

# *Oxfam Says Rebuilding Gaza May Take 100 Years if Siege Continues*

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Gaza City, February 27 (RHC)-- Rebuilding the besieged Gaza Strip, which suffered heavy damage during a 50-day Israeli war last summer, may take 100 years if the Israeli blockade of the Palestinian enclave continues, charity organization Oxfam says. "It could take 100 years to complete essential building of homes, schools and health facilities in Gaza unless the Israeli blockade is lifted," Oxfam said on Thursday.

Gaza, which has experienced three destructive wars in the last seven years, has been blockaded since June 2007, a situation that has caused a decline in the standards of living, unprecedented levels of unemployment, and unrelenting poverty.

Over 800,000 truckloads of construction materials are needed for the reconstruction of Gaza facilities and infrastructure, according to Oxfam. "Yet, in January only 579 such trucks entered Gaza," the aid agency said, adding: "Less than 0.25 percent of the truckloads of essential construction materials needed have entered Gaza in the past 3 months."

Israel started its latest war on Gaza in early July last year. Over 2,100 people were killed and some 11,000 others were injured in the Israeli war, which ended on August 26, 2014 with a truce that took effect after indirect negotiations in the Egyptian capital, Cairo.

More than 15,500 housing units were damaged in the war in Gaza while over 2,200 houses were totally destroyed, according to official figures released by Palestinian sources.

Oxfam also stressed that the situation in Gaza is deteriorating six months after the end of the war, and called for the Israeli blockade of the coastal enclave to be lifted immediately.

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