suffering, regardless of the source, was part of their life, 88 percent reported that it was. Finally, respondents' distress levels as measured by the aggregate score of twelve distress items revealed that 51 percent of respondents reported least to low distress, compared with 35 percent and 14 percent reporting moderate and high levels, respectively.

Table 3: Distribution of Direct and Indirect War-related Variables, Gaza Strip, 2009

		N (3017)	%
Private property destruction	Yes	1258	41.7
	No	1759	58.3
Neighborhood destruction	Yes	953	31.6
	No	2064	68.4
Displacement	Yes	897	29.7
	No	2120	70.3
Suffering	Suffering not part of life	373	12.4
	Suffering part of life	2644	87.6
Individual Distress	Least distress	397	13.2
	Low distress	1146	38.0
	Moderate distress	1065	35.3
	High distress	408	13.5

Table 4 shows the percentages for the human insecurity reports by selected classical associated factors. Reporting of high insecurity was inversely related to age. More women (47 percent) reported high insecurity than men (42 percent), but more men reported low to moderate insecurity. Based on governorate, more persons in Deir Al-Balah (52 percent) and Gaza City (47 percent) reported high insecurity. Finally, persons with lower educational levels (48 percent) were more likely to report high insecurity. No significant patterns emerged based on employment or locality.

Table 4: Human Insecurity by Selected Socio-demographic Factors, Gaza Strip 2009

Independent Variables		Human Insecurity		Chi-square	p-value
		Low to moderate	High		
		% (N)	% (N)		
Age	18-30 years	54.1(712)	45.9(604)	12.58	0.002
	31-64 years	54.9(823)	45.1(677)		
	65 years and older	68.8(110)	31.3(50)		
Sex	Male	57.8(862)	42.2(630)	7.56	0.006
	Female	52.8(783)	47.2(701)		
Locality	Urban	55(1343)	45(1101)	1.53	0.464
	Rural	61.7(50)	38.3(31)		
	Camp	55.9(252)	44.1(199)		
Governorates	North Gaza	59.4(307)	40.6(210)	22.99	<0.001
	Gaza City	52.4(519)	47.6(472)		
	Deir al-Balah	48(216)	52(234)		
	Khan Younis	59.3(384)	40.7(264)		
	Rafah	59.2(219)	40.8(151)		
Education	Below secondary	51.7(764)	48.3(713)	22.85	<0.001
	Secondary	55.8(506)	44.2(400)		
	Post-secondary	63.2(375)	36.8(218)		
Household Employment	No one working or partial	56.6(705)	43.4(541)	1.48	0.224
	Full-time employment	54.3(940)	45.7(790)		

Table 5 presents regression results with human insecurity as the dependent variable. Predictors of high insecurity were females [OR = 1.21 (1.043-1.413)] and respondents from larger families. Older persons [OR= 0.57 (.395-.836)], and persons reporting higher educational levels [OR= 0.76 (.606-.951)], higher (better) standards of living [OR = 0.90 (.866-.944)], and full-time employment [OR= 1.36 (1.152-1.605)] reported lower insecurity. Reports of property [OR= 1.23 (1.035-1.461)] and neighbourhoods [OR= 1.46 (1.223-1.734)] destruction, and displacement [OR= 1.41(1.177-1.683)] as a result of the attack (objective measures); and reports of distress [OR= 1.20 (1.09-1.32)] and suffering [OR= 1.38 (1.080-1.750)] (subjective measures) were associated with higher human insecurity scores. Results demonstrate that persons with greater human capital (education) and socioeconomic resources (higher standard of living and employment) were somewhat protected from human insecurity associated with the attack and siege.

Table 5: Logistic Regression Results for the Dependent Variable High Human Insecurity by Selected Classical, War and Siege Independent Variables, Gaza Strip 2009

Independent Variables	Unadjusted OR (95%)	Adjusted OR (95%)	P-
Sex- male	1	1	.012
female	1.23 (1.060-1.416)	1.21 (1.043-1.413)	
Age- (18-30) reference	1	1	
31-64 years old	.97 (.836-1.125)	.95 (.810-1.121)	.561
65 years and older	.54 (.377-.761)	.57 (.395-.836)	.004
Governorate- North Gaza	1	1	
Gaza City	1.33 (1.072-1.649)	1.59 (1.258 – 1.996)	<.001
Deir al-Balah	1.58 (1.227-2.044)	2.23 (1.688-2.948)	<.001
Khan Younis	1.01 (.794-1.272)	1.32 (1.024-1.698)	.032
Rafah	1.01 (.768-1.323)	1.48 (1.103-1.990)	.009
Educational Level- below secondary	1	1	
Secondary	.85 (.717-1.00)	.89 (.743-1.067)	.208
Post-secondary	.62 (.512-.758)	.76 (.606-.951)	.017
Family Size (1-4 persons)	1	1	
(4-8 persons)	1.37 (1.155-1.620)	1.28 (1.061-1.538)	.010
(5-8 persons)	1.47 (1.197-1.810)	1.24 (.985-1.553)	.067
Household employment- partially or never	1	1	
Full time	1.09 (.946-1.268)	1.36 (1.152-1.605)	<.001
Standard of Living	.89 (.857-.922)	.90 (.866-.944)	<.001
Private property destruction- no damage	1	1	
At least one type of	1.44 (1.242-1.667)	1.23 (1.035-1.461)	.019
Neighbourhood destruction	1	1	
At least one type of damage	1.50 (1.283-1.755)	1.46 (1.223-1.734)	<.001
Displacement- No	1	1	
Yes	1.69 (1.439-1.979)	1.41 (1.177-1.683)	<.001
Suffering- No	1	1	
Yes	1.62 (1.287-2.027)	1.38 (1.080-1.750)	.010
Distress	1.29 (1.184-1.406)	1.20 (1.09-1.32)	<.001

DISCUSSION

We investigated the human insecurity reports of a representative sample of adults living in the Gaza Strip six months after the Israeli attack on the Strip to identify demographic and war-related experiences that might explain variations in human insecurity levels.

The sample distribution of human insecurity (as measured by fears and threats) reflects a skew towards high levels of insecurity among respondents with 44.7 percent reporting high levels of human insecurity. This supports the presumption that in the aftermath of war, there is a period of uncertainty marked by mass population dislocation, high levels of insecurity, widespread destruction of infrastructure, loss and assault from outside (Leaning et al., 2004).

The results also reveal important associations between human insecurity reports and classical and war-related factors. Our results showed that older persons report lower insecurity. The lower insecurity among older persons may be explained by the fact that older persons have probably undergone several war experiences (1948 and 1967 wars) and may have developed more resiliency, in addition to the contention that older persons tend to be less fearful of death (Gesser, Wong, & Reker, 1988).

Results also showed that more women report high insecurity than men; both men and women experience insecurity during war, but consistent with findings by Abu-Rmeileh and colleagues (2011) that females report lower quality of life than men, females in our study also reported higher insecurity. A possible explanation of this finding is that the exposure to chronic political violence, trauma, and especially the exposure to the effects of the latest war and ensuing distress are internalised by women more than by men, as has been reported elsewhere (Kirmayer, Das & Lock, 2004; Sayar, Kirmayar, & Taillefer, 2003). Alternatively, from a contextual viewpoint, females may experience more insecurity because of their traditional roles in society as primary caregivers for their children, husbands and the elderly, in addition to the stress associated with the potential loss of the male breadwinner in the family. Women's insecurity may also stem from their fears of taking financial responsibility for the family in the absence of male members due to injury or death, and may result in losing their sense of home and link to the community and their hope for a better future.

Individuals with higher educational levels, full-time employment and higher STL reported lower insecurity. These factors are typically associated with a steady income (job security), financial and social stability; and socioeconomic conditions that promote human security (UNDP, 1994; Leaning et al., 2004; Giacaman et al., 2009). These results are also consistent with research findings that low levels of education (Loneragan, Gustavson, & Carte, 2009) and economic deterioration (Batniji et al, 2009) threaten human security. Results demonstrate that persons with greater human capital (education) and socioeconomic resources (higher standard of living and employment) were somewhat protected from human insecurity associated with the attack and siege. Women and persons in large families in the household more often are insecure. This corresponds to the literature on human security that shows that those with the fewest resources are much more likely to be insecure.

As expected, private property and/or neighbourhood destruction were associated with high insecurity scores. This is consistent with the fact that 42 percent of Gazans who reported destruction to at least some private property had not been able to repair or rebuild their properties by the time of the survey due to the ongoing siege conditions. Also, damaged schools, universities, hospitals, clinics, commercial shops and roads had also not been repaired (Amnesty International UK et al., 2009).

Furthermore, displacement was associated with higher human insecurity reports. This may be exacerbated by the history of being repeatedly uprooted (during the 1948 and 1967 wars), which may create a compounding effect and trigger feelings of insecurity and instability. Displacement disrupts connections to home and communities and weakens hope for the future; all of which are key psychosocial elements of human insecurity (Leaning & Arie, 2001; Giacaman et al., 2009). Finally, results reveal reports of distress and suffering are associated with greater insecurity. This is consistent with the disputation that Palestinians have been enduring social suffering (Kleinman et al., 1996) associated with war, and the experience of violence and trauma may disrupt their shared sense of communal security (Leaning & Arie, 2001; Giacaman et al., 2009).

Since Operation Cast Lead and up to January 2011, 12 Gazan homes were demolished for alleged military purposes, 113 Palestinians, including 12 children were killed by the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip, and 108 Palestinians were killed by Israelis for partaking or suspicions of partaking in hostilities. In addition, 37 Palestinians were killed by Palestinians (B'tselem, 2011). Indeed at the time of writing this study, Physicians for Human Rights Israel reported that food insecurity rose from 40 percent in 2003 to 61 percent by the end of 2010 in the Gaza Strip. At least 75 percent of Gaza families were reported as surviving on humanitarian

aid for their basic needs, and unemployment has reached 45 percent in 2011 (PHRI, 2011). These daunting statistics demonstrate the continued effect of the ongoing siege conditions, Israeli military violence and internal Palestinian factional violence. Threats to national security (such as bombing and shelling resulting in destruction and displacement) continue to affect livelihoods of individuals, families and communities.

Our findings are consistent with Batniji and colleagues' (2009) that threats to human security comprise direct and indirect factors. In the Palestinian context direct threats to security include gunfire, home demolitions, displacement and imprisonment, and indirect threats include siege, barriers, and curfews, which lead to economic restrictions. Indirect threats are also believed to increase social exclusion, unemployment and social support, which challenge the essence of the Palestinian community and compromise its individual, communal and national security. Our results underscore the additional role of psychosocial war-related factors (suffering and distress) in affecting human security. They also reveal the link between human and national security, given that insecurity was found to be higher among those who experienced higher levels of destruction related to the war. This highlights the need to combine human and national security paradigms into a unified causal framework when studying the impact of war on survivors. Finally, given the ongoing siege, the population of Gaza continues to need the assistance of humanitarian and international aid with the provision of food and other handouts. However, the root causes of human insecurity, in this case, war and the ongoing siege, also need to be addressed. It is only then that Gazans would be relieved from a main cause of human insecurity.

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VARIABLES USED TO BUILD THE SCALES MENTIONED IN THE PAPER

Standard of living scale variables (range of scores 0-9)

1. Currently available Electrical fridge to the household
2. Currently available Solar Heater to the household
3. Currently available Clothes washing machine to the household
4. Currently available Microwave to the household
5. Currently available Hoover to the household
6. Currently available House library to the household
7. Currently available Telephone line to the household
8. Currently available Computer to the household
9. Currently available Internet service to the household

Individual distress scale variables (range of scores 1-5)

1. To what extent did you feel unable to control the important things in your life?

2. To what extent did you feel unable to cope with all the things that you had to do?
3. To what extent did you feel worried?
4. To what extent did you feel frustrated?
5. To what extent did you feel incapacitated?
6. To what extent did you feel humiliated?
7. To what extent did you feel lonely?
8. To what extent did you feel anxious?
9. To what extent did you feel sad?
10. To what extent did you feel angry?
11. To what extent did you feel fed up with life?
12. To what extent did you feel unable to cope with all the things that you had to do?

Human insecurity scale variables: (range of scores 1-5)

1. To what extent do you fear for yourself in your daily life?
2. To what extent do you fear for your family in your daily life?
3. To what extent do you feel worry/fear not being able to provide your family with daily life necessities?
4. To what extent do you worry/fear about losing your source of income or your family's source of income?
5. To what extent do you worry/fear losing your home?
6. To what extent do you feel worry/fear from displacement or uprooting?
7. To what extent do you worry/fear for your future and your family's future?
8. To what extent do you feel fear on your safety?
9. To what extent do you feel fear on the safety of your family?
10. To what extent does your family feel fear on your safety?

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